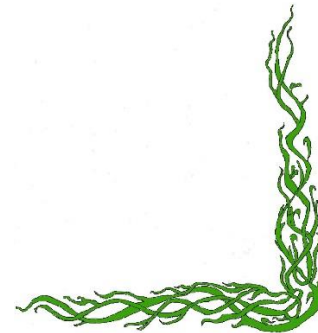
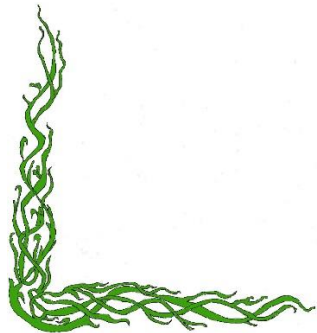


# The Stars Above

*A Treatise on Astronomy and Constellography  
by Aspen, Prophetess of The Glade*



Long have I looked upon the stars in their courses, learning from them of their sage wisdom of the fate of our races. There is still so much to learn from them, yet I take this moment to chart for you what I have seen, so that you may see what cannot be seen, and understand what is far above you.

In these pages you will learn the constellations, their placement and courses in the sky, the myths and stories of their lives before they were placed in the heavens, and the art of navigating by their position. When you finish this book, you will have all the tools that you need to be a guide, augur, helmsman, and seer, save one.

And that is the gift of discernment. The stars speak to us in their language, at full speed, expecting full comprehension, while we toddle around like an infant, not even grasping a fraction of their song. But still they speak to us. So we will listen. And this will require you to apply yourself with everything you have to learn their truths. Anyone who does any less is not worthy to glimpse the stars, for they ever cry out to us, yet so many do not hear.

Have courage, and be humble in their presence, and you will hear the music of the stars that guides our fates as I have. But be warned: you will never be the same. You have been warned.

*Aspen*

## Chapter I: Cosmology

When I say the word, “stars,” what thoughts come to mind? If you are like other mindless mortals will think in one of four veins.

You might think **scientifically**; you say to yourself, “A star is a celestial body, set in the sky, which comes out at night and shines upon the world.” You are not wrong; the stars are celestial bodies that are most visible at night, but your answer would not be right.

You might think **metaphorically**; you would think, “A star is like a candle set in the heavens, lighting our way when all other lights go out,” which is not incorrect (and is insightful, as they are guides for those who care to look up and see what they relay to us), but it is also hollow of the full truth.

You might think **romantically**; you might consider one that you love, thinking, “Her eyes sparkle like the stars,” or, “She walks like the stars as they dance in their courses,” or, “Her soul is bright and pure like the stars with their celestial gleam.”<sup>1</sup> And while I am sure that your *ukoachany* has such qualities, to compare him or her to the stars in this way is simple and foolish at best.

Or you might think **metaphysically**; you would say, “A star is a celestial body beyond our understanding: we know nothing of its true form or figure, for it appears round to us, though this could simply be a distortion by the eye. We do not know its beginning or end, and thus I cannot truly say what a star is.”

Metaphysicians annoy me. I have known one metaphysician that I respect, and the rest prove the rule. They are further from the truth than any of the others, yet they feel intellectually superior because they esteem their thoughts as “lofty.”

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<sup>1</sup> There was a colt that I knew growing up who used to say things like this to me all the time. He was wrong to think so lightly and trivially about the stars; this is not to say that he was wrong to say it, or that it was undesired.

Let me speak clearly: the stars are lofty. Visions of the future as told to us by the stars are lofty. Their ideas fall far short of lofty thoughts. They are large thoughts, but not lofty ones.

There is another path, and that is to think **essentially**. When thinking essentially, you consider the essence of the target of your inquiry; you do not focus on particulars (scientifically), analogies (metaphorically), emotions (romantically), or empty philosophy (metaphysically), but upon what the thing is in its own nature. In short, you consider it on its own terms.

Which requires you to listen to what it says about itself. That is the art of astronomy, constellography, and divination.<sup>2</sup>

If I told you that when I think of the word, “star,” I think to myself, “A star is a celestial *person*, hearing the music that moves the universe, dancing to its rhythm, and singing of the fate of those below who are also guided by that same tune, but incapable of hearing it without aid,” would you call me crazy? Perhaps you would – but it is still true, and truer than any of the other thoughts presented previously.

So to begin our study of the stars, we must begin with what we know of the cosmology of the universe: what is the order of the stars, what is their essential nature, and how do we know this to be true. Then, and only then, can we have a meaningful discussion on astronomy, constellography, and divination.

### The Essence of the Stars

To begin our inquiry, we posit that a star, like other things in Zurn, has three elements: **physical**, **magical**, and **divine**.

The star’s **physical** characteristics are plain to us, and they are the subject of the scientific vein of thinking. We know from its

<sup>2</sup> We will go into each of these in detail in this work, but for now, all you need to know is that “astronomy” is a study of the constellations, “constellography” governs placement in the heavens, and “divination” is the art of reading them.

physical form that it is a light in the night sky, appears to have a physical form, and is more readily apparent at night.

Stars also possess **magical** qualities, but these come not from the individual stars, but from their grouping as a constellation. There is a whole lore of magic – The Celestial Lore – devoted to the study of these magical qualities, with an eye particularly to added magical power stemming from groups of constellations working in harmony together (commonly called a “convergence”).

But often overlooked is that there is a **divine** spark – a soul, if you will – attached to stars as well. This soul is referred to as the “avatar” of the constellation, and reflects the temperament and nature of the stars within its constellation, derived from their souls.

So when we see a constellation moving in a certain way, it is much akin to reading the face of a person in a crowd, or listening to the tone of a friend’s voice, or smelling the aroma of a stew to discern its contents. This is why a true augur or augura will speak of having a mind that is “open yet discerning,” because we must be open to seeing what is conveyed to us, and yet always sifting and winnowing for meaning that is sure and reliable.

And this is why it is key to remember that stars do not move haphazardly: they move to the rhythm and music of the universe. So while we cannot always accurately predict their movements, we can guess their trajectory based on position and origin.<sup>3</sup>

So remember that any time that you look up, you glimpse a work of art that has been in constant motion since The Elder Days before the War began. Do not feel shame if you need to take a moment to get your bearings. That is respectful to the stars, and that is the right mindset, for you are taking them on their own terms. In a word, you are treating them essentially.

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<sup>3</sup> Scientists get frustrated with astronomy because “it is not an exact science.” I can understand why: they want everything to be clean and easily grasped. Astronomists understand that the mortal mind is not so strong as to grasp all wondrous ideas with certainty, so a level of uncertainty is not a frustration.

## The Three Subdivisions of Constellations

There are three tiers of constellations in the heavens: common constellations, advanced constellations, and the Pantheon, the strongest and mightiest of the stellar host.

**Common** constellations are generally comprised of smaller stars that do not shine as brightly. They serve the other avatars of the heavens, and while their tasks are important (and can be of great benefit to us here on earth), they are not as powerful. This also makes them easier to read: beginning astronomers would be wise to learn their constellations first, as this will make divination in particular easier.

**Advanced** constellations are more powerful, and usually signal action in the dance of the stars. While common constellations help to show the “what,” “where,” and “who” in a prophecy or vision, the advanced constellations show the “when” and “how.”

The **Pantheon** of the constellations is comprised of the ten most powerful constellations, and these govern and rule over the others. They relay the “why” in our tales, and their songs are the hardest to understand, yet essential to wisdom.

This raises the question of how we know this hierarchy is true.<sup>4</sup> Some of our basis for this knowledge comes from traditions: the Beyonder placing the constellations in the sky, the selection of the members of the Pantheon, and the moving of their souls to the music He used to create the universe.

Those who do not hold to the teachings of the Beyonder rely on legends and tales regarding how the constellations came to be. But the lesson that must be learned here is this: astronomy and constellography are based in experience grounded in past stories.

<sup>4</sup> Whatever I may think about metaphysicians, know that I have the high respect for epistemologists. They have great thoughts, and in their inquiries there is much wisdom, for the question of how we know what we know is critical to seers, astronomers, prophets, augurs, and constellographers.

It requires you to look back while looking forward, building on the wisdom of those who came before you to discern the future of those who will come after you.

You may choose a different approach. Doing so will blind you.

### **Conclusion**

It is flippant to speak of the common avatars as “common,” as they are powerful enough to destroy a mortal. But we speak of them as “common” as we might say a vowel is common in language: it is integral to every word, phrase, sentence, and work.

You will learn to respect each constellation, for you do not know which part a constellation will play in the song you are listening to until it begins to sing. So learn to respect them all, however much you may gravitate toward one or another. It is unwise to become blind just when you are beginning to see.

## **Chapter II: Common Constellations**

Common constellations serve as the “nouns” in visions, answering who, what, and where an event will occur. In a dream or prophecy seers notice these first, as reading these answers is key to accurate interpretations. So even though common constellations are not as glamorous as the others, they are critical to our work, and serve a pivotal role in the night sky.

There are 24 common constellations that we can see, and are easier (or harder) to read depending on the alignment of the stars in the constellation, and the alignment of the astronomer. Light-Aligned constellations are comprised of avatars that possess souls with Light alignment, and are easier to read by Light-aligned seers, and are harder to read by Dark-aligned and Neutral seers.

There are also unaligned constellations: these constellations have stars with a mix of alignments in their composition. There is no “balancing” in the alignment of a constellation: a constellation with four stars (two Light-Aligned, two Dark-Aligned) would not be a Neutral constellation: it would be an unaligned constellation.<sup>5</sup>

We will begin by examining the unaligned constellations, then we will examine the Light, Dark, and Neutral constellations.

### **Unaligned Constellations**

Of the 24 common constellations, 18 of them are unaligned. They comprise the plurality of constellations in the sky, and are the most common subjects of divination and constellography.

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<sup>5</sup> I have learned over the years that this concept confuses people, as they tend to get the neutral alignment of the soul conflated with a Neutral affiliation in the Great War between Order and Fury. So to reiterate: each star has a soul. Stars are part of constellations. If all the stars in a constellation are of the same

alignment (Light, Dark, or Neutral), then the constellation has that alignment. If even one star has a different alignment than the others in its constellation, the entire constellation is an Unaligned constellation.

You will learn them in order (according to their names in *The Basic Tongue*), as that is how I learned them from my father.<sup>6</sup>

- **Altar of Chiros:** An altar in the sky comprised of twelve stars. The Altar of Chiros is said to aid in prediction and prophecy, and it is the first constellation that seers learn to identify in the night's sky. Since it sits in the center of the night sky, a lot of visions involve it, so it is constantly consulted (and is the most common subject of constellography). If you don't learn to read this constellation, you are trying to make divination inordinately hard on yourself. Learn to read this constellation accurately, as you will use it often.
- **Canis Major:** The great hunting dog comprised of three stars, Canis Major tells the physical qualities of the "who" in a vision or prophecy. Canis Major is often consulted when trying to identify a thief, size up a foe, and find a worker strong enough to perform a task. It is also used for less warlike and vocational reasons: it is common for young girls consult Canis Major to learn what their future husbands will look like.<sup>7</sup> Boys consult Canis Major to learn what their wives will look like. Canis Major is part of *The Hunters* convergence, along with Canis Minor and Orion.
- **Canis Minor:** The lesser hunting dog, Canis Minor tells of the physical proficiencies of the "who" in a vision or prophecy. While Canis Major tells what a

person looks like, Canis Minor sheds light on the skill set of the person, showing ability and proficiency in the things in which they excel. This is useful for warriors sizing up opponents, kings recruiting talent, and of course youths predicting the qualities of their future spouse.<sup>8</sup> Comprised of only two stars, Canis Minor has a Light-aligned star (Pupper) and a Dark-aligned star (Bork). Canis Minor is part of *The Hunters* convergence, along with Canis Major and Orion.

- **Carina:** The six star keel of a ship, Carina (often called, "Fair Carina" by those who seek her guidance) speaks to the "what" in a vision, which often turns out to be the subject of the vision. It is also said that those who cast the *Star Gazer* spell and look to Carina while navigating a journey on the seas will find greater accuracy in their navigation. I am no mariner, but it is reasonable for Carina to grant added foresight in navigating the sea, as Carina is part of the *Argonavis* convergence, along with Pixis, Puppis, and Vela.
- **Cassiopeia:** The queen constellation comprised of five stars, Cassiopeia tells the "who" for regal figures in visions. Augurs that serve royalty study Cassiopeia religiously for anything involving their masters, either directly or indirectly.
- **Centaurus:** A warrior centaur with a sword and shield comprised of eleven stars. The centaur predicts strife

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<sup>6</sup> My father, Silvus Ironwood, was not an exceptional seer, but he was a very gifted constellographer, charting motion and position as easily as other people breathe or walk. He taught me a song to remember the constellations that placed them in alphabetical order, and that is how he remembered them all so well. I pass the list on to you as a tribute to him. I love you, papa.

<sup>7</sup> I confess: I did this at the age of eight, which piqued my interest in astronomy, constellography, and divination. I don't regret it. I was not alone.

<sup>8</sup> Some have claimed that Canis Minor ought to be Canis Major, not because the constellation is larger (as it only has two stars instead of three) but because it has more import in the realm of divination. I stand by its current name.

and war, and is heavily consulted before a nation goes to war to see if there will be victory.

- **The Cup of Destiny:** A goblet that holds blessing and terror. It is the clearest constellation to read (it basically shouts at you), but you may not like what it has to say. It focuses on the “what” question, often with running commentary on why the subject deserves its fate. I have found its seven stars easy to read, though it is difficult to discern: is its commentary prescriptive of what might happen (but can be avoided), or descriptive of what will come to pass? That is harder to discern.
- **The Fishhook:** A fishhook comprised of eight stars, the legends say that the great fishhook was thrown into the sea to pull the land of Zurn up from the depths, and when the land came to its place of rest above the waves the hook flew into the sky, where it stands to this day. The hook is most often involved in prophecies involving manual labor and acts of physical strength involving empty hands. Wrestlers consult it before a match, as do farmers and day laborers.
- **Lupis:** The wolf composed of ten stars, Lupis predicts trickery, deceit, and treason. Lupis is rarely consulted (as it is hard to read, since its movements are shaded and take years to learn), though those who fear falling into a trap will at least glimpse it in the hopes of seeing something useful. The star that forms the eye, Thusia, is associated with discerning truth: casting *Star Gazer* with this constellation increases the bearer’s Willpower

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<sup>9</sup> I will say this: whatever you think about Lyra, the voice of the constellation is truly beautiful. It has a cadence in its movements that is unparalleled in the night sky, except perhaps by Virgo herself. I find her song magically soothing.

against Charm attacks in addition to the spell’s effects, making it easier to detect deceit.

- **Lyra:** A lyre with five stars (two Light-Aligned stars, two Dark-Aligned stars, and one Neutral-Aligned star) that does not tell much of its own stories, but does help to flesh out the song of other stellar movements, so it is sometimes consulted as a means of confirming the story of another constellation. It presents a problem though: Lyra tends to over-embellish the story, so treat it as “epic details,” not necessarily “accurate details.”<sup>9</sup> Some seers have neglected this, to their detriment.
- **Pilum:** A javelin formed by five stars, Pilum predicts where wars will start. It is said that Pilum was set in the sky after being forged by Order, and when The Great War began, it was cast against Fury, who deflected it with a great hammer. It flew up into the sky, and is now connected to the wars between the servants of Order and Fury. It does not say why war, strife, or rebellion will erupt, only that it will.<sup>10</sup>
- **Pixis:** The Great Compass in the sky, Pixis tells the “where” of a vision, especially one involving the high seas. Pixis is unique: it tells the location in context of its distance from Mount Ulan, the polar north of Zurn. Comprised of four stars, Pixis is a bright constellation, making it a favorite of mountainman and mariner alike. Pixis is part of the *Argonavis* convergence, along with Carnia, Puppis, and Vela.

<sup>10</sup> This notion of it only predicting strife between Order and Fury is complete nonsense. It predicts strife, which includes internal conflict, national conquest, and at least once one argument between a husband and wife that I know of.

- **Puppis:** The stern of The Great Ship, Puppis tells the “who” in a vision, though often tied to objects rather than persons. Said to be the last remnant of the first people to reach the far continent of Rune Terra to the East, the eight-star constellation is part of the *Argonavis* convergence, along with Carina, Pixis, and Vela.
- **Reticulum:** A massive net, said to have been used by a giant to capture demons in The Elder Days. The nine stars of Reticulum are said to predict the coming of trials, especially those that catch you unaware. They are hard to predict, but with training it can be mastered, and it makes for a very desirable seer.
- **The Southern Cross:** A large cross used as a guide to sojourners in the southern lands, The Southern Cross is comprised of five stars, and helps to guide the “where” of finding things. It is commonly sought when something is lost, or when one is in need of something and must find it. Kings who require the assistance of great warriors from another land will often consult The Southern Cross as a means of finding their champions.
- **Ursa Major:** The Big Bear comprised of nineteen stars, The Bear predicts the resilience and might of a person. It is sought both in war and peace, as kings wish to see the might of their enemies, while also desiring to see how strong their offspring will be when they are born. Much like Canis Major, Ursa Major speaks more toward the physical characteristics of the person than of character qualities and traits.

- **Ursa Minor:** The Little Bear, which only has seven stars, Ursa Minor predicts the fortitude, valor, and other character qualities of a person. Said to be of great import to all men and women of all eras, Ursa Minor’s “tail” star, Polaris, is a fixed star, staying above Mount Ulan all year, with the constellation “swinging” around that point as the constellation moves across the sky.<sup>11</sup>
- **Vela:** The sails of the *Argonavis*, Vela tells of the direct object of the action in a vision. While Puppis may tell of objects and Carina tells of persons, Vela tells of the person (or object) being acted upon in the vision. It is said to be a particularly unlucky thing to see one’s own demise in Vela, so seers are reluctant to consult Vela (though it is often necessary). Vela has seven stars, and is part of the *Argonavis* convergence, along with Carina, Pixis, and Puppis.

### Light Constellations

There are only two Light-Aligned constellations among the common constellations, and both are designed to inform and defend the seeker. The Great Unicorn and the Great Fox are two of the most sought constellations in the sky, and for good reason.

- **The Unicorn:** The Great Unicorn has fourteen stars, the most prominent of which is Luca, the star that forms the tip of the unicorn’s horn. It is said that The Great Unicorn gives wisdom in where to live, and predicts magical actions taken by a person. Stories say that The Great Unicorn was as red as a healthy flame,

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<sup>11</sup> There is a legend talking about how The Little Bear was grasped by Orion, the Great Hunter, and swung the bear by his tail before dashing his skull against

a tree. I find it unlikely that the short tail of a bear could be used to swing it, but the story is quite creative in its explanation of the stationary star.

and was the great love of the legendary Sapphire Unicorn of the Forest of Arden, his mate and queen of the forest.

- **The Great Fox:** *Voltacula* in the faun tongue, the Great Fox gives great speed to those who seek its aid (and is often sought by runners before a race), but also tends to show the “where” of another prophecy with great accuracy. Comprised of seven stars, the Fox serves as quiet counselor, rarely speaking with its own voice, it is reminiscent of a wise friend speaking silently in the ear after a course of action is given.<sup>12</sup>

### Dark Constellations

Both of the Dark-aligned constellations possess gifting in the art of predicting death. They are commonly sought by kings and warlords, regardless of the alignment of the person.

- **Arrow:** An arrow of five stars, The Arrow is said to give precision to other visions regarding war, making them less murky. It is like an echo: if the movements of another constellation are unclear or shrouded, it may be repeated by The Arrow. The Arrow is part of the *Archer* convergence, along with Sagittarius.
- **Smierc:** The Great Worble, these sixteen stars portend death, and becomes very animated in those visions. Unlike Centaurus and other constellations that speak of war, Smierc almost exclusively speaks of murder: death beyond the battlefield, often involving ambush

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<sup>12</sup> Legends say that the Fox was added to the night sky after outsmarting a serpent in a riddle war. When the serpent lost it grew angry, and attempted to skin the fox with its knife. The fox darted, deftly crossing a pit of burning lava

or trickery. Thus many augurs study Smierc: if it sings, you must quickly (and accurately) discern its meaning before someone you love is harmed.

### Neutral Constellations

Both of the Neutral constellations involve the water, and both are among the most useful constellations in the sky.

- **Ardanis:** The Great Rver, the constellation includes a whopping thirty stars, and answers the “what” in a prophecy. It does not have many prophecies of its own, but gives background on other visions through its song. It is a favorite of neutral astronomers because of its general applicability (and general ease of reading), and those who lack Neutral alignment still consult it in the hopes of learning from it.
- **Durado:** The Swordfish has eight stars, and predicts future danger (often physical). Like the swordfish, the hearer must discern whether to fight back against its assailants, or flee with the speed of a swordfish from the threat. Durado is said to have been selected to join the night sky because he shows courage and wisdom in the face of danger, and has been commonly sought by those who prepare for trial by combat.

### Conclusion

By this point, some have lost track of an integral truth in astronomy: anyone can learn from any constellation. Not all find it

to escape the serpent. For his speed and cunning, the Fox was selected to join the night sky, promising aid to those who are in dire need. It is rumored, though, that thieves are shaded from reading its movements and hearing its song.



as easy to read a particular constellation (based on their alignment), and not all persons can harness the magical power of each avatar (as I understand it, celestial mages can only summon the avatar of constellations that match their alignment or are unaligned). But as you learn your constellations, remember: any constellation you can view in the sky you can learn from, so pay attention to all of them.

In the next chapter we will discuss the twelve advanced constellations, the guardians of the sky entrusted with times and ways, and my personal favorite selection of stars. Their harmony is truly wondrous to the trained ear.

## Chapter III: Advanced Constellations

The twelve advanced constellations speak to the “when” and “how” of a vision. It comprises the “verbs” of a prophecy, often depicting the actions that will be taken by the persons in the vision.

Advanced constellations are harder to read than the common constellations as a general rule, thus while many augurs may be able to tell a king if he is the subject of a vision, they are often less clear on what will happen, and when. This is not due to incompetence of the seer (at least, not that alone), but in the naturally harder task of reading these constellations.

Advanced constellations have a more vibrant, deeper voice than the common constellations, at least to my ear. Some say that this is due to the fact that the “how” and “when” lend a bit more timber and resonance to the prophecy, giving more telling detail. I agree in part; I think their role is critical for sewing the fabric of the prophecy together, so it appears to us as deeper. In reality I think it is simply a chorus of voices performing their part of the greater song, and whether that is deeper or higher is irrelevant as long as it sings its part. If it is deeper, so be it: so long as you listen to what that voice says.

As we did in Chapter II, we will examine the six unaligned constellations, and then discuss the aligned constellations.

### Unaligned Constellations

There are six unaligned advanced constellations, and these form the core of the consulted stars. Whether they predict coming blessings or terrors, they stand as wary guardians over the future, foretelling the secrets to victory and defeat, hope and despair.

- **Cepheus:** Cepheus, the old king of legends (and the husband of Cassiopeia), was said to have dim sight, and yet he was very wise. It is a dim constellation, hard to see at night if you are not well trained, but this six star constellation sings of hidden things, be they secrets kept safe, dangers on the horizon, or long-forgotten treasures. So when seeking the timing and ways of hidden things, consult Cepheus.
- **Hydra:** A constellation with nineteen stars, the hydra is a three-headed monster, and in its coils it holds the secrets of how wars are to be won and fought. Battle seers glimpse Hydra, hoping to see how battles can be won, especially when the fight is desperate.
- **Orion:** The Great Hunter, comprised of fourteen stars that are easily distinguishable in the night sky, Orion is the most famous constellation, with every culture having an Orion story. A huntsman who slew great beasts across Zurn, Orion has three bright stars: Rigel, Bellatrix, and Betelle.<sup>13</sup> They speak of courage, and are consulted by warriors before battle to learn the way of valor. It is not uncommon to find pictures of Orion on shields, armor, and even patterns on dresses worn by maidens. Orion is part of *The Hunters* convergence, along with Canis Major and Canis Minor.
- **Phoenix:** The large twelve-star constellation set near the horizon, Phoenix predicts hopeful turns in events,

often from dire situations. When trials come seers turn to Phoenix, in the hope that they will hear the song of redemption amidst the crisis. Phoenix has one bright star (Ankaa), that is usually associated with the head of the bird, and it is said that when a good life ends Ankaa sheds a tear for them, and is apparent in the dance of the star. It is also commonly sought by shaman healers who hope for the safe deliverance of a person from an illness or fatal wound.

- **Scuti:** The Great Shield, Scuti is comprised of five stars, and is used to predict ways of protection. Often sought by defenders and household guardians, Scuti sheds its light and song on how one might protect and guard that which one has been entrusted. It is common to find pictures of Scuti engraved on baby cribs, door mantles, and fireplaces, as it is considered a sign of good luck and protection for those that dwell there.
- **Tragg's Hammer:** A massive hammer in the sky, the eight stars that form this constellation are small but vibrant, as if they still shine with the light of the Forges of Khazaldul. Tragg the Foe-Render was a troll of great renown who was given a hammer made by the dwarves to defend their realm against Slaarvak, an undead dragon that haunted their halls, spreading necrotic rot across their kingdom. It is said that they forged great magic into the hammer, strong enough that it would follow his command even when it left his hand. The

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<sup>13</sup> They say that Bellatrix, Rigel, and Betelle were Orion's closest companions on his journey. Bellatrix was the wife of his youth, who went with him on his first journey, and was slain in his battle against Hydra, the only creature who ever defeated him. Rigel was his trusted tracker who took him to find the den of the Harpies of Olc'Tarash, and cared for his two dogs. Betelle was a huntress who

went with him on many journeys (including the slaying of the Centaurs of Prixoe and the Black Stag of the Greater Wood), and while they never married, it is said that no one wept more bitterly for him upon his death than she. It is said that she harbored a secret love for him, one that never bloomed before his death.

constellation speaks of the coming of great doom, and when one's fate is spoken of by Tragg, it is often said that, "Tragg rings for you."<sup>14</sup>

### Light Constellations

The Light-aligned constellations, Andromeda and Pegasus, come from the same legend. The tale says that Andromeda was to be fed to Cetus, the Great Sea Wyrm, and a brave adventurer came to her rescue, mounted on the great Pegasus. From his seed sprung the race of pegasii, and for his bravery in the battle he was given the gift of magical blood that he passed on to his descendants.

The adventurer was given the reward of Andromeda, whose beauty captivated him for the rest of his life. They represent a paradox of meaning in the sky, and those with Light alignment find they have easier sight into the hearts of persons around them.

- **Andromeda:** The princess of the legend, Andromeda is the daughter of Cepheus and Cassiopeia, and sits by them in the sky. Comprised of an astounding twelve stars, her star count is equal to her mother and father combined, and shows her chained to the rock, awaiting salvation from Cetus. Her "head" is formed by three close stars, which shine brightly in the sky (and is her distinguishing feature). Andromeda's song is one of clinging to hope, and is consulted for how to endure suffering. It is said that her stars grow dim as hope fades, so keep an eye on the brightness of her stars.
- **Pegasus:** The flying horse of legend, Pegasus has eleven stars, with the most prominent being Enif in the

"face" and Alpheratz in the body. Pegasus speaks of freedom and travel, and is consulted as to be the best way to travel to another destination. It also can predict the ending time of a journey, so it is consulted before long voyages.

### Dark Constellations

The Dark-aligned constellations both portend change, but in different forms. Draco, the Great Dragon in the sky, tells of when great wars will come to a kingdom, threatening their existence and the one that sits on the throne. Horologiul predicts a sway of power from one to another, which may come through intrigue within, war from without, or rebellion.

So while other mages may find it easier to learn the ways and times of events in the world, those with Dark alignment find it easier to predict the changing and overthrow of rulers. This makes them in high demand as seers and augurs.

- **Draco:** The Great Dragon, Draco is truly magnificent, comprised of twenty stars, and among the largest in the night sky. Its two largest stars, Rastaban in the fangs and Thuban in the tail, mark off the signature strengths of the legendary creature, who was said to be able to tear through mountains with its jaws, and level towers with a strike from its tail. Draco tells of when great wars and rebellions shall come upon a people, and when Draco lights up, everyone watches him closely.
- **Horologiul:** A massive pendulum that shows the sway of power from one person to another. The pendulum

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<sup>14</sup> It is unknown where this saying comes from, but it is used universally among the Neutral races, and is very common among the Fury races. I have reason to

believe that it is a trusty saying, as everyone I have seen predicted by Tragg has, in fact, died at the appointed time. So face your fate with valor when it comes.

has eight stars, and takes great practice to read (as its movements are subtle, and can take years to master), but when it speaks augurs study it relentlessly.<sup>15</sup> There was once a satyr war shaman who saw it move and spent years trying to understand its meaning. During that time his apprentice turned the colony against him, and he was overthrown. The meaning suddenly struck him, and he went away dejected and downcast.

## Neutral Constellations

The Neutral-aligned stars are arguably the strongest of the advanced constellations, at least from the perspective of an augur. These two constellations are perhaps the most insightful in all of the night sky, and for those who have the clear mind to glimpse their wisdom, it will carry you far.

Of course, what they share, like all stars, can also be dark and despairing, so glimpse them carefully and learn from them. Not all that is sad is evil, and these constellations give you good insight.

- **Cetus:** The Sea Wyrm of legend, Cetus was slain by a troop of adventurers, led by their leader on a pegasus for the hand of Andromeda.<sup>16</sup> Cetus is comprised of thirteen stars, a number some would consider unlucky, and that is fitting for the avatar of Cetus. Cetus gives deep knowledge of the ways of the undercurrents of

thought in the world, and thus it is a sage monster, powerful both in size and in knowledge. Cetus, being a wyrm, was a cunning foe, and when he died he was translated to the stars where he now sits and gleans the plots of all flesh. If you are seeking the plans of a plot, look to Cetus for the answer.

- **The Pleiades:** The six sage sisters, The Pleiades are among the easiest to see in the sky, but their close cluster of six stars makes it hard to distinguish their movements. The Pleiades, also known as The Fates, speak clarity into the prophecies and predictions of other stars, and those who learn to master the ways of Maia, Alcyone, Merope, Electra, Celaeno, and Taygeta, will gain great wisdom in many matters. It is said that all the stars speak to The Pleiades before they sing, and thus she sits at the center of the visions of the future.

## Conclusion

Learning the subject and object of a prophecy is critical, but without the “how” and “when” the translation is meaningless. The advanced constellations are harder to read, but they are essential to accurate, useful predictions. So stick to it, do not be afraid to ask for help, and give your predictions time. Let the stars sing their songs, and do not rush them in telling the story.

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<sup>15</sup> There is a great irony to Horologiul: it portends change, yet it is immensely hard to read, so the sign is unseen by most seers. It is the harbinger of change, and yet the change is often unknown until it happens. It is said that this is due to the nature of the original pendulum, a gift from an elvish king to a kyrie warlord. The pendulum was supposed to strike until the reign of the warlord ended. One day the warlord’s son flew into the throne room on a gust of wind, and the prince brushed against the pendulum, causing it to topple. In his rage the warlord cast out his son, who led an army against him that same day.

<sup>16</sup> In a great turn of irony, I learned the other day that the hero who rescued her on Pegasus was not the original leader of the group: apparently there was another who led the party, and he rose to the occasion to save Andromeda as the party leader was married, and lacked the desire to risk life and limb for a foreign princess that they had never met. So all of you who are not in leadership, be you an adventurer or a servant girl, take heart: sheer devotion and dedication will get you far in life. It did for this lucky soul.

## Chapter IV: The Pantheon

Of all the constellations in the sky, ten stand above the rest. These constellations are known as The Pantheon, and there are sects across the world that venerate them in various ways.

The Pantheon constellations are also the hardest stars to read, though they are generally brighter than the other constellations. This is the paradox of seeing: in the night sky they are clearly visible to the eye, but their song and dance is more complex, making their meaning harder to grasp.

The Pantheon addresses the “why” question: key to successful translations of visions, and a contributing factor to the difficulty of reading them. Divination is built around the study of the Pantheon, for without the “why” an augur can be taken in by a prophecy and blindsided by an unexpected (though predictable, if the movement of the constellation was understood correctly) turn of events.

Thus before we begin studying the Pantheon, we begin with a word of caution: pay attention in your studies, and approach them with the humble tenacity fitting of an augur, ready to learn while maintaining a sharp mind.

### Unaligned Constellation

There is only one unaligned avatar among the Pantheon: Libra. This is fitting for its avatar, as it is perfectly balanced in the alignment of its stars. While it is alone among the Pantheon, its solitary place among them also makes it an excellent arbitrator,

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<sup>17</sup> The greatest danger in reading Libra is that most persons who seek Libra’s wisdom come with an agenda: they want something to be “right” and something else to be “wrong.” I encourage you to exercise the humility of your mind in

weighing facts with impartial judgment. Thus it is among the most commonly consulted constellations in the heavens.

- **Libra:** A constellation with nine stars (three that form each scale, and three that form the arms), The Great Scales speak of actions made by rulers, weighing them for justice. The constellation has three Light-aligned stars (one scale), three Dark-aligned stars (the other scale), and three Neutral-aligned stars (the arms), and is consulted when seeking to make a wise decision.<sup>17</sup>

### Light Constellations

The Light-aligned members of the Pantheon (Leo, Sagittarius, and Virgo) all have a defensive bent to them, and they are the great defenders of the heavens. With the likes of these on your side, it is hard to be overtaken and consumed.

- **Leo:** The Great Lion comprised of nine stars, Leo looks forward in the sky with a fearless eye and ready claws. Of its nine stars there are three that are brighter than the others: Regulus (the front paws), Denabola (the hind legs), and Lew (the fearless eye), and it is said that those who cast *Star Gazer* and look upon Lew gain added willpower and courage. Those who use Regulus for *Stellar Convergence* find that they strike with greater ferocity, as if the star itself desired to pierce the armor. Leo was a fierce and loyal friend to those who knew him, and those who look to him hear why they should have courage amidst trials of every kind.

being open to changing your perception of “right” and “wrong” in a situation when consulting Libra, as it will help you in translating her song.

- **Sagittarius:** Twelve stars that form a centaur archer, the *Jezdiek* (as we call it in centauran), is the great archer of the sky, second only to Orion as a huntsman. The legends say that in The Elder Days before the Great War Sagittarius rode across the world fending off the fell creations of Molog, the Avatar of Desolation. Look to Sagittarius if you seek the “why” behind a conflict or war, and thus it is common to glimpse him while looking at Centaurus.
- **Virgo:** The virgin avatar with twelve stars, Virgo sings of why people fall in love (or don’t fall in love), and gives advice as to how one might win over another. Her words are soft, though, and requires dedication to the vision beyond that of other constellations.<sup>18</sup> Her voice is sweet though, and it is common for a person who hears her song not to want to leave the vision, even long after their questions have been answered.

It is also said that Virgo gives greater courage to men on the battlefield. I do not know whether this is true (as I have never consulted her on the battlefield), but there are stories that confirm this. Legend says that when she was chased by Taurus she was rescued by Lupis, The Great Wolf, and that he was surprisingly brave beyond belief in the face of the Minotaur. So it is not uncommon to see her sought by warriors as well as maidens deep in love.

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<sup>18</sup> Her voice is uniquely sweet (I should know: I’ve consulted Virgo since I was a girl), even more so than Andromeda. Even when giving correction for not loving others as one should or helping you understand why someone else does not love you she is very gentle. It astounds me that a celestial avatar would treat

## Dark Constellations

If the Light-aligned constellations are great defenders, the Dark-aligned constellations are mighty attackers, with strength that challenges even the strongest walls and warriors. Their legends across the world speak of epic destruction in their wake, and those who turn to these avatars will not find their counsel lacking.

- **Aquarius:** The great keeper and defender of the deep (the *tethys*, as the fauns say), Aquarius is comprised of thirteen stars, and is the most beloved and feared of the constellations among the mariners. It speaks of why storms and natural disasters arise, and when Aquarius speaks seers say his voice is akin to the thunder of a driving storm. Aquarius can be hard to read, but it is also said that for those who wait patiently that he rewards diligent followers with greater insights.
- **The Ram:** A fiery ram with 6 stars, it can be seen in the night sky squaring off against the Unicorn, as if both were bounding toward each other at full speed. The ram (*Aries*, as the fauns call him, and *Baran* in centauran) speaks of why animals and feral beasts act as they do, with an eye particularly toward aggression. Beastmasters constantly consult The Ram, especially if an animal is acting abnormal. Seers have also used *Baran* to predict when a creature will give birth, which has saved a kingdom on more than one occasion.<sup>19</sup>

mortals like us with such kindness. She is not forced to act this way; she chooses to be gentle. So respect her.

<sup>19</sup> The Ram once saved the Tor’xel troll clan. Near their forest there was a dragon with child, and Tragg’s Hammer sang of the destruction of the colony at the hands of the dragon. Using *Baran* the seers predicted that the baby would

- **Taurus:** The Bull Minotaur in the sky, Taurus has nine stars and is a mighty warrior, speaking of why one side will win a battle. It is commonly consulted by battle seers, but is also sought during balgur games and other sports, as Taurus will sometimes sing of whether a team will win its match. Taurus is pictured in the sky opposite Virgo, and the two do have some enmity between each other. It is said that anyone who consults Virgo will find it harder to consult Taurus, and the same is true the other way, as if their conflict in the sky continues in the mind.

### Neutral Constellations

The Neutral-aligned constellations strike a balance between defender and attacker, offering insight into both the realm of war and that of healing and understanding.

- **Capricorn:** The great warden of the waters that appears to be part fish and part goat, Capricorn has ten stars and speaks of the strength to stand against foes far and wide. His favorite songs include those who stand against innumerable odds, and thus Capricorn is sometimes called, “The constellation of the desperate.” Capricorn is most visible during midsummer and midwinter, when the light of the moon is lessened. This led to the saying among the dwarfs: “To fight in mid-spring is to fight blind,” for Capricorn is hard to see.
- **Carellus:** The healer bearing a snake across his broad shoulders, Carellus has fifteen stars, and is both the

healer of his friends and the bane of his enemies. He speaks of why people die, as well as whether they will have a quick and/or miraculous recovery. Legend says that Carellus was a traveling alopen monk who would heal men with a drop of his snake’s venom, but if a wicked person became ill his snake would strike them, and they would die swiftly. Seers say that you can hear the hissing of the snake as you gaze upon Carellus, and that if you are very engaged in the vision you can even feel it slithering on your shoulders.<sup>20</sup>

- **The Twins:** The *Bliznieta*, in centauran, The Twins have fourteen stars between them, and they speak of why a situation unfolds as it does, often presenting two sides to the issue before resolving it. The two appear to be hand-in-hand in the sky, and tales say that the brothers fought side by side until their deaths at the hands of Draco. To the bitter end they stood by each other, and thus seers have found that while they may present various viewpoints, they always find an accord in their final assessment. If you maintain your focus until they have exhausted all options, you will find that their counsel is sound and clear.

### Conclusion

It takes years of practice to reliably discern the songs of the Pantheon. A gifted student of divination may discover the meaning of a prophecy every now and then from these constellations, but to master it and perform an accurate translation reliably one of the key traits to success is patience. So give it time.

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be born in three months, and told the tribe to flee the forest. The Tor’xel tribe was saved, and they live happily a few leagues away in a new and better forest.

<sup>20</sup> I confess: I have never sought Carellus with this much fervency. I have a dread fear of all snakes, and I cannot abide the thought of having one in my mind.

## Chapter V: The Art of Astronomy

Astronomy is an art. It takes time and effort to remember the location of constellations in the sky, as well as to discern between a constellation and a free star.<sup>21</sup> Add into this the presence of things that are not stars in the night sky (like planets), and you see why I say that it takes time and effort to master this art.

This is okay: astronomy is the study of things beyond our power to control, so taking it slower is always wiser, as we want to give deference and respect to that which is stronger than us.

A gifted astronomer is someone who realizes the placement of the stars is beyond his control, is being orchestrated by powers greater than the stars themselves, and thus realizes that some things may be beyond his grasp. There is room for error in astronomy; the placement of a celestial body, however, is within the realm of understanding, and thus it is not unreasonable to demand that of an astronomer.

### Placement of the Stars

Stars form each constellation, and they can be distinguished in the night sky. Astronomers will often remember positioning by what are sometimes called “position stars,” or stars that form a tell-tale pattern in the sky that is easy to remember. Notable examples of position stars would include the three stars in Orion’s belt, the bow of Sagittarius, and the cluster of stars we call The Pleiades. If these stars are noticed above, then we know our positioning.

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<sup>21</sup> A “free star” is a star that is not tied to a constellation, but stands alone in the heavens, free to move, sing, and speak on its own. They tend to simply provide background choral tones, but every now and then they speak. So being able to discern whether a star is part of a constellation or free is critical to divination.

Positioning and placement is key both in divination (to hear the song of the stars) and constellography (tracking the movements of the constellation over time), so it is widely considered the most critical art of astronomy.

I personally disagree: any child can be taught over time to remember the placement of the stars. You cannot simply teach a child how to hear the songs of the heavens with a discerning ear.

### The Celestial Dance

Critical to reading the night sky (and what makes positioning challenging) is realizing that the stars are in motion. Stars move together across the sky, though, and they move in an orderly, fairly predictable way. Think of the stars as the perfect consort dancing together across the sky, with each star singing its part of The Song. That is what we are tracking through constellography: we note the cosmic dance of the stars in a constellation.

To make matters more complicated, the Song directs multiple constellations at once, so it is common to have to track multiple constellations all at the same time, with the penalty of missing a single movement being the potential for error in translation.<sup>22</sup>

So know that you might miss something in the night’s sky purely due to volume of constellations singing. And that’s okay: choose the best constellations, and track those. And if you miss part of their song because of the myriad voices around you, just remember that you are merely a creature attempting to understand a language, tune, and dance that is well beyond your abilities to fathom. So be as accurate as you can be for being a mortal creature.

<sup>22</sup> This makes sense the more you think about it: since different constellations answer the, “who/what/when/where/why/how” of a prophecy, you will often be tracking more than one constellation at a time. So take your time and keep in mind the movements of all of your constellations.



## Planets, Moons, and Other Celestial Bodies

There are things in the night sky that are not stars: planets, moons, and other celestial bodies that we do not understand yet. I will take a moment to discuss them, as they are part of the heavens and every now and then will play a role in the Song.

Different planets lend a certain tone and timber to the song of a constellation when they intersect it. We always supposed that this is because planets mimic the songs of the stars (and thus contribute their voice to that of the constellation), but it's possible that the stars actually mimic the planet, and thus when the planet intersects the constellation it is really bringing the original song to the stars. I lack the wisdom or foresight to answer this question, so I will leave this to a wiser augura to answer.

Sometimes a portion of a prophecy will come from a comet or a planet instead of coming from a star, and in rare cases the stars will sing of the comet, saying how the comet's dance reveals the meaning of the prophecy, as told by the stars. How they all work together is a great mystery, and part of what confirms for us that the thoughts of the stars are loftier than our thoughts.

So at the risk of saying something immensely unhelpful, I will simply say this: keep an eye on celestial bodies in the sky, be they stars, planets, comets, or moons. You never know what they will say that may be worth hearing.

## Conclusion

Now that you have a working understanding of astronomy and how the constellations work, you are not ready to learn the arduous yet immensely important art of constellography.

## Chapter VI: Constellography

In the last chapter we talked about astronomy, and where all of the stars can be found in the night sky. Astronomy is important, as it helps us to track the movements of the constellations through the heavens, shows us their character by their movements, and acts as our guide in locating them in the sky.

Constellography is the art of tracking the movement of specific constellations over time. Fundamental to the art of reading the night sky and hearing their song is learning to isolate the voices and movements of the constellations that we want to hear from, track their melody over an extended timeframe, and accurately decipher their dance across the heavens. This is the art of constellography.

Since each constellation has a different pattern and voice, the art of constellography, rightly understood, is the art of selecting a small set of constellations (as few as one, sometimes as many as seven) to graph and follow, unraveling the mysteries of the future through their motions.

Since you will never be tracking all of the constellations on one map at a time, how to properly make a map becomes an art: you cannot simply purchase a map and use it for the rest of time. You must learn to chart them yourself, and that takes practice.

What follows here is the beginning of your practicing: a short synopsis on how to graph a constellation, followed by a few examples of how you might select your constellations.

## Graphing the Stars

First, and perhaps the most important thing that you need to know about constellography, is that stars are very subtle movers to the mortal eye. Stars may not noticeably change in their placement

from day to day, so tracking them will almost certainly be an over exaggeration of their motions. And that's okay: as mortal beings it sometimes takes exaggeration for us to grasp something, and such is often the case with the movement of stars. So do not feel bad if you have to exaggerate a star's movements: this is common.

Since you do not know how long you will need to watch a star, it is also recommended that you use a scroll, not a book. While a book is easier to carry (and you can leave a marker for which leaf you last used), a scroll allows you to chart things in both directions, which is sometimes useful if you don't know how long it will take. It also means that you can chart multiple constellations at once in lines, allowing you to better grasp the message at a glance.

Start at one end of the scroll, and work across the parchment. If you feel like you are working with a very mobile constellation, start in the center of the scroll, allowing you movement in either direction. You will also find that there are some scrolls that come with lines pre-drawn to aid you in charting a constellation's journey in case you are interested in more structure on your parchment.

One important thing to remember amidst these tips: graphs are almost never accurate. They do not track the subtle movements of the stars, and they are written with a mortal's mind, not the wisdom of the stars. So just know that just because your graph says that the stars are telling us something does not mean that it is actually saying that. Discernment will always be the better tool.

### Selecting a Constellation

Each constellation has its own interests. They generally sing about certain topics, just like singers here in Zurn will focus on some themes more than others (and they will favor different ranges

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<sup>23</sup> One of my greatest pupils at House Ochuro fell into this trap. He was a gifted seer – perhaps more gifted than I shall ever be – and the Pantheon's movements came readily to him. He made the mistake of only focusing on the Pantheon, every now and then including an advanced constellation, but neglected all the

of songs as well). This helps us in selecting which constellation we graph, as it helps us narrow down the 46 constellations in the sky.

You also want to think within the context of the hierarchy: we want to include the higher tier constellations (hard as they may be) since they will have useful information for us, but the common avatars are also critical to the song, so do not neglect them. So as you choose your constellations, do not fall into the hubris of only selecting advanced and Pantheon constellations: you will lose very critical information on your graph if you do this.<sup>23</sup>

### Conclusion

Constellography can be overwhelming. There is a lot to think about all the time: many variables, lofty ideas, and things in motion all at once. Add onto this the fact that, as mortals, there is so much that we just don't know about stars, and it can seem hopeless to truly glean wisdom from the stars.

And that is the beauty of it: the stars, knowing that we are so small, have chosen to condescend and reveal truth to us anyway. As you grow, young one, you *will* learn from the stars, for they are, in their essence, teachers. Their primary role is to sing and dance according to the dictates of the Song, and that makes them our instructors. So look at them essentially, and allow your teachers to teach you. Then use your discernment and act on what they say.

common constellations. The result: a very important prophecy regarding his father went unnoticed by him, because he did not glimpse the name of the man in the prophecy. He did not see his error until his father passed. He left sad and dejected, and gave up on augury altogether.

## Chapter VII: The Art of Divination

As we have already discussed, astronomy and constellography are not the art of divination. It is a separate discipline, though it is closely tied to the others, and those who excel at astronomy and constellography will find it easier to practice divination.

Divination can also be done separate from the stars: some use entrails, others read ripples in the water. All of these are charlatans. Their knowledge is coming from a hunch, not actual reading of the future. The stars speak of what is to come, thus they are the source of divination. So when I say, “divination,” I do not mean any of the cheap imitations that you may find around you. I speak only of reading and discerning the movements and songs of the stars.

### Form and Procedure

Divination requires three things working in perfect harmony with each other. First, one must have a good ear to listen, which will require the virtue of patience. Second, one must have sharp eyes, which will require the virtue of prudence. And third one must have an open mind, requiring the virtue of humility. Without these three elements all in play, you will not divine anything accurately.

It is also worth noting upfront that divination is a strenuous exercise that will require your full attention. You cannot afford to approach it half-heartedly, as you will miss critical information to your prophecies. So when you set your mind to study the stars, make sure that you are all there, and free of distractions.

Not everyone who searches for a vision of the future will find it. This is because the stars don't answer to us: we come as pupils seeking to be taught, not as a master seeking an answer. So if you find that you are not receiving a vision, do not panic. Simply come

back again, and see if they will answer you then. It is our duty to make sure that when we come to the stars that we are ready.

There are many techniques to prepare yourself to glimpse the future through the stars; I tend to follow that of my father, who, though he was not an excellent seer, had very good habits to make sure his mind was clear to receive visions.

First, lie down on the ground. Get comfortable, and let all of the cares that you brought with you fall away. Close your eyes, and steel your resolve to focus on the movements and the song of the stars. And then open them, and gaze with wonder and discernment upon the stars.

Now you are ready to read the dance and hear their songs.

### How to Read the Dance

Stars dance in a line: all of the stars in the constellation move in the same direction, and this direction is what we call “forward” when we are reading the vision. Usually one star will guide the others (the “leader” of the dance, if you will), and this star, which will change based on the tone and timber of the Song, is the one that we locate first. By following its movements (and the resulting motions of the others as they follow it), it is the fastest way to discern the meaning of their movements.

Planning the trajectory is also done off of this star. Trajectories will change a lot over the first few hours and days of watching this star (as it will take some time to find where it is moving when you first start following it), but this star is the point that we use to track the constellation's movements on the scroll.

A final word on reading the dance: keep an eye on all of the stars, even if only a casual glance at the others in the constellation. Sometimes one of the stars in the constellation will “signal” the leader to change course, so keeping an eye on all, even as we focus on the leader, will help you immensely in predicting the trajectory.

## How to Hear the Song

Of course, it is one thing to read the dance of the stars, and you will learn much from this. But stars also have voices, and part of accurate divination is developing your inner ear to hear the Song of the heavens. So instruction on how to develop your inner ear is integral to our thoughts on divination.

First, going back to the essentials of divination, humility is key to proper hearing. If the stars are trying to tell us something, who are we to think we know what they ought to say? Who are we to think that we can adequately grasp the meaning of their words? A wise seer will let the stars speak, giving them time to nuance their words, break down difficult concepts, and then lay out what we need to know. There is almost a childlike reaction to the words of the stars: wait for the words to be brought to your level. So bring your focus to bear, but with an ear to listen intently.

Second, mind your immediate reactions. As the inner ear grows stronger your natural reactions will be closer to the truth, but in the early stages it is very common for gut reactions to follow your desires and dictates, not the stars. Just as we do not read entrails, so also we do not read our reactions from our own entrails. Stay focused: keep your attention on what the stars are saying, not on what we want their meaning to be.

Finally, realize that sometimes the sky is silent. This is like a singer waiting for their part: it adds beauty and order to the piece. So do not attempt to rush the vision: it will come in its own time.

Many a good seer has neglected the importance of properly cultivating the inner ear, relying on innate skill or intuition to get them a desired result for the vision. This has led to some seers quickly advancing through the ranks to the level of advisors to kings and potentates, sometimes with disastrous results, for the

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<sup>24</sup> You are familiar with the tale of Cherlabarr, khan of the Barra giants, whose advisors recommended that he wage war against a small tribe of dark elves in the neighboring forests. The seer was a decorated augur who claimed great skill

seer is not truly seeing; he is simply creating. And when presented as a vision confirmed by the heavens, a mortal crafting a plan can lead to dangerous results.<sup>24</sup> Do not pretend to be as wise as the stars: follow what they say, and let them speak for themselves.

## Conclusion

If you have not seen it yet, I will state it clearly: you cannot be an astronomer, constellographer, or seer, if you hold to a view other than an essentialist perspective. The scientist who only sees the measurable will not develop an inner ear to hear the stars. The soul driven by metaphor will lack the precision of astronomy. The romantic will suffer through constellography, losing their focus as they trace the movements of the dance. And the metaphysician will second guess himself, losing discernment amidst a sea of doubts.

No, only an essentialist can truly divine meaning from the Song of the heavens, for only the essentialist understands that it is her place to sit as a listener to a group of persons imparting wisdom. I have heard that there are other schools of thought regarding the practice of astronomy, constellography, and divination, but I have yet to see anyone approach it with the wonder, humility, and sure confidence of the essentialist.

So choose your camp. Follow the path you choose. And as for me and the essentialists who read, set your gaze upon the heavens, and let the wonder and beauty of what is before you – persons beyond our understanding dancing and singing to a tune so great and powerful that it moves the souls of the heavens – and bend your attention to them. Use your mind, free of distractions, to see what others cannot see. And when you grasp what is being said, be sure to write it down, so that others may understand as well.

The task of teaching them to see and hear, I leave to you.

in divination, after planning their campaign against a troop of minoboars nearby. In truth he was intuitive, not a diviner, and the result was a disastrous defeat that led to the destruction of the whole clan. Don't be led by your gut.



## About the Author

Aspen is an augura and priestess of The Glade, the original home of the centaur people, and one of the finest training grounds for auguras in all of Zurn. She first started training as an augura at the age of eight, and has been practicing the art of divination through augury, astronomy, and constellography since that time.

Aspen attended House Ochuro for her formal education starting at the age of thirteen, where she met a dashing young centaur who stole her heart (and her quills, as she recalls) in their first class together, which was Astronomy. She contends that this was not a coincidence, as she was quite proficient in the art of constellography by the age of thirteen, and asked Virgo, Andromeda, and the Altar of Chiros what to make of this boy. The Song told her to stay near him - for survival, of course. She has followed that advice ever since that day.

Together they have four charming foals (a colt and three fillies), and have been married (as of this writing) for fifteen years. Aspen loves to paint when she is not graphing stars, and her husband says that she is a gifted singer. When asked if this was true, she declined to comment.

Aspen did a short stint at House Ochuro as a teacher, and was beloved by her students. She made a point to travel back to The Glade several times a year during that time to learn from the augurs there, and after leaving her position at House Ochuro she took a position as a priestess of The Glade, where she serves to this day.



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