

The TOMB of DREAMS



A JUMPSTART FOR

EXALTED
THIRD EDITION

The TOMB of DREAMS



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Part One:

Exalted

Long ago, the gods made war against ancient monsters who forged the world. They chose as their champions mortal women and men, and through the gift of Exaltation uplifted these heroes with divine power. The goddess of the moon made the Lunar Exalted, who could take the forms of beasts. The five maidens of the stars made the Sidereal Exalted, who could compel destiny. The world-dragons made Dragon-Blooded legions empowered by the elements. And the Unconquered Sun, chief of the gods, made the Solar Exalted. The Solars became the Exalted's mightiest generals and heroes, the apex of human potential. They led the Exalted to victory, and the First Age of Man dawned.

But the death-curse of the world's creators ate at the hearts of the Exalted. The star-chosen Sidereals whispered to the Dragon-Blooded of the Solars' tyranny and debauchery, of how they'd squander their rulership of the world. Together, the Sidereals and Dragon-Blooded chased the shapechanging Lunars beyond the world's edge, slew the ruling Solars and locked away their power, and usurped the Realm that the Solars had built. The First Age ended, and the Second Age began—an age of sorrows.

The Sidereals vanished. Centuries of war and catastrophe cleansed away all but the Old Realm's most meagre remnants. The great Dragon-Blooded empire ruling from Creation's center has lost its immortal empress, and the world's lesser powers chafe to be free of her dynasty's yoke—free to make their own conquests, free to forge their own empires, and free to keep for themselves their harvests of luxuries and slaves.

Into this time of tumult the power of Solar Exaltation has returned from death and banishment—once again the Unconquered Sun raises mortal heroes to glory. The returning Solars will end this age of sorrows, but with their unbridled power and ambition, will they bring light to the world or ignite its funeral pyre?

What Is Exalted?

Exalted is a tabletop roleplaying game where the players take the role of heroes empowered with divine might. In this

scenario, and in the **Exalted Third Edition** main rulebook, players will take the role of the Solar Exalted. Additional books provide rules for playing Lunars, Sidereals, Dragon-Blooded, and other character types. Paragons of will and excellence, the Solars are charged by the Unconquered Sun with bringing Creation to righteousness as best they know how, but are ultimately beholden only to their own ambitions.

Exalted makes itself distinct from conventional fantasy in that rather than drawing its primary inspirations from the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and the books and games that followed in his wake, it sets its roots elsewhere—in **Exalted** you will find material inspired by ancient Greek, Middle-Eastern, Indian, and Asian myth-cycles; as well as pulp fantasy works like Robert E. Howard's *Conan* and Michael Moorcock's *Elric*. **Exalted** draws heavily from wuxia, anime, and manga for look and feel—characters in **Exalted** might be able to run along walls or the surface of a lake, fell a foe with a sword-blow delivered from ten yards away, or craft an argument so perfect none may deny its truth. But while the Exalted are powerful, they are not necessarily wise, and while their magics aid great deeds, only their human judgment can help them discern worthy action from unworthy.

Creation

Creation is a flat world of five elements floating in an ocean of chaos. The North is the direction of elemental air, where humanity makes fragile homes amidst icy tundra and trades across glacier-wracked seas. The South is the direction of elemental fire, of sweltering jungle and trackless desert. The East is the direction of elemental wood, fertile forests and plains where those who've resisted the Realm's rule divide into ten thousand petty kingdoms. The West is the direction of elemental water, a great ocean littered with tiny islands, each a nation in itself. And the Center is the direction of elemental earth, the source of stability and order, and the seat of the Dragon-Blooded Realm that demands tribute from the rest of the world.

Beyond the world's edges, beyond the boundaries of the real, surges the roiling unreal Wyld, domain of the Fair Folk who steal mortal dreams and sup upon mortal souls.



Spirits abound across Creation. The rarified and esoteric *gods* oversee river and road and forest, watch their domains and report goings-on within to the vast Celestial Bureaucracy of Heaven. The base and physical *elementals*, who arise from firmament and natural processes, toil to keep Creation's elemental cycles in balance. And the *demons*, locked away in Hell at history's dawn along with the gods' vanquished enemies, slip back into the world to conduct their mischief—or are summoned and bound to servile duty by the sorcerers of the Exalted.

Since their inception, the Exalted have ever shaped Creation's societies. From the Center, the Dragon-Blooded rule their great Realm, claiming the privileges and responsibilities of the world's masters as their birthright, harvesting all the world's wealth for their own and sending their Wyld Hunt out against their enemies. At the edge of the world those enemies lurk—the Lunar Exalted, who know the Dragon-Blooded for usurpers and who now raise tribal armies from the people of the world's edge to cast down that decadent empire; and the returning Solar Exalted, whose might and glory have been locked away for millennia and who now incarnate among the people of a world left hungry and desperate after centuries of Dragon-Blooded predation. The Exalted live among the mortals of Creation as heroes—raising kingdoms, working sorcery, and shaping the course of history.

Beyond the veil of death lies the Underworld, where the ghosts of those who can't let history go eke out what half-lives they can in a world of lingering memories and black waterways. And now the Abyssal Exalted, Chosen of the grave, march forth from that Underworld to bring death's glories to Creation.

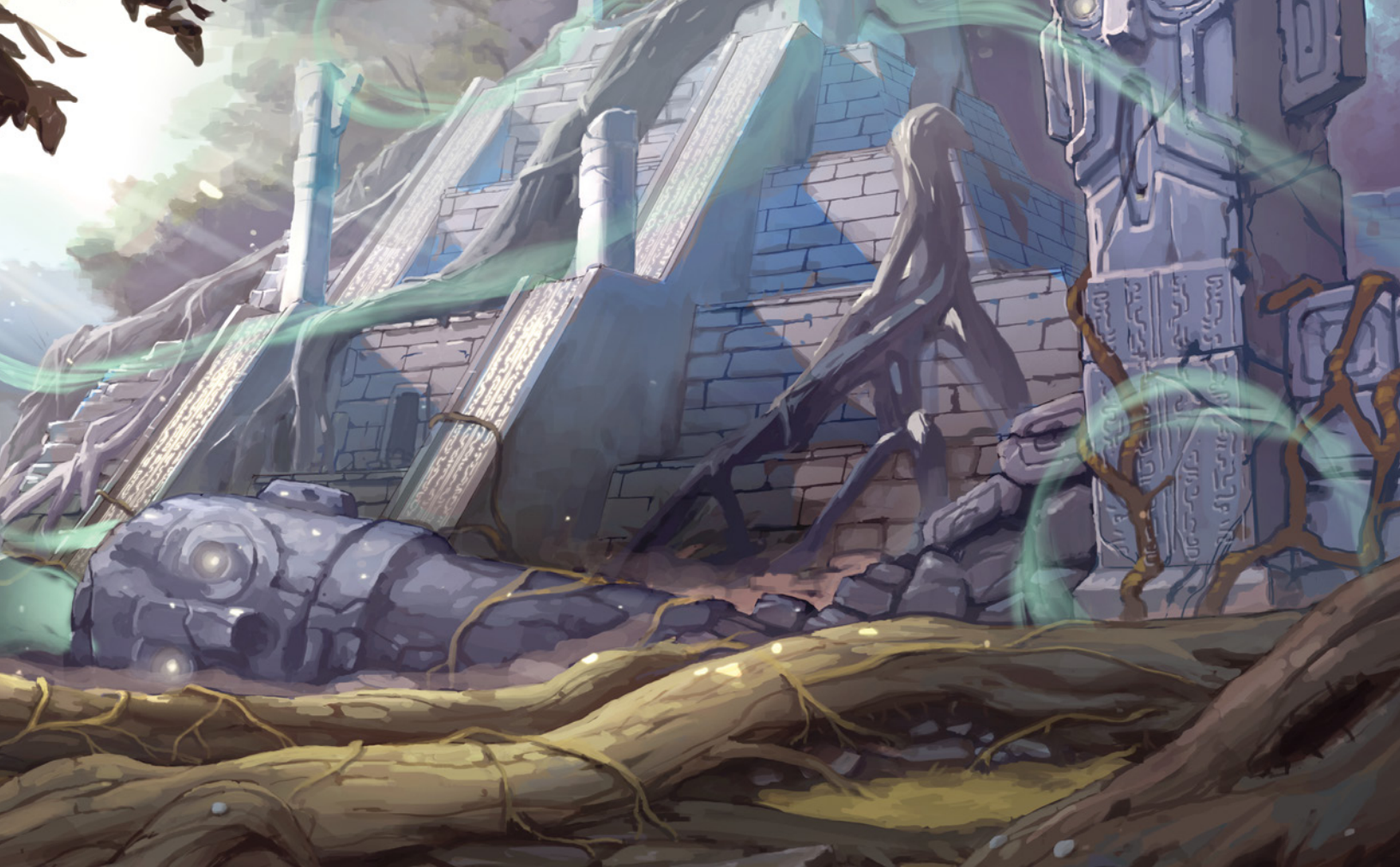
As one of the Exalted, what legends will they tell of your deeds?

Basics of Play

To play **Exalted** you'll need this book or the **Exalted Third Edition** main rulebook, paper and pencils, ten-sided dice (10 to 15 dice would be best), and friends.

Most players will take the role of Solar Exalted—the main rulebook provides rules for making Solars from scratch, but in this scenario, each player selects from one of five pre-generated Solars, presented beginning on [page 44](#). Players with a passion for game mechanics may want to finish reading Part One of **Tomb of Dreams** before selecting a character, in order to get a sense of what the traits and dots on each Solar's character sheet mean; other players may wish to choose a sample character they like first and learn the rules through play.

One player, however, does not play a single character. She or he will take the role of the Storyteller, whose



job it is to be familiar with the entire scenario, describe the setting, adjudicate the rules and game mechanics, and describe the actions of Storyteller characters. The Storyteller should read this whole booklet. **Only the Storyteller should read Part Two.**

Tomb of Dreams plays best with between four and six players—one Storyteller, and between three and five Solars.

Traits on the Character Sheet

Characters in **Exalted** are mechanically described by *traits*, most of which have an associated *dot* rating. See Part Three for five sample characters and their sheets.

The nine *Attributes* at the top of the character sheet describe a character's most basic characteristics—how strong or dexterous she is, her charisma, her intelligence. The *Abilities* running down the sheet's left side describe the skills she's learned. Most actions a character takes are resolved by taking an Attribute and an Ability, combining their total dots into a *dice pool*, and rolling that many dice. See "Dice and Actions" below for more details.

Merits are a catch-all trait category for unusual or singular character traits, or for traits external to the character herself—wealth and political power are Merits. Merits are not covered in this scenario; you'll need to read **Exalted Third Edition** for details.

WHAT'S ALL THIS, THEN

Part One of *Tomb of Dreams* first covers *Exalted Third Edition's* basic rules for resolving actions. It then explains the basics of combat, including the rules for stealth in combat and for battle groups, by which the actions of large numbers of similar opponents are resolved together. Next comes social influence, by which *Exalted* characters make friends and influence people. After that come rules for recovery from injury and exertion. Finally, it explains the rules for the magic by which the Exalted make their mark on Creation.

The main rulebook covers these topics in more depth and many others topics besides, but even for groups *not* using the scenario in *Tomb of Dreams* Part Two or the characters in Part Three, a player who's read Part One should understand the game and be set to play.

Willpower is the measure of a character's mental tenacity and force of will. It has both a permanent rating in *dots* and a temporary rating in *points*, marked in the boxes below those dots. Players spend Willpower points to do things.

Essence represents a character's raw magical potency, and below it, her *personal* and *peripheral* mote pools are how much magical power she can muster before she exhausts her inner wells of mystical strength. *Committed* motes are any she has dedicated to active powers.

Limit Break and *Limit Trigger* represent the curse twisting at the souls of the Exalted, levied when they slew the enemies of the gods. *Experience* is what players use to advance their characters. Like Merits, neither Limit nor Experience are dealt with in this scenario.

The space for *weapons*, below that, provides a spot to record values associated with any weapons characters carry.

Under *Health & Defense* are a variety of *static values* derived from a character's other traits, as well as *soak*, which is resistance to injury. See "Static Values" below for details. *Health Levels* represent injuries a character takes.

Intimacies represent what the character believes and cares about. They're used in social interaction.

Finally, *Charms* are the supernatural powers of the Exalted. Fueled by Essence, Charms represent Exalts' capacity to perform near-divine feats of heroism.

Keeping Time

Exalted Third Edition uses five measurements to describe the division of time within the game. From largest to smallest, they're as follows.

A *chronicle* is an extended game focusing on a single group of characters, like a series of books or multi-season TV show.

A *story* is a discrete narrative within a chronicle, usually focusing on a connected series of events. It's one phase within a larger narrative—a single book or movie, or a single plot arc within a comic or TV series. **Tomb of Dreams** provides enough material for one (short) story's worth of play.

A *session* is a single period of gaming—one evening, or maybe one day during an extended weekend of play.

A *scene* is a portion of play that takes place within a particular location and period of time. Usually any given sequence of immediately connected events make up one scene.

A *round* is an abstract time measurement most often used during combat, in which everyone present gets to act once. Rounds are usually about three seconds. The point during a round when a character takes action is called that character's *turn*.

Finally, there's *downtime*, which is time between scenes and stories when things are happening off-camera or out of the spotlight. Three months of travel could be downtime, as could the waiting period between an afternoon of planning and a heist beginning at midnight. During downtime, players may wish to describe brief vignettes about what their characters are doing, but downtime ends and a scene begins when characters' actions come into focus.

Dice and Actions

Players determine the success and failure of many of their characters' actions in **Exalted** through rolling dice. The player chooses what she wants her character to do, the Storyteller selects an Attribute and an Ability appropriate to that action, and the player adds her character's dots in those traits together to get a dice pool and rolls that many ten-sided dice. Sometimes, powers or circumstances provide bonuses or penalties to those dice pools.

When rolled, each die that shows 7 or higher (0 counts as 10 when using ten-sided dice marked 0-9) is called a *success*. A roll with no or insufficient successes is a failure. A roll with no successes in which one or more dice show a result of 1 is a *botch*—a disastrous failure that complicates the story (If the character is trying to pick a lock, perhaps the lockpick breaks and jams it). The Storyteller should describe a botch that makes sense given the action, dramatically escalates the situation, and isn't too punitive.

Every action has a *difficulty*—how many successes the player needs to roll to succeed. Difficulties normally range from 1 to 5, but modifiers can push it above 5 or down to 0. (Difficulty zero rolls are unusual. They still require at least one success, but cannot be botched.) Successes *in excess* of the difficulty are called *threshold successes*, so three successes on a difficulty 2 roll provides one threshold success.

For most rolls, a die showing 10 counts as two successes—this is called the *double tens* rule. Some powers or Charms expand the range of numbers that count double, so a roll under the effect of *double nines* counts *both 9 and 10* as two successes. A very few rolls don't benefit from the double tens rule; these exceptions are called out explicitly in the text.

Other circumstances may alter the way the dice work, usually in self-explanatory ways—for example, a power might say “Re-roll 6s until 6s fail to appear,” or “Re-roll 9s until 9s fail to appear, keeping any extra successes gained along the way.” Again, these are called out explicitly in the text when they apply.

Finally, *players may spend a Willpower point to gain one automatic success on a roll*, above and beyond any shown by the dice. Players can only apply one Willpower point to any given roll, and must choose to spend it before rolling.

So there’s the basic rules for resolving actions characters take—the player says what she wants her character to do, and the Storyteller chooses an appropriate Attribute and Ability. The player forms a dice pool out of those traits, and rolls against a difficulty chosen by the Storyteller. If the player rolls enough successes, the action succeeds! Everything else builds on that.

STATIC VALUES

When one character takes a rolled action against another (for example, attacking), one of the target’s *static values* may serve as the difficulty of the roll. **Exalted Third Edition**’s static values are *Parry* (used to block incoming attacks), *Evasion* (used to dodge them), *Defense* (the

actual value used to defend against incoming attacks, usually the higher of Parry or Evasion), *Resolve* (used to resist attempts to sway characters’ thoughts or feelings), and *Guile* (used to hide characters’ motives). Just as players can spend a Willpower point to enhance a roll, they can spend one to enhance a static value by one.

BONUSES AND PENALTIES

Modifiers—bonuses or penalties—apply to certain dice pools, adding or subtracting dice.

Situational penalties are modifiers applied to rolls where the difficulty is already set. For example, when one character attacks another, the attacker’s difficulty is set by the target’s Defense, so further hindrance applies as a penalty to the attack pool. They also apply to rolls with no difficulty, like opposed actions (see “Extended and Opposed Actions,” below). *Equipment modifiers* apply when equipment aids or hinders an action, and *Charm modifiers* apply when magic modifies it (see “Magic of the Chosen,” later).

While equipment and Charm modifiers are generally pre-set by the quality of equipment or the rules for whichever magic applies, situational penalties span the same 1-5 scale as difficulty, arbitrated by the Storyteller. Remember, apply situational penalties *only* to rolls with pre-fixed difficulties.

A situational penalty applied to a static value reduces that value by the penalty. Penalties cannot reduce a dice pool or a static value below 0.

STUNTS

Nobody wants a fight scene that plays out as “I attack with my sword” on repeat. Stunts reward players who describe their characters’ actions in exciting terms—“With a two-handed grip, I thrust my spear’s point into a gap in the rebel’s armor.” To qualify as a stunt, an action must fulfill two conditions: It must be cooler than a basic declaration of intent, and it must not be boring. (Descriptions that go on forever and leave everyone else at the table thinking “Get on with it” don’t count as stunts.) The Storyteller decides what counts as a stunt and what doesn’t.

One-point stunts provide two extra dice to any action they enhance. If they’re used to describe the application of a static value (“I twist out of the way; her spear’s point glances across my breastplate”), they raise that static value by one. One-point stunts are not meant to be difficult—any description cooler than a basic declaration of intent is a one-point stunt, and players should be able to use them on essentially every action.

DIFFICULTIES

Difficulty 1 actions are run-of-the-mill by the standards of puissant heroes. *Examples:* Picking a lock or removing a patient’s appendix, assuming sufficient illumination and materials and no hurry.

Difficulty 2 is harder. *Examples:* One of the above actions performed in the dark and in the midst of a storm.

Difficulty 3 actions daunt even heroes. *Examples:* Plucking a gem from a nest of writhing serpents without being bitten, breaking a monstrous man-eating horse so it accepts the character as its rider.

Difficulty 4 is harder than that. *Examples:* Snatching the gem while the temple collapses around you, breaking the horse in the midst of a forest fire.

Difficulty 5 is near-impossible. *Examples:* Reading a letter by feeling the texture of the ink on the page, running without food or sleep for three consecutive days.

Two-point stunts grant two extra dice and one automatic success to whatever action they enhance, or raise a static value by two; also, when a player describes a two-point stunt, her character regains a point of Willpower, up to the maximum of her Willpower dots. A two-point stunt must be above and beyond other stunts, and stand out as probably one of the highlights of the scene. They're meant to be rare, but not too rare; Storytellers who hand out fewer than one per scene may need to rethink where they've set the bar.

Three-point stunts grant two extra dice and two automatic successes, or raise a static value by three. They award two points of Willpower, which can go *above* the character's Willpower dots. A three-point stunt needs to stand out as one of the highlights of the evening—it's rare to see more than one three-point stunt during a play session. Again, though, Storytellers who *never* hand out three-point stunts ("That was really cool, but what if the next one is even cooler? I better only give it two points, just to be safe!") may need to rethink their standards.

Finally, stunts provide some protection for characters who take risky actions. Storytellers should provide a player who *fails* a dangerous stunt a way to avoid grievous consequences—having failed a leap, she catches the edge of the cliff; having caught her clothing on fire, she rolls to extinguish herself and springs back to her feet.

EXTENDED ACTIONS AND OPPOSED ACTIONS

Extended actions are for when it's important to know how long an action takes. It's just like a normal action, except with multiple rolls. Generally the character needs some total number of successes (the *goal number*) and the Storyteller should decide how much time each roll represents (the *interval*).

Each time the player rolls during an extended action, count the successes that meet or exceed the roll's difficulty and add them to a running tally—when this reaches the goal number, the character has succeeded. (So, if the difficulty is 2 and the player rolls 3 successes, add 2 to the tally, because the second success met the difficulty and the third exceeded it.) If the player fails a roll, she accumulates no successes that interval; if she botches, the attempt is ruined and her character must start again from scratch.

Some extended actions have a *terminus*, which is the number of rolls allowed. If the player doesn't reach the goal number before the terminus, the extended action fails.

Use *opposed actions* when two characters compete directly. Opposed actions have no difficulty—both players roll their characters' dice pools, and whoever rolls more successes wins. Ties go to whoever has the better stunt.

REFLEXIVE ACTIONS

Most of the time, you can only take one action in a round, on your turn, but some actions happen automatically or by reflex. Characters can take *reflexive actions* whenever appropriate—for example, the Storyteller should allow a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll to spot a stalker. Certain Charms or powers grant reflexive action, and normal movement is usually a reflexive action.

Combat

Mythic heroes are usually well-known for getting into fights! **Exalted Third Edition's** combat rules emphasize the tension of rising and falling action via the tracking of two important traits—*Initiative* and *Health*.

Order of Actions

At the start of a fight, every participant's player makes a *Join Battle* roll. A character's Join Battle pool is (Wits + Awareness); everyone rolling Join Battle at the beginning of the fight **adds three successes to this roll**. The result of this roll is your starting Initiative, which (among other things) dictates who goes first. During each round, every character takes a turn in order from highest Initiative to lowest. Each Initiative number is called a *tick*, so if your starting initiative is 6, you act on tick 6 of the round. Characters with identical initiative act on the same tick and their actions normally resolve simultaneously—if it becomes necessary to decide which action to declare or resolve first, players can discuss which order of events makes the most sense; in a dispute, flip a coin.

If you want to act on a lower tick than your Initiative, you can *delay*; delaying costs 2 Initiative but allows you to act on any later tick that round (yes, even just one tick later).

Aside from dictating who acts when, Initiative is a resource carried from round to round, and will raise and lower depending on the actions characters take, so keep in mind: *Characters get one turn per round*. If you start a round with 6 Initiative, take your turn, and then on tick 4 another character takes an action that knocks your Initiative down to 3, you don't get another turn right away—you'll have to wait until tick 3 of the *next* round.

On the other hand, if you haven't taken your turn yet in a round, and on (for example) tick 4, some effect increases your Initiative *above* 4, you get your turn *on the next tick*—you don't have to wait until your new, higher Initiative number comes up next round.

Making Attacks

The most common action during combat is an attack. Whether by blade or bow or fist, combatants attempt to subdue their opponents. Different avenues of attack use different Abilities—Archery to attack with a bow, Brawl to scrap, Melee to attack with a sword or a club, Thrown to attack with thrown weapons, or a Martial Arts skill to attack with one of Creation's esoteric combat disciplines. But ultimately **Exalted Third Edition** uses two types of attack to measure the rising and climactic action of a fight: **withering attacks** and **decisive attacks**. **Withering** attacks seize the flow of battle, stealing a foe's Initiative and adding it to one's own. **Decisive** attacks leverage that advantage to do real damage to opponents' Health.

The dice pool for an attack is always (Dexterity + [Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee, or Thrown]). **Withering** attacks add an accuracy bonus to this roll based on the sort of weapon used (unless they're ranged; see sidebar). **Decisive** attacks do not—they use *only* (Dexterity + [Ability]). The character sheets in Part Three have pre-calculated **withering** and **decisive** dice pools for each character's various weapons and unarmed attacks.

RANGED ATTACKS

Ranged attacks get their accuracy bonus to their (Dexterity + Archery or Thrown) roll based on what range they're made from, not from the quality of the weapon. See "Movement and Ranges During Combat," below, for range explanations.

None of the sample characters use Archery. For Thrown weapons, the range modifiers are +4 at Close, +3 at Short, +2 at Medium, -1 at Long, and -3 at Extreme.

Ranged withering attack options in Part Three don't take these into account—if you're playing a character who throws knives and make an attack at e.g. Short range, you'll need to remember to add +4 dice to your withering attack pools. Ranged weapons also have limits beyond which they can't attack; see "Equipment," later.

The difficulty of an attack roll is the target's Defense—that is, whichever of Parry or Evasion he wishes to apply (usually the higher). Every time a character is attacked, he accrues a -1 *onslaught penalty* to his Defense, which



lasts until his next turn. The onslaught penalty applies whether the attack hits or misses.

LANDING A WITHERING ATTACK

When a **withering** attack succeeds, it's time to figure out the attack's *raw damage*. Raw damage is the attacker's Strength plus the damage rating of their weapon (listed on the character sheet) plus the threshold successes on the attack roll—if an attacker rolls 5 successes against a target with Defense 3, she adds 2 to her weapon's damage trait to determine the attack's raw damage.

Then figure out the *damage pool*—how many dice of damage the attacker will roll. The damage pool is the attack's raw damage, minus the target's *total soak* (also listed on the character sheet). Soak cannot reduce the damage pool below the weapon's Overwhelming value, which is usually one. (But see the Balanced tag under "Equipment," later, for an exception.)

Finally, roll the damage pool. The attacker gains one point of Initiative for landing a successful **withering** attack. Then subtract the successes on the damage roll from the target's Initiative, and add it to the attacker's Initiative.

EFFECTS OF INITIATIVE DAMAGE

A character knocked to Initiative 0 or lower enters *Initiative Crash*, a terrible state in which he's completely lost control of the fight. He has Hardness 0 (see "Landing a **Decisive** Attack," below), cannot make **decisive** attacks of his own anymore, and cannot use Charms with the Perilous keyword (see "Magic of the Chosen," later, for what that means). A character who enters Initiative Crash on his own (by taking an action that costs Initiative) immediately loses another 5 Initiative.

A character in Initiative Crash can recover by either raising his Initiative above 0 by making **withering** attacks, or surviving three consecutive turns. If he does, his Initiative is set to 3—this is called *resetting to base Initiative*.

An attacker who knocks a target into Initiative Crash gains an *Initiative Break* bonus. She immediately gains +5 Initiative. However, you don't gain this bonus if you knock a character into Initiative Crash during the round he's recovering from one, or the round after that. When a character enters Initiative Crash due to his own actions, the Storyteller should award the Initiative Break bonus to whichever character she judges most provoked whatever action caused the Crash.

If a character is Crashed, and then Crashes the foe that Crashed her, she enters *Initiative Shift*. She immediately resets to base Initiative (unless this would lower her

I WITHER MY FRIEND FOR EXTRA INITIATIVE!

Nope. Withering and decisive attacks are abstractions to help measure fight pacing, but they are not real things characters engage in consciously. Every attack, whether withering or decisive, represents a character's attempt to land a meaningful blow. An attack that establishes no advantage over your foes is not a successful withering attack, and attacking your allies doesn't establish an advantage over your foes! The Storyteller can and should call shenanigans on these sorts of attempts to game the system.

THEN I WITHER THIS HELPLESS FOE!

Nope again. If an enemy is on the ropes and it's clear to everyone that the players are having their characters keep him alive just so they can occasionally wither him for extra Initiative, the Storyteller can declare him defeated and out of the fight the next time he suffers a withering attack. Same applies to attacks against helpless bystanders—withering attacks do damage to their Health and yield no initiative at all.

Initiative), and then rolls Join Battle, adding the successes to her Initiative. Her turn is then refreshed—she can take an action, immediately. However, if she chooses to attack, she must attack the foe she just Crashed.

LANDING A DECISIVE ATTACK

When a character makes a **decisive** attack, the outcome depends on whether it succeeds or not.

If a **decisive** attack fails—that is, if the successes on the attack roll are less than the target's Defense—the attacker loses 2 Initiative if she had Initiative between 1-10. If she had Initiative of 11 or greater, she loses 3 Initiative.

If a **decisive** attack succeeds but the target has *Hardness* (marked on the character sheet) equal to or greater than the attacker's Initiative, the target suffers no damage. If the attacker's Initiative is greater than the target's Hardness, roll the attacker's full Initiative as a dice pool. **The double 10s rule does not apply to this roll.** The target takes Health damage equal to the successes on this roll.

Finally, after a character lands a successful **decisive** attack (whether or not it actually inflicts damage), reset the attacker's Initiative to 3.

A weapon's Damage rating does not affect how much damage a **decisive** attack inflicts—the smallest knife can land a killing blow on even an uninjured target, if its wielder seizes the right opportunity. Likewise, threshold successes on a **decisive** attack roll do not increase the attack's damage—it's determined purely by the attacker's Initiative.

EFFECTS OF HEALTH DAMAGE

Exalted Third Edition applies three types of damage to characters' Health Levels—bashing, lethal, and aggravated.

Bashing damage represents blunt trauma—unarmed strikes inflict bashing damage, as do blows with blunt weapons such as staves, hammers, and clubs. Mark a level of bashing damage with a slash (/) across the target's leftmost unfilled Health box. Once the character's *Incapacitated* Health box is filled with bashing damage (that's the box marked INC), that character is unconscious. Further bashing damage “wraps around” and begins inflicting lethal damage.

Lethal damage represents cutting, tearing, or piercing damage to the target. Mark a level of lethal damage with an X across the target's leftmost available Health box—this “pushes” bashing damage to the right. If a character's Incapacitated Health box is filled with lethal damage, that character is either dead or dying at Storyteller discretion (see “Recovering Health and Willpower,” later).

Aggravated damage is the result of powerful magic that leaves grievous wounds unaffected by magical healing. It's marked with an asterisk—that is, an X in the Health box, plus a vertical line through it. It pushes both bashing and lethal damage to the right. (Nothing within the **Tomb of Dreams** scenario inflicts aggravated damage. Don't worry about it for now.)

Every Health box has an associated *wound penalty*—either -0, -1, -2, or -4. Characters suffer the wound penalty associated with their rightmost damaged Health box. They *subtract that wound penalty from all rolled actions and all static values*. It does not affect damage rolls.

CLASH! (SIMULTANEOUS OPPOSED ATTACKS)

Two characters who attack each other on the same tick perform a *clash attack*. This is an opposed attack roll that *bypasses Defense*—whoever rolls more attack successes lands her attack.

A successful **withering** clash attack adds the threshold by which the winning fighter beat her opponent's roll to its raw damage, and adds three extra levels of Initiative damage after the damage roll. A successful **decisive** clash attack adds one automatic level of Health damage. The loser of the clash attack suffers a -2 penalty to his Defense until his next turn.

It's entirely possible to clash a **withering** attack with a **decisive** attack or vice-versa.

Movement and Ranges During Combat

The Exalted are highly mobile! As such, **Exalted Third Edition** uses abstract movement—at any point, a given character is within one of five *range bands* in relation to any other character:

Two characters at *close range* are close enough to fight with sword, spear, or fist. They're not necessarily within arms' reach of each other at all times, but they can close distance trivially. Any character within close range of an opponent is *embattled*, and must use a disengage action if he wishes to move away (see “Movement Actions,” below). Many fights can take place entirely at short range, making tracking movement unnecessary.

Two characters at *short range* are outside the range of hand-to-hand attacks, but close enough to reach that range with a quick sprint.

Two characters at *medium range* are a fair distance away—far enough apart they need to shout to communicate. Characters need to take aim actions (see “Other Combat Actions,” below) to attack each other with ranged weapons at this range or greater.

Two characters at *long range* are very far apart—too far apart to clearly hear each other even when shouting, necessitating signaling devices or enthusiastic pantomime to communicate. They need powerful ranged attacks to attack each other.

Two characters at *extreme range* are usually effectively in different scenes—they're tiny specks to each other. Communication and combat are effectively impossible. All range bands beyond long are considered extreme range, and it's possible for two characters to be multiple extreme range bands away from each other (though groups rarely need to track this).

While **Exalted** eschews grid-based maps, it's still good to have a rough idea of where all the characters are. A character who moves away from one foe also moves in relation to everyone else on the battlefield, and it's up to the ST to sensibly arbitrate the results.

MOVEMENT ACTIONS

- The basic *move* action is just moving one range band toward or away from any other character or landmark on the battlefield. It can be taken on the

character's turn, once, as a reflexive action (see "Reflexive Actions," earlier). All the other sorts of move actions, below, are *combat actions*—that is, they consume the character's action for a turn, and to be performed along with an attack or other sort of action, must be placed in a flurry (see "Other Combat Actions," below).

- *Rush* must be directed at an opponent within short range. A rush is a contested (Dexterity + Athletics) roll between character and foe. If the character succeeds, then the next time the opponent moves away, the character moves one range band toward him, keeping pace. This movement is reflexive and can occur outside the rushing character's turn.
- *Disengage* is an action characters must take if they wish to retreat when embattled—that is, a character at close range cannot use the basic reflexive move to escape an enemy. Disengage is an opposed (Dexterity + Dodge) roll against the (Dexterity + Athletics) of all close opponents who want to contest the escape; a character who takes this action immediately loses 2 Initiative. If the character defeats all his opponents on the opposed roll, he moves out to short range; also, if one of the disengaged opponents moves toward him on her next turn, he immediately and reflexively moves one range band away from her, even outside his turn. If a character fails the opposed roll, he can't find a safe opening and doesn't move.
- Characters knocked to the ground by certain attacks can *rise from prone*, which is usually automatically successful. If a foe is within close range, however, rising requires success on a difficulty 2 (Dexterity + Dodge) roll. A prone character suffers -1 to Parry, -2 to Evasion, -3 to his attacks, and cannot take movement actions except to rise from prone. He automatically fails all attempts to resist rush and disengage actions
- *Taking cover* puts something between a character and her attackers. It requires a (Dexterity + Dodge) roll at a difficulty set by the ST based on how difficult nearby cover is to find and reach. *Light cover* protects a significant portion of a character's body (leaning into a doorway, standing behind a waist-high wall) and raises Defense by 1. *Heavy cover* conceals most of the character (leaving, at most, part of the head and a shoulder and arm exposed) and raises Defense by 2. *Full cover* protects the entire character and makes incoming

attacks impossible. Remember that cover is situational and subject to common sense, so taking cover against attacks from one direction doesn't help against attacks from the other side, and characters in cover can only move without leaving it if the cover itself allows (consider the difference between a tree and a long waist-high fence). Also, two characters exchanging close-range attacks both benefit from cover equally—if you take light cover behind that fence from an enemy swordsman while continuing to exchange blows with him, he likewise gains light cover against you.

- *Withdrawing* is how characters escape from a fight entirely. It's an extended (Dexterity + Athletics) roll, difficulty 1, goal number 10, interval one round, and may only be attempted while at medium range or longer from all opponents—and a character who takes a withdraw action loses 10 Initiative per round. Withdrawing moves the character one range band away from all enemies, and a character who reaches extreme range and succeeds at the extended roll successfully escapes the battlefield, evading all pursuit.

Difficult terrain modifies movement actions. It can model almost anything—swamp, thick snow, a deadfall- or underbrush-infested forest, a panicked crowd, or even the interior walls of a building. In difficult terrain, characters need to take two actions to move a single range band. Attempts to rush, disengage, or withdraw across difficult terrain suffer a -3 penalty, but difficult terrain often makes taking cover easy.

Other Combat Actions

Aside from attacking and moving, **Exalted** characters have a variety of other options for acting in combat.

- A *flurry* is when a character needs to act twice during a single turn. The rules for flurries are simple: Each action, if rolled, suffers a -3 penalty to its dice pool, and a flurrying character takes a -1 penalty to his Defense until his next turn. Two of the same action cannot be placed in a flurry—you can't attack twice, not even with two different weapons or two different attack types.
- A character who *aims* spends a turn preparing an attack against a chosen target. If she attacks that target on her next turn, she gains a +3 bonus to her attack pool. But ranged attacks from medium range or longer require a turn of aiming to make at all, and a player who wants the +3 bonus on

such an attack must spend *two* turns aiming to get it. The aim action cannot be placed in a flurry.

- *Defend other* is the action of shielding an ally within close range. Performing this action, you may apply your Parry against any attacks targeting your ward until your next turn. If the attacker succeeds on his roll, he must choose between damaging you, or applying his attack's threshold successes against his initial target's Defense. If he chooses to strike his original target with a **decisive** attack, he loses one Initiative die from his damage roll for each two points of your Parry.
- *Draw/ready weapon* represents unsheathing a close-range weapon or readying a long-range one. It inflicts -1 Defense until the character's next turn, and is used for drawing a weapon after being subjected to an attack unexpectedly, or for changing weapons mid-combat. Characters who enter combat knowingly are assumed to start with a readied weapon and don't have to take this action.
- *Full defense* represents a character who's dedicated completely to protecting himself! He loses 1 Initiative, but gains +2 Defense until his next turn. A character suffering Initiative Crash can't use full defense, and full defense can only be flurried with social influence (see "Social Influence," later) or miscellaneous actions (see next).
- *Miscellaneous action* is a catch-all term to cover non-combat actions characters might take during combat—picking a lock, searching a fallen foe's pockets. The Storyteller decides what is or isn't possible as a miscellaneous action. A character who performs a miscellaneous action suffers -1 Defense until his next turn.

GAMBITS

Gambits are a sort of **decisive** attack used to represent unusual maneuvers—situational actions that would be unbalanced if characters could attempt them easily, but still important enough to have a place in the rules. To perform a gambit, a player makes a **decisive** attack roll against the opponent's Defense, and then rolls her Initiative at a difficulty depending on the gambit (no double-tens on that Initiative roll). Success inflicts no damage and costs Initiative equal to the gambit's difficulty +1, but achieves some desired effect. The **Exalted Third Edition** main rulebook has more gambits than presented here, including the rules for grappling. Whenever a player wants to do something unusual in combat, the ST can declare it a gambit and chose an appropriate difficulty.



- *Disarming* an opponent (difficulty 3) knocks the opponent's weapon away out to short range. Retrieving it normally requires moving to the weapon and using a draw/ready weapon action.
- When *distracting* an opponent (difficulty 3-5), the player chooses a target to distract, an ally (not in Crash) to benefit, and a difficulty for the Initiative roll. That ally gains as much Initiative as the distracting character loses (difficulty +1), but must use it to attack the target on the ally's next turn or else loses it immediately.

STEALTH AND UNEXPECTED ATTACKS

All stealth attempts are opposed rolls, usually (Dexterity + Stealth) against (Perception + Awareness). Penalties can apply to the hiding party's roll (noisy underbrush, bright light, scant cover) or to the seeker (noisy crowd, poor light). A character who's successfully hidden herself can make an unexpected attack—either an ambush or a surprise attack.

- An *ambush* is an attack against a target who not only doesn't see the attacker, but doesn't even know he's in a fight. It's only possible during the first round of a fight, against an opponent with lower Initiative. An ambush target is considered to have Defense 0 against the incoming attack.
- An *unexpected attack* is an attack against an enemy who knows he's in a fight, but doesn't know where his attacker is hiding. The target of an unexpected attack suffers a -2 Defense penalty.

A stealth roll to hide and *re-establish surprise* is a combat action that can't be placed in a flurry, opposed by all enemy combatants. Attempting stealth during combat inflicts a -3 penalty to the roll. A character in stealth cannot rush, and if she wishes to move, she must have some place to hide in her desired destination and must make a reflexive (Dexterity + Stealth) roll to stay hidden while moving (again, opposed by all opponents). If there's no cover between her previous and new hiding spots, the penalty to the roll increases to -5.

EQUIPMENT

For **Tomb of Dreams**, most of the way equipment works is self-explanatory. The character sheets in Part Two list attack and damage values for weapons, and soak and hardness values for armor. Two things need calling out, though: the mobility penalty for armor, and tags.

Armor has a *mobility penalty* ranging from -0 to -2. A character wearing armor subtracts that armor's mobility penalty from all nimbleness-based Athletics rolls, as well

as any rolls involving chasing, running, or dodging, and any Stealth rolls to move silently. (It's also normally subtracted from Evasion, but the Part Two sample characters' Evasion scores already take their armor into account.)

Tags are keywords used to describe equipment behavior. Descriptions of all the tags used in **Tomb of Dreams** follow.

Archery: This weapon can make ranged attacks using the Archery ability, out to a maximum of the listed range.

Balanced: This weapon's Overwhelming value is one greater than normal. The weapons the sample characters start with in **Tomb of Dreams** have base Overwhelming values of 1, so starting weapons with the Balanced tag have a minimum raw **withering** attack damage of 2.

Bashing: **Decisive** attacks with this weapon inflict bashing damage.

Brawl: This weapon can make close-ranged attacks using the Brawl Ability.

Chopping: This weapon can make chopping attacks. A chopping attack costs the attacker 1 Initiative and inflicts -1 to her Defense until her next turn, but raises a **withering** attack's raw damage by 3 or allows a **decisive** attack to treat the target's Hardness as two points lower than its true value.

Lethal: **Decisive** attacks with this weapon inflict lethal damage, but players can stunt to inflict bashing damage with it instead.

Martial Arts: This weapon can make close-ranged attacks using a Martial Arts Ability.

Melee: This weapon can make close-ranged attacks using the Melee Ability.

Natural: This weapon is part of the user's body; it can't be disarmed and never requires a draw/ready weapon action to make ready.

Piercing: This weapon can make piercing attacks. A piercing attack is a **withering** attack that costs the attacker 1 Initiative and inflicts -1 to her Defense until her next turn, but ignores 4 points of armor soak.

Smashing: This weapon can make smashing attacks. A smashing attack costs the attacker 2 Initiative and inflicts -1 to her Defense until her next turn, but if successful knocks the target either prone or back one range band, at the attacker's choice, in addition to inflicting damage.

Special: This weapon has some unusual property explained in its description.

Thrown: This weapon can make ranged attacks using the Thrown ability, out to a maximum of the listed range (unless magic extends it).

Two-Handed: This close-range weapon requires a two-handed grip to wield, granting a +2 bonus to Clash attacks but preventing the wielder from performing actions with her other hand.

Battle Groups

Battle groups model large numbers of similar opponents acting together—anything from packs of goons to whole clashing legions. *This section is mostly for Storytellers. Players can skip ahead to “Social Influence.”*

A battle group starts with the traits of whatever sort of character it's most made up of, plus some extra traits and bonuses. It always makes **withering** attacks, but its attacks inflict Health damage to opponents in Initiative Crash. By contrast, it does not have Health, but a similar trait called Magnitude, and takes Magnitude damage from both **withering** and **decisive** attacks.

BATTLE GROUP TRAITS

Size represents how big a battle group is. A battle group gains a bonus to its attack rolls, raw damage rolls, Magnitude (see below), and soak equal to its Size. *Size 1* is between three to a half-dozen enemies, while *Size 2* is between 10 and 25. *Size 3* is between 125 and 250, *Size 4* is up to 500, and *Size 5* is up to 1,000. When a battle group seems like it could fit between one of those categories, the Storyteller should make a judgment call based on the overall quality of the troops.

Drill represents how well a battle group is trained to work together. It's probably the most important battle group trait. *Poor Drill* represents an undisciplined mob—a battle group with poor Drill suffers a -2 penalty to order and rally for numbers actions (see below) and suffers +1 Difficulty to all rout and rally for numbers checks (also below). *Average Drill* is most armies who've spent time training together, and grants +1 Defense. *Elite Drill* is the most well-trained, hardened, experienced armies. It grants +2 Defense and +2 to command actions (see **Exalted Third Edition** for rules on command actions, which are outside the scope of this scenario).

Might represents supernatural potency, and is both rare and valuable. Most battle groups in Creation have Might 0 and are entirely mortal. *Might 1* represents groups lightly touched by the supernatural—beastmen or mortal armies fighting under divine blessing. It grants a +1 bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and Defense. *Might*

2 represents groups composed primarily of supernatural beings such as lesser gods or demons. It grants +2 to attack and damage rolls and +1 to Defense. *Might 3* represents armies of the most potent supernatural beings, and such forces have barely been fielded since the fall of the First Age. It grants +3 to attack and damage rolls and +2 to Defense.

Magnitude is the trait battle groups have in place of Health. It always starts equal to the Health trait of the average member of the group, plus the group's Size. When a battle group runs out of Magnitude, its members are *not* all dead, but many are injured, dead, or fleeing, and this may prompt the remainder to either collapse into a total rout or regroup in lesser numbers. Magnitude loss, unlike Health loss, does not inflict wound penalties.

FIGHTING BATTLE GROUPS

A battle group *attacking its enemies* launches **withering** attacks, and doesn't gain Initiative from doing so. Its damage rolls don't gain double 10s. On the other hand, its attacks damage the Health of opponents in Crash. While a battle group only attacks once per round, if that attack is close-ranged *it applies this attack to every enemy within close range*. When a battle group makes a ranged attack, it selects one target and applies the attack to every combatant (friendly or hostile) within close range of that target.

A battle group *moves* about the same as any character, but depending on its size, can take up a lot of space. Two characters within close range of a large battle group might not be in close range of each other.

A battle group *suffering attacks* always takes damage to its Magnitude, whether that attack is **withering** or **decisive**, but **decisive** attacks against a battle group do an extra level of damage for every four damage dice rolled. (Remember, a **withering** attack against a battle group still yields 1 Initiative just for succeeding.) Magnitude damage represents both physical and psychological casualties—death, injury, panic, demoralization.

When a battle group *loses all its Magnitude*, it loses a point of Size and make a special Willpower roll called a *rout check*. This starts at difficulty 1, and gains +1 difficulty for each dot of Size the group has lost previously during the fight and +1 difficulty for each of the following conditions that apply: An allied battle group has already suffered dissolution during this fight (see dissolution, next paragraph); one or more of the group's leaders has been incapacitated or killed; the rout check is provoked by a devastating or terrifying supernatural attack that covers an area; the battle group has poor Drill.



A battle group that succeeds at its rout check re-fills its Magnitude track (remember, it just lost one point of Size), but a group that *fails its rout check* suffers *dissolution* on its *next turn*. Those members that aren't dead are scattered, scared, and running. Opponents that wish to prevent the survivors from fighting another day can take *slaughter* actions against the fleeing survivors, which are simply attacks against the group's basic traits—the fleeing group suffers -3 Defense. The Storyteller judges the effectiveness of these attacks based on the amount of damage rolled, but if the battle group's initial Size was 3 or greater, only another battle group can launch slaughter attacks against them.

A character whose attack causes a battle group to lose a point of Size gains an Initiative Break bonus.

Social Influence

The Exalted are gifted in all fields of human endeavor. Their Charms represent superhuman puissance with every Ability. And like most people, they spend much more time living than fighting. The social influence rules represent the ways people in Creation gain each

USING THE BATTLE GROUP RULES

Canny players already realize that fielding five Size 2 battle groups would be much more effective than fielding one at Size 3. While this works in the sense that separate infantry and archer battle groups complement each other, weary Storytellers realize splitting every Size 3 mass of basically-identical infantry into five battlefield actors would be a bookkeeping nightmare and defeat the purpose of a system to represent lots of combatants as a single unit. So that doesn't work! Storytellers should always "clump" similar groups of combatants into battle groups of the greatest possible Size. This applies whether the enemy is five forest bandits or two allied nations' armies.

other's trust, convince each other of things, and change each other's minds.

Intimacies are the traits key to social influence. An Intimacy is a belief or feeling dear to a character's heart. **Exalted Third Edition** recognizes two types of Intimacy, at three intensities.

Ties are Intimacies that describe attachments to people, organizations, or other concrete entities. They include the object of attachment and an emotional context. For example, The Realm (Hatred), My Spouse (Love), or My Commanding Officer (Grudging Respect). On the other hand, *Principles* are beliefs and abstract ideals, usually written as a statement. “There’s nothing worse than a traitor” is a Principle, as is “I believe everyone looks out for herself first.”

Minor Intimacies are beliefs or attachments sincerely but not strongly held. They come into play only when the object is directly relevant to the current situation. *Major* Intimacies are both sincere and influential, and come into play even if the subject is only indirectly or tangentially related to the situation at hand. Finally a *Defining* Intimacy hold sway over every aspect of its adherent’s life. A man with My Spouse (Love) at Defining intensity conceptualizes his life in terms of that relationship.

Characters can gain or lose Intimacies in play; the ones written on the character sheet aren’t fixed. At the end of a scene, based on what happened during that scene and whether the Storyteller thinks it’s appropriate, a player can gain a new Minor Intimacy or strengthen or weaken one of her Intimacies by one step. Losing or weakening Intimacies usually takes longer than gaining them, and often should take multiple scenes of applicable roleplaying.

The method by which players have the greatest influence on the Intimacies of other characters is social influence. Social influence is about influencing other characters’ emotional lives, as represented by discovering their Intimacies, strengthening or eroding them, inspiring new ones, or persuading them to act based on the Intimacies they hold.

TAKING SOCIAL ACTIONS

The core of the social influence system is the *influence roll*, by which a player rolls a social action against a target’s Resolve (or, more rarely, Guile). The social influence system doesn’t have special timing—there’s no “social Initiative” or “social turns” to determine who goes first outside of combat. When the group reaches a point during a scene of roleplaying where it seems as though one character is exerting influence on another, as determined by the Storyteller, that’s when the influence roll happens. A player can explicitly declare an influence roll when she feels her character has made a social play, in which case it’s up to the Storyteller to decide if the timing is right.

An influence roll is usually a combination of a social Attribute (Charisma for personal magnetism,

Manipulation for emotional appeal, or Appearance for sheer surface appeal) and an appropriate Ability (most often Presence for conversation; Performance for oratory, acting, dance, and so on; and Socialize for etiquette). Players or the Storyteller choose the most appropriate dice pool.

If rolling against a target’s Resolve, *the target’s Intimacies modify the difficulty*. Minor Intimacies offer a +2 Resolve bonus against influence rolls that oppose them, but inflict a -1 Resolve penalty against influence that aligns with them. For Major Intimacies, the modifier is either +3 or -2. For Defining Intimacies, it’s either +4 or -3. Influence rolls are modified by only one Intimacy-related bonus and one Intimacy-related penalty at a time—the strongest of each that applies.

Characters with high Appearance find it easier to persuade the weak-willed. A character taking an instill or persuade action (see below) and who has an Appearance greater than the target’s Resolve gains bonus dice equal to the difference—so a character with Appearance 5 gains a +2 bonus against a target with Resolve 3.

When an influence roll *targets a group*, it suffers a -3 penalty—it’s easier to shrug off an argument not directly addressed to you. The player rolls only once, and the successes are compared against the Resolve of every member of the group. When targeting a large group of background characters, the Storyteller should consider the successes on the roll and the crowd’s average Resolve (usually 2 or 3) and likely Intimacies, to decide how many in the crowd are swayed. The Appearance bonus applies against the group’s average Resolve as well.

- The *read intentions* action is a roll of (Perception + Socialize) against a target’s Guile and represents trying to discern what the target wants or believes. The player can ask the Storyteller to either describe what the target is trying to accomplish with whatever he’s doing this scene, or what he cares about or believes in general (“Does he love anyone?”). If the roll succeeds, the Storyteller should answer, either revealing the target’s goals or one of his Intimacies. (If he has no Intimacies applicable to the question the player asked, the ST should indicate this.) Success on the read intentions action is limited by the context in which the player observes the target—you can tell if a target is lovestruck by the look of longing in his eyes, but unless the object of his affection (or some evidence of their identity) is around, you won’t know by

whom. Finally, targets unaware they're being observed suffer a -2 Guile penalty.

- The *instill action* represents attempts to change others' feelings and beliefs. It's used to inspire new Intimacies or alter existing ones. If the belief the character is attempting to instill is particularly implausible or hard to believe, the Storyteller can inflict a situational penalty to the roll, within the usual scale of -1 to -5.

A character can always attempt to instill a new Minor Intimacy, but strengthening or eroding existing Intimacies is subject to restriction. Attempts to strengthen a Minor Intimacy to Major or weaken a Major Intimacy to Minor can only succeed if the target already has a different Intimacy at Minor intensity or higher that supports the attempt. Strengthening a Major Intimacy to Defining or weakening a Defining Intimacy to Major requires the support of different Major Intimacy. Finally, strengthening an existing Intimacy requires the argument or evidence used be *stronger* than whatever lead the target to the Intimacy at its current strength.

- The *persuade action* represents when one character tries to convince another to do something. The scale of task it can provoke is limited by the Intimacies of the target.

Trivial tasks take a scene or less and offer no danger—begging a coin from a passing stranger or asking a neighbor to visit for dinner when the neighbor had no plans that night anyway. You can always attempt a persuade action to convince another character to perform a trivial task.

An *inconvenient task* poses some potential danger to the subject or might take longer than a scene to carry out. They're the sort of thing you'd only do for a person or cause you care about, and then only if the person asking were genuinely persuasive, but which still resolve quickly and *may* not carry long-term consequences. "I need you to deliver this parcel to that big house up in Cinnabar District, with the red lion statues by the door. If the doorman has a scorpion tattoo, don't leave it with him—insist to see the master of the house." The target must have at least a Minor Intimacy in support of the action for the persuasion to have any chance of working.

A *serious task* carries risk of extreme harm or impediment, or requires long-term commitment such as joining an organization. Convincing a farmer to join your militia, or an apothecary to provide you with a poison he could be jailed for if it's traced back to him, might each count. The target needs a Major Intimacy in support for this to work.

Life-changing tasks can be almost anything. Convince a follower to hold the enemy at bay while you retreat. Convince a wealthy patron to give the majority of his fortune to your cult. The target needs a Defining Intimacy for persuade attempts at life-changing tasks to be applicable at all.

- The *bargain action* functions as persuade, but instead of appealing to Intimacies, involves offering a bribe, gift, or favor to the target equal in value to the task asked for in exchange. The Storyteller should take into account the Intimacies, wealth, and social status of the target in deciding what they will consider sufficient payment. A bribe that would motivate a beggar is likely to insult a prince.
- The *threaten action* is like bargain in reverse. Instead of offering something, it represents threatening harm to the target unless he performs the request—for this to work, the target must be more afraid of what you threaten than the action you're demanding. It can also function as an instill action to inspire or strengthen a Tie of fear or hatred. Using a threaten action almost always inspires a negative Tie in the target, and weakens any positive Ties the target has towards the threatening character.

- The *inspire action* incites emotion in others' hearts, and usually involves rolling Performance. The player chooses an emotion her character tries to inspire, and on a successful roll, the target is impassioned by that emotion and inspired to take action appropriate to it—but the target's player chooses what form that passion takes, and what action follows. Characters needn't drop everything and act immediately—someone inspired to religious fervor who resolves to take a pilgrimage will still probably set her affairs in order and tell her family—but they're genuinely motivated and will proceed under sincere intentions. For as long as a character is acting on an inflamed passion, it's treated as a Major Intimacy for purposes of other social actions. Unlike other influence rolls, inspire doesn't suffer a -3 penalty for targeting a group. Players don't necessarily know the effects of their inspiration on others without a successful read intentions action as a follow-up.

RESISTING SUCCESSFUL INFLUENCE ACTIONS

Players may spend a Willpower point to resist forming a new Intimacy, even if targeted by a successful instill action. They may likewise spend a Willpower point to resist weakening a Major or Defining Intimacy, or to reject the effects of a successful inspire action.

A character subject to a successful attempt to make him take action—that is, *do something*, rather than just change Intimacies—and who wishes to further resist, enters a state called a *Decision Point*. At the Decision Point, the player must choose an Intimacy and explain how it justifies resisting that influence. Which Intimacy he can use is subject to two restrictions: First, it must be of equal or higher intensity than whatever Intimacy permitted the influence attempt in the first place, and second, it must be a different Intimacy than the one that strengthened his Resolve against that attempt. If it meets both these conditions and the Storyteller agrees it's applicable, the player may spend a Willpower point to resist the influence.

Resisting influence is easier if it's opposed by more influence—characters are usually loath to abandon a course of action once they've set themselves upon it. A character who's been persuaded to do something via influence receives a further +3 bonus to his Resolve against any counter-influence that would cause him to abandon or disregard that persuasion. Furthermore, any petitioner who seeks to overturn the effects of influence on another must spend a Willpower point before making her counter-influence roll. If contradictory persuasion succeeds and pushes a target into a second Decision Point, the target need not spend a Willpower point to resist the counter-influence—instead, he must spend it *not* to resist. This reinforcement lasts for one story.

Unacceptable influence is influence a target can successfully resist automatically at no cost. There's four main types of unacceptable influence: First, any sort of influence described above as inapplicable (e.g. persuade attempts on a target without an Intimacy at sufficient intensity to permit them). Second, any influence that would cause the target's certain demise. Third, any influence that would cause the target to completely abandon or end one of his Defining Intimacies or make fulfilling it impossible. Fourth, any seduction attempt that violates a character's sexual orientation as defined by the player (and see the Red Rule under "Using Social Influence," below).

RETRYING SOCIAL ACTIONS

Once a social action succeeds, or has failed or been resisted, trying it again gets more difficult. Just how much more difficult depends on what sort of action it was.

To *retry a failed or resisted instill, threaten, or bargain action*, you must escalate your argument—present your target with substantially greater evidence for whatever you're trying to convince him of, or offer a substantially

SOCIAL INFLUENCE IN COMBAT

In combat, social influence actions count as combat actions—that is, they're not reflexive—and can be placed in flurries. A request that the enemy accept your surrender *generally* counts as a trivial task, but might be an inconvenient task if the enemy has reason to believe your surrender is a ploy, or even a serious task if they really, really want you dead.

better bargain or greater threat. Alternately, wait until the next story.

To *retry a failed or resisted persuade action*, you must either make a different argument playing to another of the target's Intimacies (of equal or greater strength than one they used to resist), wait until the Intimacy that supported your initial influence roll is strengthened somehow, or wait until the next story.

To *retry a failed read intentions action or a failed or resisted inspire action*, you need to wait until the next scene.

USING THE SOCIAL INFLUENCE SYSTEM

Social influence isn't mind control and isn't even necessarily antagonistic. It's here to lend weight to the way people relate to each other, and represent the way great heroes are often as charismatic or persuasive as they are strong or fast. Groups should take care to interpret its effects as representative of real social dynamics—for example, a (Charisma + Presence) instill action to instill a Tie of "Me (Loyalty)" may represent less one character's conscious attempt to suborn another and more the process by which the target is, well, inspired to loyalty. This isn't an assertion that all social influence is good or legitimate—it *can* represent bullying, brainwashing, or just taking advantage of others—merely a reminder that it isn't all evil.

Finally, while social influence as a system is useful for everything from negotiating trade or a truce to inspiring loyalty, it can go in at least one ugly direction easily, so here's **the Red Rule**: *A player-controlled character can only be seduced or otherwise put in a sexual situation if the player is okay with it. Otherwise, any such attempt fails automatically.* This rule applies per attempt, and consent can be withdrawn at any time. And remember the Storyteller is a player, so all Storyteller characters count as player-controlled characters. Respect the boundaries of everyone in play.

Recovering Health and Willpower

Characters may lose Health in combat, and players may spend Willpower points to augment rolls or resist social influence. Here's how to recover them.

Health recovers from right to left along the Health Track, with bashing healing first, then lethal, then aggravated. For the Exalted, a -0 health level heals in one hour if bashing, or one day if lethal. A -1 health level takes 12 hours to heal if bashing, or two days if lethal. A -2 health level takes one day if bashing, or three if lethal. A -4 health level takes two days if bashing, or five if lethal. Aggravated heals at the same rate as lethal damage.

Recovery from Incapacitation is up to the Storyteller—if bashing, the Incapacitated health level usually heals at the end of the scene, but might happen shortly after combat's end but before scene's end if the Storyteller wants the player back in action. Incapacitation via lethal damage is usually fatal, but a character so wounded may linger at death's door long enough for other players to

stabilize him with medical treatment, in which case it may take hours, days, or even weeks before the character regains consciousness, depending on what's best for the story and most fun for the players

Willpower recovers a number of ways. Six to eight hours of rest or sleep recovers one point of Willpower once per day. Once per scene, a character may gain a Willpower point if she undergoes significant hardship or sacrifice to uphold a Major or Defining Intimacy, which may exceed her Willpower dots. At Storyteller discretion, achieving a major character or story goal may reward between one and three Willpower points, depending on scale and significance, which may likewise exceed a character's Willpower rating. Finally, two- and three-point stunts recover Willpower as described under "Stunts," earlier.

Magic of the Chosen

Essence underlies all of Creation; it's the universal flow of energy that sustains life and existence. A mortal hero wields the Essence of the world indirectly, as expressed through her own muscles, personal magnetism, or the power of her mind, but the Chosen tap into the world's



Essence directly, harnessing the power of Creation and of their own spirits to fully realize their potential. The powers of the Exalted are many, but their most common sort is *Charms*, by which the Exalted push their human abilities to superhuman limits.

A single “point” of Essence is called a *mote*, and players spend their characters’ motes to empower their actions. Every Exalted character has two *mote pools*—their *Personal Essence*, which represents their deepest reserves; and their *Peripheral Essence*, which represents the power they can draw most freely from their immediate surroundings. Additionally, the players keep track of *committed motes*, which are motes that power the persistent or ongoing effects of Charms. If a character has a Charm that hardens her skin against attacks, then the motes spent to activate that Charm remain committed for its duration.

During combat, characters regain five motes at the end of every round, first to the peripheral pool and then to the personal pool once the peripheral pool is full. Outside of combat but during normal activity, they replenish at five per hour. (Storytellers should note that players keeping a combat going to help fully replenish mote pools falls under the same general prohibition against shenanigans as keeping helpless opponents around to farm Initiative.) During sleep or other rest, they replenish at a rate of ten per hour. A committed mote cannot replenish until the Charm it powers is no longer in effect. Committed motes count against the total for the mote pool they’re spent from. Some Charms cost both Willpower and motes to activate; the Willpower cost component is never committed.

THE ANIMA BANNER

As an Exalted hero taps into the raw power of Creation, her might spills forth and becomes visible around her, first as a glow from the *caste mark* upon her brow and then as a roiling bonfire of energy fully surrounding her body. This is the *anima banner*, which marks her as Chosen of the Gods. Those Exalted who wish to hide from sight or pass for mortal must choose carefully when—and how much—of their divine power to express.

Whenever a character spends five or more motes of Peripheral Essence in an instant, her anima intensifies by one level for every five Peripheral motes spent. The levels of anima are as follows:

Dim anima is invisible. When she’s not spending Essence, an Exalt’s anima resides at this level.

Glowing anima surrounds a Solar’s body with faint light, and her caste mark appears on her brow, shining through anything placed over it. Attempts at stealth or disguise suffer a -3 penalty.

A *burning* anima blazes brightly, with wisps of power coiling and rising into the air. Stealth is impossible, and anything subject to the anima may become warm to the touch afterwards or take on the faint scent of a summer afternoon.

When a Solar’s anima is at *bonfire/iconic*, it takes on a grand display of power reaching high into the air and visible for miles. When it first reaches this level and during particularly dramatic displays of power thereafter, it projects personal iconography appropriate to the Solar’s character—a roaring tiger, perhaps, or a storm of parchment bearing the lore of lost ages. Players are encouraged to incorporate iconic anima displays into their stunts!

It takes about fifteen minutes for bonfire anima to recede to burning, another fifteen minutes from burning to glowing, and about a half-hour to fade from glowing back to dim.

At any time, by feeding a single mote of Essence into her anima, a Solar may cause her caste mark to appear on her brow and shine for as long as she desires. She may also spend a single mote to feel the brilliant presence of the sun relevant to herself and therefore know the exact time of day, no matter her surroundings. Beyond that, each Solar Caste has a suite of unique anima powers—they’re detailed with the sample characters in Part Two. In the **Exalted Third Edition** main rulebook each caste gets three unique anima powers, but **Tomb of Dreams** leaves out anima powers outside the scenario’s scope.

Charms

Charms represent the Essence-laden power and skill of the Chosen. Each is a discrete block of rules or mechanics representing a specific thing a character can do.

Each Charm has a *name*, an *Ability*, a *type*, and a *duration*. It then has a description that says how much it costs to use and what it does, possibly including *keywords* (italic, in brackets; see “Charm Keywords,” below). A Charm’s Ability and type are important because they determine what other Charms it can be combined with.

CHARM TYPES

Simple Charms count as combat actions; they can only be used on a character’s turn. They can’t be placed in flurries.

Supplemental Charms enhance an action, but unless their text states otherwise, *must benefit an action that uses their Ability* (so a supplemental Melee Charm can’t enhance a Brawl attack). Characters are free to use as many supplemental Charms per round as they have motes for, but can’t



enhance one action with the same supplemental Charm multiple times to stack the Charm's effect.

Reflexive Charms create or enhance reflexive actions or enhance non-dice actions. Characters may use any of their reflexive Charms any time it makes sense to do so, and this is a “player-level” choice—you can use a reflexive Awareness Charm to enhance your opposition to a foe's Stealth attempt even if your character wouldn't “know” you're engaged in an opposed Awareness vs. Stealth roll. A character can't enhance something with the same reflexive Charm multiple times to stack the Charm's effect.

Permanent Charms permanently enhance a character's prowess.

CHARM DURATIONS

Charms with an *instant* duration expel their magic immediately. Charms with a longer duration require committing their mote costs until it expires; players can end them prematurely by withdrawing the commitment. *One tick* Charms last only until the next Initiative tick, while *one turn* charms last until the character's next turn and *one scene* Charms last until the end of the scene. Charms with *indefinite* duration last until commitment is withdrawn. Durations like *one day* or *one story* are self-explanatory.

CHARM KEYWORDS

Charm keywords are like weapon tags, briefly noting something about the Charm. Charm keywords applicable in **Tomb of Dreams** are as follows.

Clash: This Charm cannot be used simultaneously with or in response to a Charm with the Counterattack keyword.

Counterattack: This Charm cannot be used in reaction to a Charm with the Counterattack or Clash keyword.

Mute: This Charm's cost doesn't add to the Exalt's anima level unless she wants it to.

Stackable: This Charm's effects can stack multiple times.

CHARM LIMITATIONS

Players (including the Storyteller) must openly declare which Charms their characters are using, and all Charms (unless the text indicates otherwise) must be declared and paid for *before* any dice are rolled.

Many Charms add to dice pools or raise static values, subject to limits. *When adding to dice pools*, no combination of Solar Charms can add more dice to a pool than the relevant (Attribute + Ability) total affected by the Charms. For example, a Solar with Dexterity 4,

Melee 3 cannot add more than seven dice to a melee attack roll; if she had Dexterity 5, Melee 5, she could add 10. The exception is rare magic that adds (usually very limited numbers of) “non-Charms” dice to certain rolls. Sometimes, Charms *add successes*—treat each success as two dice for the purpose of dice-adding limitations

Charms can only *raise static values* by half the (Attribute + Ability) total that goes into creating that static value (and see “Excellencies,” below), rounded down. So, a character with Manipulation 3, Socialize 2 could use Charms to raise Guile by no more than 2.

EXCELLENCIES

The most common sort of Charm that Solars know is called an Excellency; there’s one of them for each Ability. It’s supplemental (or reflexive when used to enhance a static value), with a duration of instant. A character with an Excellency in an Ability may spend motes to directly add dice to actions taken with that Ability (or static values derived from it), at a rate of one mote per die (or two motes per +1 static value), up to the usual limitation (see “Charm Limitations,” above). The Charm sections of the characters in Part Two list which Abilities they possess Excellencies for, and note which Excellencies can be applied to raise static values.

Sorcery

A sorcerer uses her Essence to bend the fundament of Creation to her will. Beyond supernatural expression of

mortal skill, her magic can call up storms, enslave spirits, or kill at a glance. Each expression of sorcery is a *spell*.

Sorcerers don’t cast spells using their own motes; instead, they draw *sorcerous motes* from the environment around them using the *shape sorcery* action. It’s an extended (Intelligence + Occult) roll at Difficulty 1 with an interval of one round and a goal number of the spell’s mote cost. It cannot be placed in a flurry. A sorcerer interrupted in the middle of casting can take a few turns to perform other actions before returning to her spell, but loses three sorcerous motes from her running total at the end of every round in which she hasn’t gathered any. Once the sorcerer gathers enough motes, she releases the spell and invokes its effects.

In addition to motes, spells cost Willpower. The sorcerer pays the spell’s Willpower cost when taking the first shape sorcery action toward its casting. If she successfully casts her spell, she regains one Willpower point.

A sorcerer in Initiative Crash does not regain a Willpower upon successful casting, and her spells all cost three more motes to cast.

SHAPING RITUALS

Sorcerers all learn at least one *shaping ritual*—a ritual action or ceremony they can perform to gather (and often hold) a number of extra sorcerous motes. Sorcerers can call on these “banked” motes only to help pay spells’ mote costs.





Part Two:

Tomb of Dreams

In the latter days of the First Age, before the Dragon-Blooded and Sidereals usurped and murdered the rulers of the world, one Circle of Solars created a cache of powerful magical tools and talismans. They pooled their occult knowledge and sorcerous might to summon a great demon, they bound it into a nightmare-wracked sleep, and they hollowed out a space within its dreams in which to hide their treasures.

They died, these Solars did, when the First Age ended in blood and betrayal, but the demon's bindings held. It has slept since. It dreams of escape from its torment; it would slip out of the prison of its own dreams and into the minds of Creation's peoples. What it would do next it does not know—anything would be better than the bindings placed upon it.

It cannot wake while the anchoring artifacts remain cached within its dream-prison, and it was charged to let only its Solar masters withdraw them. While the Solars were themselves dead and imprisoned, the demon had no hope. It could only wait and slumber for millennia.

Now the tenor of Creation's dreams has changed, and the demon can feel it. The Solars have returned and the demon reaches out to their minds. Reborn Solars are blessed or plagued with memories of their earlier lives, and the demon's sendings hide among these. *Here is your legacy*, they say, *a cache of your treasures. Claim and retrieve your tools, and use them as you will. They are your birthright.*

All it needs is a new Circle of Solars to retrieve what it guards.

But while the demon itself has remained bound, its prison is not untouched. Over the years, a river god and an elemental firebird, refugees and exiles from other spirit courts, found the entrance to the cache and slipped inside. And now they too are trapped. The demon will not permit them to leave as long as its own bindings hold.

The god would keep the demon bound even if she must stay as its jailor. She'd like to escape, but has long resigned

herself to staying. If given the choice between imprisonment to keep the demon here or freedom and its release, she'll decide she finds respite within its dreams, away from the politics of Creation's spirit courts. She was ousted from her position outside when cataclysm diverted her river to a new course, and rival gods conspired to strip her of her office. Here, she believes she can serve to keep a dangerous enemy of the world sealed away, and in so doing find peace, worth, and meaning.

The elemental yearns for freedom, not just for itself, but for the demon as well. The Demon Princes were the enemies of the gods, thrown down by the Exalted at history's dawn, but it cares not for these ancient politics, and besides, not all their lesser progeny had a place in that war.

How to Run Tomb of Dreams

In **Exalted**, it's normal for player characters to have a lot of agency, not only in how they approach the problems in front of them but in what problems they choose to face. The returning Solars are not just fantastic combatants; they're intellectually, socially, and mystically potent enough to make their own way in the world—they can travel widely, establish or assume control of institutions, and pursue self-chosen agendas. As a demo scenario, **Tomb of Dreams** limits the arena of play to a self-contained environment and sets a clear goal for the players—escape from a demon's dream, possibly profiting along the way. But even so, the players are free to approach the scenario any way they want.

Tomb of Dreams isn't presented as a linear dungeon crawl or series of events for the player characters to experience in order. Instead, it's a collection of narrative elements for the players to interact with—an environment, characters with goals and powers to join or oppose, treasures for the characters to pursue, and a collection of potential scenes and ideas. Most groups running **Tomb of Dreams** will begin similarly, but are likely to veer in different directions depending on the actions the players take.

Your job as the Storyteller is to portray what happens when the player characters push against these elements, and to ensure the players find those results interesting, exciting, and fun. This means rising action and a gripping finale—some groups may want a big fight, but others may prefer a tense negotiation or a cathartic airing of grievances and reconciliation.

Setting Overview

The interior of the demon's prison appears as a tropical volcanic island, buffeted on its coasts by a howling storm. The whole place is caustic—water seems to sting, metal develops a light tarnish, cloth is discolored. The sea around the island teems with toothy, tentacled, scaled, and phosphorescent life out of the ocean's deep benthic zone—angler fish, cephalopods, jellyfish, sea-snakes, and deep-sea worms. It seems to go on forever.

The island proper can be roughly divided into the following areas:

The Reef: A small reef jutting out of the ocean, connected to the southern edge of the island via a narrow rocky path. This is where anyone who enters the prison appears, from which they can make their way to the island proper.

The Coast: The coast of the island is nigh-unclimbable cliffs to the north and west; to the south and east is a rocky beach and the Circle's entry-point to the island proper. To the northeast is an active volcano, spewing lava eternally into the ocean.

The Caves: Down the cliffs on the island's west face are rocky paths leading into deep caves, in which one of the artifacts rests.

The Interior: The interior of the island is a dense jungle in which grows euphoric and hallucinogenic flowering vines. Over the years, the god and elemental have cleared paths through it, and both partake of the flowers to pass the years.

The Volcano: The island is volcanic and smoking as if near eruption—lava flows slowly from a peak to the island's eastern side. One of the artifacts rests inside the caldera.

The Trench: In the ocean to the apparent east of the island is a deep abyssal trench. Several of the artifact-anchors are found there, so the Circle will need to travel into it. In the context of the trench, the water is breathable—more a dream of the ocean floor than its reality.

These locations are discussed in greater detail below under “Scenes.”



Cast of Characters

Tomb of Dreams centers around the relationship between three personalities—a god, an elemental, and a demon—as disrupted by the arrival of the players’ Solar Exalted. Now that the Solars have returned, the demon has hope of escape and the firebird wants to aid it. The god wants things to continue as they were, with the cache serving as its sanctuary and with the demon safely jailed.

Spirits in **Exalted** share some common traits.

Many gods are immortal; they don’t age and are difficult to permanently kill unless attacked by special magic (which the players’ characters here don’t have). If reduced to no health in combat, they disperse, and can take weeks or months to reform. Some gods thus killed never reform, though, and the god trapped in the demon’s dream isn’t sure if she’ll reform normally if killed here. Elementals aren’t immortal in this manner. In practice, this means that any spirit the PCs kill in combat is gone for at least the remainder of the scenario, and even the god won’t be reckless with her life.

Many spirits spend most of their time *immaterial*. An immaterial spirit is invisible and intangible; it can see and hear, but cannot be seen, heard, or felt. It can usually pass through obstructions. While immaterial spirits are visible, audible, and solid to each other, when an immaterial spirit wants to interact with a material being, one of the parties involved needs some sort of magic to bridge the gap. The natively-immaterial god in this scenario has the Materialize Charm, which she can use to become solid. The elemental and the demon are both naturally material in the dream.

Quick Characters

Most Storyteller characters in **Exalted Third Edition** don’t have a full set of traits the way PCs do; instead, they’re expressed as *Quick Characters*, who have pre-determined dice pools for the sorts of actions they’re likely to perform, including dice pools for combat and social influence. Most of this is self-explanatory—QCs have a Senses dice pool in place of (Perception + Awareness) and a Combat Movement pool that serves as both (Dexterity + Athletics) for rushes and (Dexterity + Dodge) to disengage. In combat, like player characters, QCs’ Damage trait applies only to **withering** attacks; the

STORYTELLER CHARACTERS AND WILLPOWER

Players generally won’t spend all their characters’ Willpower in a single scene, as they know the next scene is coming up. Even if Storyteller characters only appear for a single scene, they should still behave as though they have lives outside the spotlight. As a rule of thumb, a Storyteller character should resist spending more than half her Willpower points in a single scene unless her life is under serious threat. If she’s subject to social influence, she should only spend Willpower to resist if she has an Intimacy or strong motivation opposed to it.

damage they do with **decisive** attacks depends on their initiative. Unlike player characters, however, QCs roll the same attack pool for **withering** and **decisive** attacks.

Cseke, the Nightmare Cloud, Demon of the Second Circle

The demon’s physical form is everywhere and nowhere until the players gather all the anchors together, but the dream is filled with its psychic emanations, which it projects to interact with anyone within the dream.

The Wolf Emanation

The wolf emanation is a part of the demon’s psyche turned against itself—bound to destroy intruders who risk waking it. Its role is to confront the player characters when they first enter the dream and fight them again later on. It appears as a great lupine beast of smoke and ember, six feet tall at the shoulder, with glowing cinder eyes.

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 5; **Join Battle:** 9 dice

Personal Notes: 70

Health Levels: -0/-1x3/-2x3/-4/Incap.

Actions: Read Intentions: 8 dice; Senses: 11 dice;

Social influence: 6 dice; Stealth: 7 dice

Appearance 3, Resolve 4, Guile 3

COMBAT

Attack (Bite): 9 dice (Damage 11)

Combat Movement: 8 dice

Evasion 4, Parry 3

Soak/Hardness: 6/0

MERITS

Shadow Harry: Whenever the wolf emanation inflicts 5+ damage with a single attack of any kind, shadowy tendrils arise from the substance of the dream to entangle the target character's legs, rendering them incapable of moving from that spot until they take a miscellaneous difficulty 3 (Strength + Athletics) action to break free. This effect also ends if the wolf flees or is destroyed.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Principle of Motion (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant): The wolf surges through the substance of the dream in a pulse of smoke and shadow with terrifying speed. It may act twice on its turn without any of the normal flurry penalties, and will most likely use this Charm to attack twice.

Shattering Howl (8m; Simple; Instant): The demon wolf unleashes a terrible howl that rends the substance of the dream with the weight of its long centuries of anguish. This is treated as a 15-die **withering** attack (damage 13) against all enemies within medium range. After a character has heard the howl once, they are immune to it for the remainder of their stay in the dream, so the wolf will likely withhold this Charm until its second encounter with the Solars.

Dreams of the Pack (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant): When the wolf emanation fights alongside a pack of lesser wolf-dreams, as in its second encounter with the Solars, it may use this Charm whenever the wolf pack battle group attacks, allowing the pack emanation to roll twice and keep the better of the two rolls.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Smoke Body Defense (5m; Reflexive; Instant): Attacks struggle to find purchase in the wolf's smoky body, though this Charm becomes less effective the harder the Solars press their advantage in battle. Smoke Body Defense raises the emanation's soak by its current Evasion rating (subject to onslaught penalties).

The Pack Emanation

The pack emanation is a group of five lesser wolf emanations that emerge during the player characters' second confrontation with that entity. They use the rules for a battle group.

This battle group shares the wolf emanation's dice pools and Harry power, but cannot use its Charms. Instead, it is a battle group with Size 1, average Drill, and Might 2.

USING BATTLE GROUPS

The pack emanation's battle group traits—Size, Drill, and Might—affect its attack and damage pools and its Defense. The battle group uses the traits of the Wolf Emanation. It adds +2 on attack and damage rolls, +2 Defense, and +1 soak from its Size, Drill, and Might. Because it's only Size 1, it suffers dissolution automatically if reduced to zero Magnitude, which it uses instead of Health.

All you need to remember is that it has static initiative, takes damage to its Magnitude from both withering and decisive attacks, it attacks anyone in range every time it makes an attack action, always uses withering attacks (and doesn't benefit from double 10s on damage rolls), and its attacks target the Health of player characters in Crash.

The Serpent Emanation

The serpent emanation lives in the depths of the cave system on the island's western face. Not initially inclined to violence, it reflects the demon's wisdom and cunning, and represents an opportunity for the player characters to have an initial confrontation with the demon—or at least part of it—before confronting it at the end of the scenario. It appears as a giant constrictor snake of burned wood and charcoal, cracks on its surface glowing with internal heat.

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 6; **Join Battle:** 3 dice

Personal Notes: 60

Health Levels: -0/-1/-2/-4/Incap.

Actions: Read Intentions: 8 dice; Senses: 6 dice; Social influence: 8 dice; Stealth: 10 dice

Appearance 2, Resolve 3, Guile 4

COMBAT

Attack (Bite): 3 dice (Damage 8)

Combat Movement: 8 dice

Evasion 4, Parry 1

Soak/Hardness: 2/0

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Disorienting Retreat (10m; Reflexive; Instant): If threatened, the serpent may briefly cause the caverns and passages of the dream to twist in on one another, rendering coherent movement impossible for two rounds. During this time, it can disengage from any enemies without the need for a roll, and will use this opportunity to attempt to escape from its attackers.

The Monster Emanation

The monster emanation is a great cephalopodan beast of molten rock lairing in the abyssal trench to the west of the island. Near-mindless, it reflects the demon's anger, as well as an opportunity to imply that within the dream, the demon is potentially far vaster in scope the other emanations suggest. Its role is to provide either an ominous scene in which the players must evade something far vaster than they in pursuit of their goals, or, if they're really into having lots of fights, a big exciting battle with a giant lava-squid.

The monster itself will not descend to attack the players—the undersea ruins they explore are too cluttered for its main bulk to squeeze itself in—but instead will snake out long, volcanic tentacles to attack, each of which is treated like a separate monster. All tentacles share a single pool of Essence and Willpower, however.

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 6; **Join Battle:** 5 dice

Personal Notes: 80

Health Levels: -0/-1x2/-2x2/-4/Incap

Actions: Senses: 4 dice

Appearance 1, Resolve 4, Guile 0

COMBAT

Attack (Slam): 10 dice (Damage 17)

Combat Movement: 6 dice (only useful to oppose disengage actions)

Evasion 3, Parry 4

Soak/Hardness: 9/0

MERITS

Magma Tentacle: Each magma tentacle is an extrusion of a great nightmare-monster, looping in from the dark waters to attack the Solars. It can't 'move' from the point where it appears, but is able to stretch to attack opponents at out to short range. Magma tentacles do not combine to become a battle group.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Volcanic Strike (8m; Supplemental; Instant): This Charm supplements a **withering** tentacle slam, causing the tentacle to surge with veins of fire. If the attack inflicts five or more points of Initiative damage, then the targeted character also suffers one point of lethal damage.

The Demon Itself

Cseke, the demon itself, if finally confronted in combat (see "Confrontation with the Demon," later), is a roiling cloud of smoke and ember with no set form—it assumes the temporary appearances and voices of others trapped within its dream in order to attack intruders.

Essence: 4; **Willpower:** 8; **Join Battle:** 10 dice

Personal Notes: 90

Health Levels: -0x3/-1x3/-2x3/-4/Incap

Intimacies: *Defining:* "I must guard the artifacts left in my care" (sorcerously-enforced); "Let the dream end that I might be free;" *Major:* "I wish for the dreams of Creation to be my playthings"

Actions: Read Intentions: 6 dice; Senses: 6 dice; Social influence: 6 dice; Stealth: 6 dice

Appearance 1, Resolve 5, Guile 3

COMBAT

Attack (Phantasmal Attacks): 10 dice (Damage 16)

Combat Movement: 6 dice

Evasion 4, Parry 5

Soak/Hardness: 9/4

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Principle of Motion (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant): The demon may act twice without any normal flurry penalties, and may take the same action twice if desired (normally attacking twice).

Shattering Roar (15m; Simple; Instant): Cseke unleashes an unearthly howl of sufficient volume to shatter bones. This is an attack rolling 9 dice, which targets a single character out to medium range. A **withering** howl has a base damage of 20. A **decisive** howl adds extra successes on the attack roll to its damage pool. This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Manifestation of the Abyss (20m; Reflexive; Instant): Cseke summons a magma tentacle out of the depths of its inchoate form. This tentacle is identical to those of the monster in the trench. It is 'anchored' to the demon and moves when the demon does, and fights on the demon's behalf until destroyed. The demon may only use this Charm once per round, on its turn, and may summon a total of no more than its Essence in tentacles (so 4 at most at any one time).

OPTIONAL: Dreadwolf Summons (15m; Reflexive; Instant): This Charm may only be triggered in the moment Cseke drives an enemy into Initiative Crash or Incapacitates them. The demon summons forth a pack emanation of demon wolves around the Crashed or Incapacitated character, conjuring them from the pain and despair of the character and giving them life with its infernal Essence. This pack dissipates back into raw Essence after three full rounds if not defeated prior to that. **Only add this Charm if your group of players has proven quite adept at mastering combat challenges, and you feel that Cseke would not present an enjoyable final battle otherwise.**

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Infernal Renewal (10m; Simple; Instant): The demon may become dormant for a round, using its Essence to knit its wounds. This Charm restores one damaged health level.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Materialize (45m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): The demon must build a body for itself to act in Creation. When it does so, all characters momentarily glimpse a manifestation of their worst fears and imaginings, which quickly dissolves into the inchoate shadow that is Cseke.

Suma, the River-God

A former river-god ousted from her domain due to the politics of the celestial bureaucracy, she slipped into the demon's dream and was trapped. She appears as a tall woman in a blue robe, with hair like a waterfall. She carries a fishing spear.

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 7; **Join Battle:** 7 dice

Personal Notes: 70

Health Levels: -0x2/-1x2/-2x3/-4/Incap

Intimacies: *Defining:* "I am the warden of this prison;" *Major:* "Everything has a place;" Creation's spirit courts (bitter resentment); *Minor:* The island and surrounding environs (discomfort); Teo (distrust); Creation (responsibility of care); The Solar Exalted (deference)—A scene in which Suma decides to set herself against the player characters counts as a scene spent abandoning this Intimacy, in which case it will be absent in the next scene in which she appears.

Actions: Read Intentions: 6 dice; Senses: 6 dice; Social influence: 8 dice; Stealth: 4 dice

Appearance 3, Resolve 4, Guile 3

COMBAT

Attack (Fishing Spear): 8 dice (Damage 14)

Attack (Brawling, if disarmed): 4 dice (Damage 10)

Combat Movement: 7 dice

Evasion 3, Parry 4 (1 if disarmed)

Soak/Hardness: 8/4

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Principle of Motion (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant): Suma moves with the speed of raging rapids, deploying a series of swift attacks with her fishing spear. She may attack twice on her turn. This Charm ceases to function if her fishing spear is disarmed, and cannot be used to grant her any form of bonus actions other than attacking twice.

Floodwater Strike (5m; Supplemental; Instant): This Charm surrounds one of Suma's attacks with a corona of rushing waters. If the attack succeeds, it knocks her target back one range band and leaves them prone on the ground, in addition to doing damage normally.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Whitewater Rapids Defense (5m; Reflexive; Instant): When Suma faces more than one opponent within close range, she may whirl her fishing spear and conjure streamers of water to protect herself. This raises her Parry by three points against a single attack. Whitewater Rapids Defense cannot be used if her fishing spear is disarmed.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Materialize (35m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Suma may materialize within the demon's dream, as described in the Shore scene.

Teo, the Firebird

An elemental firebird of brilliant, vibrant flame of every color, Teo can shift at will between the form of a large heron with feathers of fire and an androgynous human-like figure.

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 7; **Join Battle:** 8 dice

Personal Notes: 70

Health Levels: -0x2/-1x2/-2x3/-4x2/Incap

Intimacies: *Defining:* "We should be able to make our own ways in the world;" *Major:* The demon (outrage on the behalf of); Creation (distant curiosity); "I am brilliant, beautiful, and worthy of respect;" *Minor:* Visitors (curiosity); The wolf emanation (fear); The island and surrounding environs (affection); Suma (distrust)

Actions: Read Intentions: 7 dice; Senses: 5 dice; Social influence: 9 dice; Stealth: 2 dice

Appearance 4, Resolve 3, Guile 4

COMBAT

Attack (Burning Hands, in Human form): 7 dice (Damage 10)

Attack (Burning Feather Buffet, in Heron form): 9 dice (Damage 13)

Combat Movement: 9 dice

Evasion 4, Parry 2

Soak/Hardness: 8/4

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Rain of Burning Feathers (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Teo spreads its arms or wings wide, scattering burning feathers in every direction. This is an

8 die **withering** attack against all characters out to medium range; however, Teo only gains half the damage it inflicts in Initiative from each character damaged by the attack (round up).

Garda Aspirant's Claw (5m; Supplemental; Instant): This Charm supplements a **decisive** attack, wreathing it in a terrible corona of flames and adding three dice to the damage roll.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Burning Wings Retreat (9m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant): Teo may activate this Charm after successfully defending from an attack, allowing it to automatically retreat two range bands away from its attacker without need of a disengage action.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Heart-Warming Smile (10m; Supplemental; Instant): Flushing itself with the Essence of fire, Teo may attempt to recover from social faux-pas by making itself tremendously appealing. This Charm may be used after a failed instill action designed to make characters view the elemental favorably, allowing Teo to re-roll the action and keep the second result.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Materialize (35m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Teo may materialize within the demon's dream, as described in the Shore scene.

Artifacts

The Solars have been drawn here with promises of great treasures from ages past, and that promise is no lie. Not all of the treasures are immediately useful, however.

The Armory

Among the artifacts stored in the abyssal trench to the island's east are a collection of dread weapons. When the Exalted create god-weapons of stature equal to their own Chosen might, they create them out of imperishable, magical materials—*orichalcum*, a sun-aspected golden metal; *moonsilver*, a flexible and variable silver that glints with the moon's light; *jade*, translucent white, black, red, green, or blue rock that resonates with the power of the five elements; *starmetal*, rare rainbow-hued meteoric iron with power over fate; and *soulsteel*, black metal mined from the Underworld and infused with the imprisoned souls of the dead.

The weapons cached within the demon's dream are all unique—somewhere in Creation must be records of their origins, deeds, and powers. But such things are not recorded within the armory, and the demon knows not their histories. It would take research in the world outside to find their pedigrees and evoke from them their full occult might; in the meantime they can be wielded as simple (but devastatingly potent) killing instruments by any Solar who would attune to them. Attuning an artifact weapon requires committing motes equal to its attunement cost—without attunement, they're simply too heavy to make effective use of in battle.

Provided are the attunement cost, Overwhelming value, and tags for each weapon, as well as the combat

stats—withering attack pool, decisive attack pool, withering damage, and Parry defense (if applicable)—for each as wielded by each sample character. The players will have to decide which character uses which weapon.

Killing Tide, the Daiklave

With a blade five feet long and six inches wide, this is a massive straight sword of orichalcum, inlaid with black jade in a pattern of tempestuous waves.

Attunement: 5; Overwhelming value: 5; Tags: Lethal, Balanced, Melee

- For Volfer: Withering 11, Decisive 8, Damage 17, Parry 5
- For Fire Orchid: Withering 10, Decisive 7, Damage 15, Parry 5
- For Iay: Withering 7, Decisive 4, Damage 14, Parry 3
- For Faka Kun: Withering 8, Decisive 5, Damage 14, Parry 3
- For Mirror Flag: Withering 6, Decisive 3, Damage 14, Parry 3

Deadwind, the Reaver Daiklave

The reaver daiklave is a brutish, square-tipped chopping weapon with a single cutting edge, with a blade four feet long and a foot wide. The majority of its cutting edge is

green jade, but the back, blunt edge is soulsteel in the shape of a spinal column, which curves into the haft. It gives the impression of nothing so much as an enormous cleaver.

Attunement: 5; Overwhelming value: 4; Tags: Lethal, Melee, Chopping

- For Volfer: Withering 11, Decisive 8, Damage 17, Parry 5
- For Fire Orchid: Withering 10, Decisive 7, Damage 15, Parry 5
- For Iay: Withering 7, Decisive 4, Damage 14, Parry 3
- For Faka Kun: Withering 8, Decisive 5, Damage 14, Parry 3
- For Mirror Flag: Withering 6, Decisive 3, Damage 14, Parry 3

Kalinaki, the Reaper Daiklave

A long, thin, curved blade, five feet by one inch, with a single cutting edge. It's of simple orichalcum, polished to a mirror sheen.

It uses the same traits as the daiklave.

Great Fanq, the Direlance

A tremendous two-handed spear, with a six-foot haft of exotic wood set with starmetal filigree and fitted with a foot-long blade of moonsilver at its end. Though the moonsilver is solid, it reflects light like the surface of a rippling pond.

Attunement: 5; Overwhelming value: 5; Tags: Lethal, Melee, Piercing, Two-Handed

- For Volfer: Withering 9, Decisive 8, Damage 19, Parry 4
- For Fire Orchid: Withering 8, Decisive 7, Damage 17, Parry 4
- For Iay: Withering 5, Decisive 4, Damage 16, Parry 2
- For Faka Kun: Withering 6, Decisive 5, Damage 16, Parry 3

- For Mirror Flag: Withering 4, Decisive 3, Damage 16, Parry 2

Empty Sun, the Infinite Chakram

A razored ring of orichalcum and white jade about a foot across, the infinite chakram ricochets back to its wielder's hand as soon as it either misses or strikes its target

Attunement: 5; Overwhelming value: 3; Tags: Lethal, Thrown (Medium), Special

- For Volfer: Withering 3*, Decisive 3, Damage 15
- For Fire Orchid: Withering 3*, Decisive 3, Damage 13
- For Iay: Withering 2*, Decisive 2, Damage 12
- For Faka Kun: Withering 10*, Decisive 10, Damage 12
- For Mirror Flag: Withering 5*, Decisive 5, Damage 12

* +5 at Close, +4 at Short, +3 at Medium, +0 at Long; only Faka Kun can attack out to Long range with this weapon, and only through the use of her Triple-Distance Attack Technique Charm

Syanotis, the Skycutter

A two-foot razored war boomerang of white and red jade, inlaid with moonsilver. In the air, the moonsilver in its construction flexes to alter its flight; it returns to its wielder's hand unless she botches the attack roll.

Attunement: 5; Overwhelming value: 4; Tags: Lethal, Thrown (Long), Special

- For Volfer: Withering 3*, Decisive 3, Damage 17
- For Fire Orchid: Withering 3*, Decisive 3, Damage 15
- For Iay: Withering 2*, Decisive 2, Damage 14
- For Faka Kun: Withering 10*, Decisive 10, Damage 14
- For Mirror Flag: Withering 5*, Decisive 5, Damage 14

* +5 at Close, +4 at Short, +3 at Medium, +0 at Long

Glossota, the Powerbow

None of the sample Solars can effectively wield this massive bow of blue and green jade, strung with a single starmetal wire so tightly that without attunement it cannot even be drawn. No arrows are stocked with these god-weapons, and the characters aren't carrying any either. Still, it's a treasure of the First Age, its value incalculable, and it's one of the demon's anchors.

The Ancient Lute

In the caves to the island's west can be found a lute, created with green jade and an exotic wood that's as white as new-fallen snow, with strings of moonsilver. Anyone who commits five motes and succeeds at a (Dexterity + Performance) roll at difficulty 5 can play a haunting melody that resonates in listeners' bones—those who hear the song feel their aches and pains recede while the song continues (negating two points of wound penalties).

Thereafter, they heal and recover from illness twice as fast, until they're completely healthy and free of any damage, after which they can't benefit from the effect again for a year and a day.

The Tapestry

In the volcanic caldera rests the tapestry. Its purpose is not apparent—it appears as a square of dingy cloth woven of coarse brown thread, about five feet to a side. From the corner of the eye, or exposed to the light of a Solar's anima, it seems to harbor faint patterns dyed into the thread—figures engaged in war, or in temples praying, or raising cities. Without a Solar anima to illuminate it, it seems unmarked. Who the figures are or what they're doing is inobvious, and nothing the sample characters can do within the dream will actually cause it to react to their presence or *do* anything, save serve as one of the demon's anchors. It's clearly very old, and it must be of value to be worth storing here—what could it be?



Scenes

The following is a list of likely scenes for you to run the players through, until they do something to push the scenario off the rails, at which point it'll become a list of scenes for you to plunder for ideas.

Scenario Beginnings and Arrival

The scenario begins with the players' Circle finding themselves on the reef. When describing the environment, emphasize their disorientation—the last thing they remember was entering a cave deep in a forest in the Southeast, amidst visible signs of First Age ruins, having been beckoned there by their dreams. They were nowhere near a sea.

Did they arrive separately, or all at once? Do they know each other? Have they met previously, traveled and adventured elsewhere before this? When they arrived, did they send someone ahead into the cave to scout while the rest waited, or did they all enter at once? Encourage the players to detail their characters' relationships and the circumstances of their entrance, either via in-character or out-of-character discussion, but regardless of the circumstances of their entry, they're all here now. None of them can be really sure *how* they got here—they don't know what the exact moment was that they made the transition into the dream.

And there's no apparent way back.

The storm whips their clothes and hair; the rain feels needle-sharp and stings their eyes. Behind them is ocean as far as they can see; beneath the storm-wracked surface they can just barely make out an undersea forest of crimson and violet weeds, benthic life swimming between them.

Before them is the island, tropical trees drenched in the downpour and tossed by the wind. Even from this distance, the light of the lava flow to the eastern shore is visible. The reef is a quarter-mile separate from the shore proper, connected via a rocky path that varies between five and ten feet wide. The path is elevated ten feet above the sea's surface—the waves, though violent, don't reach it.

Once the players take in the scenery and step on the path, they're confronted by the wolf emanation—its eyes appear, two embers floating in the air, and then the wind pulls smoke and ember out of them, shaping it into the creature's body.

Option 1: Fight!

If Mirror Flag is not among the player characters, the wolf emanation attacks them immediately, though its materialization is lengthy and obvious enough that it's no surprise attack. This should serve as a quick introduction to **Exalted Third Edition's** combat system. The rocky path is narrow enough, and the reef small enough, that the whole fight takes place within medium range or closer. If the player characters defeat the wolf, it disperses back into smoke and the wind carries it away. If they succeed at a social influence check during combat aimed at stopping its attack, it does just that, and likewise fades—as the wind whips away the smoke of its body, the wolf calls out in a low, rumbling voice: “Turn back. This place is not for you.”

If the wolf “wins” the fight—that is, if it maneuvers itself to such an advantage that it can make a decisive attack with three times as much Initiative as its target has remaining health, which is *probably* enough to strike a killing blow, it stalls, begins to shudder and growl and snap at the air, and then fades with an anguished howl. This is first because the demon doesn't want to kill its potential rescuers, no matter how the wolf emanation has been twisted by the terms of its imprisonment to that end, and second because it's no fun to kill the player characters during the first scene of an introductory adventure.

Option 2: Fell Omen

If Mirror Flag is among the player characters, her diplomatic immunity prevents the wolf emanation from attacking unless attacked first—at least at this point. It poses menacingly at the beginning of the path like a black omen-dog out of fable and, if confronted, exhorts: “Turn back. This place is not for you.” If the players try to push past it or engage it in conversation (for example, to ask “How are we supposed to do that?”), it disperses back into smoke without answer.

The Shore

The players will almost certainly have their characters follow the path to the island in search of shelter and answers (unless you have the sort of group that decides to jump into the water, in which case you might consider having them find their way to the trench encounter). The path connects to a beach—its coarse black volcanic sand is broken by jagged basalt spires like teeth set into a lower jaw, angled backwards toward the island, each ranging from as tall as a human being to about three times that. The beach is about a mile long and slopes up to the island's forested interior—at both ends of the beach, basalt cliffs rise up from the sand.

This is where the players meet the first of the spirits. Which spirit they meet depends on whether their anima banners are flaring. Suma knows the characters have entered the dream, and will come to the beach to see and spy on them, but if any of the characters have anima banners at burning intensity or higher, the light will attract Teo. In Teo's presence, Suma will retreat to meet with them later, hopefully without the firebird nearby.

Option 1: Meet the Firebird

The elemental burns with riotous colors, not just reds and oranges but blues and violets both deep and bright. Its flames look nothing like the wolf emanation's embers. It first makes a broad circle in the sky above, its grace in the air unaffected by the howling storm, and then lands nearby; as it does so, it takes on human shape. Once it gets a good look at them and realizes they're Solar Exalted, it will kneel and bow its head. "Greetings, Princes of the Earth. I've long waited for you."

The players will probably have questions, and it will answer relatively freely:

- "What is this place?" The dream of a sorcerously-bound sleeping spirit, anchored and made hollow by Solars of the First Age who used it to store ancient treasures.
- "How do we escape?" Gather the treasures and bring them together.



- “Who are you?” An elemental spirit who slipped into the dream accidentally centuries ago and has been trapped since. It has only hazy memories of its life before entrapment, and wants to be free, too.
- “Where are the treasures cached?” One is in the caldera of the volcano, one is *probably* in caves to the west (it’s not sure), and it doesn’t know the third cache is in the trench because it’s a firebird and never explores underwater, despite taking the form of a heron.
- “What was that wolf-thing?” An emanation of the bound spirit, twisted to prevent intruders from taking the treasures.
- “Are there more figments or emanations like that?” Yes, there’s a voice in the caves, but Teo was once nearly killed by the wolf, so it’s never explored far into them.

Teo will not be forthcoming that the bound spirit is a demon, or that taking all the treasures will free it. If asked about the precise nature of the dreaming spirit, it will feign ignorance—“Don’t let the Solars find out they’re freeing a demon” is one of its agendas for this encounter, which the players may attempt to discover via Sense Motive actions.

If the player characters trick, cajole, or convince it to admit the spirit is a demon, how it reacts will depend on the impression they’ve made on it over the course of the encounter. It feels passionately that the demon’s imprisonment is unjust—that it was bound here not as punishment for ancient crimes, but merely because its nature made it useful for this purpose. Teo may make an impassioned attempt to convince the players to free it, or, if they disagree, may become antagonistic, even going so far as to taunt them that they can’t escape otherwise. If confronted with questions of what the demon will do when free, it will assert that doesn’t matter, because it’s unjust to imprison something for crimes it has not yet committed.

Teo may agree to show the player characters to the caves and the caldera, or may leave them to find their own routes. If the players establish a rapport with it *and* there’s few of them and they’re not terribly skilled combatants, it might agree to accompany them into danger, as an ally (and additional party member), but if they’re a large, combat-capable group it will try to act only as a guide, leaving any danger to them. If they’re seriously injured from the fight against the wolf emanation, it will offer to help heal them.

It won’t bring up Suma’s presence unless prompted—the two of them don’t get along, Teo doesn’t want the

player characters interacting with Suma, and it worries that bringing up Suma’s presence will raise questions like “Why don’t you want us to talk to this other spirit?” If asked directly “Are there other spirits here?” it will admit to her presence, and warn the characters that she *may* try to prevent them from taking the artifacts and freeing the spirit. If the players have gotten the demon’s nature from Teo, it’ll be frank that Suma wants the demon to stay imprisoned, but otherwise will try to be vague.

Option 2: Meet the River God

If the players do not attract Teo’s attention, they get to meet Suma first. She’ll lurk at the edge of the scene, observing them as they arrive on the island, providing a chance for either Iay or Mirror Flag to show off their Spirit-Detecting Glance and Uncanny Perception Technique Charms, and for Fire Orchid to show off her anima power that forces spirits to materialize. If Fire Orchid is not among the player characters or shows no inclination of using that power, Suma will materialize once either of the characters who can see her try to engage her in conversation.

If no one is playing Iay or Mirror Flag and the Circle has no way to tell she’s spying on them, and the players are lost without a guide, she’ll eventually decide to materialize and introduce herself to the characters. “Princes of the Earth. What is your purpose here?”

She has a different set of goals from Teo.

- “What is this place?” A prison for a dreaming demon, anchored ages ago by the player characters’ predecessors.
- “Who are you?” Once a river-god, now the prison’s warden. This is a half-truth, which a Sense Motive check will reveal—warden is a role she’s given herself, not something she was assigned. She’ll admit this, if pressed, but if the player characters assume she’s genuinely a warden and afford her respect thereby, she won’t disabuse them of the notion.
- “What was that wolf-thing?” A facet of the demon, bound against itself to prevent anyone from trying to free it.
- “Are there other demon emanations?” Yes, a great monster kraken in the deep waters to the west, and something in the caves to the east.

When the players inevitably raise the question of treasures or escape, the conversation can go a few ways. Suma knows that taking the treasures will free the demon, which she doesn't want to encourage—she begins the conversation assuming the Circle can escape using their own Solar magic, *somehow*. Once she realizes they can't leave on their own, she'll reassess—they're not going to accept imprisonment, so what can be done? If there's three to five Solars in the Circle and they're combat powerhouses, she can propose gathering the treasures to rouse the demon, and then killing it, but if they don't already seem eager to antagonize it, she'll simply say that gathering the treasures will allow them to escape, and begin planning how to turn them against the demon (or the demon against them) when that happens.

If there's only two or three Solars in the Circle, and they don't seem very combat-capable, it's going to occur to her that they're not strong enough to kill the demon once they rouse it, and in order to prevent them from freeing it, *she's going to have to kill them*.

If the conversation concludes with her deciding to ally with the Solars or manipulate them into killing the demon, she'll offer to accompany them as a guide, but unlike Teo she won't accompany them into danger, since she'll only ally with them if they're strong enough to handle themselves.

If she turns *against* the Solars over the course of the conversation *and they realize this*, and she can't convince them they're wrong, she'll attempt to escape. Otherwise, she'll offer to guide them to the trench in the west in order to lure them into what she imagines will be a fatal encounter with the monster.

If the Circle seems really onboard with a plan to kill the demon, she'll volunteer that there's another spirit here, a firebird that's been corrupted or seduced by the demon who'll probably try to stop them. This isn't subterfuge—that's how she sees it, so Sense Motive won't reveal a lie. Otherwise, she'll be reticent to mention the elemental, but will relay the same information if the player characters raise the subject. If she's plotting Solar murder, she'll describe it as maddened by ages of imprisonment, and warn the player characters never to trust anything it says. This is what she believes, but presented with heavy and deliberate bias, which Sense Motive might reveal.

(Of course, it's entirely within the power of the characters to out-lie Suma, convince her the demon should be freed, or simply make such a good impression on her that she can't bear to be so coldhearted as to kill them, in which case you may have to start winging things.)

MY ONLY PLAYER WANTS TO PLAY AS MIRROR FLAG!

Ensure the player understands she can use Mirror Flag's prodigious social talents to recruit either Teo or Suma as a guide and ally. Most encounters can be resolved without any violence, with the exception of the fight at the caldera—for that, cut the pack emanation out of the scenario and have the wolf attack alone. One of the spirits should be able to help with the fight—if Mirror Flag manages to alienate Teo, forget the bit about Suma not being able to tolerate the caldera's heat.

The Caves

If the characters meet Teo first, it will direct them to the caves to the west.

While the eastern side of the island is dominated by the volcano but otherwise slopes down into the sea, the western side slopes upward until abruptly cut by cliffs, five hundred feet high—the island almost seems to have been torn away from a larger continent. At its westernmost point, a narrow path winds down the cliffs, which are carved with gigantic sculptures. Here one can make out a massive arm holding an equally massive scroll; there a leg descends into the water. The sculptures are huge and the path winds among them; it's not possible to find a vantage point from which the whole massive bas relief can be seen. Eventually the path leads through the mouth of a gigantic cave fifty feet above the waterline, and then continues down, down, far below the surface of the sea.

There's no light source in the caves. Teo can shed light if it accompanies the characters, or they can ignite their caste marks to shed a dim light—just enough to navigate by. Otherwise, it's a (Wits + Survival) roll, difficulty 1, to scavenge materials for torches from the jungle above and to get them lit. The stone is worn smooth, as if by millennia of passing tides, and the caves are humid and suffused with the sounds of dripping water and the waves outside. They're winding but not maze-like enough to warrant needing a map.

Waiting in the dark of the caves is the serpent emanation. It will speak before it's seen: "Why come you here?"

The serpent is governed by fascination. As an emanation of the dream, it's not aware of its imprisonment the way



Suma and the elemental are; it believes it's been here forever. If informed it's in a dream, it might retort, what are dreams? How do the characters know everything isn't a dream?

What it wants is to learn about the Circle. It will ask them, who are they? Why are they here? What were their lives like before they came to this place? What are their hopes for the future? It yearns for knowledge about the outside world, particularly about the dreams of humanity. This is an opportunity for the players to get somewhat invested in their characters—make up some backstory and goals. Sense Motive will reveal its interest isn't *quite* wholesome or innocent—it wants to know the dreams of the peoples of Creation so that it might possess or inhabit them, in some sense. During the conversation, the serpent should admit to sending invitations into the dreams of the returning Solars—that is, it should

come out that they weren't following their own memories.

This can be a fight scene if the players find the serpent threatening and clearly *want* to fight it, but it doesn't have to be if another fight at this point would drag. The emanation eventually either decides it's heard enough of the Solars' lives or that it's tired of being asked questions of its motives, and retreats into the deeper caves. At that point, if the players follow it, they won't find it again, but they will find a great circular chamber, and at its center, an altar on which rests the lute artifact.

The Trench

If the characters meet Suma first, she'll direct them to the trench to the east, either in an attempt to help them or an attempt to kill them.

The ocean surrounding the island is not a real ocean; it's a dream of an ocean. This means, among other things, that the characters can breathe the water (as this isn't something they're likely to experiment with on their own, it's probably best just to have one of the spirits volunteer this revelation during the lead-up to exploring the ocean floor). It also means that there's no real game-mechanics to being underwater—use e.g. billowing cloth or the way the water's drag seems to put everything into slow motion in your stunts (and encourage the players to do likewise), but rules-wise, nothing is different from acting or fighting in the air.

The water isn't even thick enough to support swimming (although it does provide enough neutral buoyancy to make e.g. climbing underwater cliffs automatically successful)—the characters just walk along the sea floor.

After entering the ocean to the island's east—Suma will accompany them, if she's allied—the Circle will pass through a dense kelp forest and eventually they'll reach the edge of the abyssal trench, which they can either climb or jump down. The descent seems to take subjective, dreamlike hours, and they'll land next to the shattered ruins of a greened bronze temple, surrounded by thermal vents that light the ocean floor with a dull orange glow even as they pump sulfuric smoke upward. Columns of rock rise up around the temple, carved with prehuman language in the demon's tongue, some fallen to the ocean floor or balanced precariously against each

other—the place is a maze. Within the temple is the armory.

(You should adjust the number of weapons downward if fewer than five Solars are in play, just to avoid a situation where it's not clear how the player characters could carry them all. The reason there's more weapons than sample characters is to give players a slightly broader choice of what to equip their characters with, and to give the impression that this place is not just for them.)

During the journey to the temple, the monster emanation is nearby within the maze but always just out of sight—a massive bulk in the water, all tentacles and hooks and steam rising from lava, too big to be seen at once. When the players remove the weapons and leave the temple, they'll attract the monster's attention.

If there's three to five Solars in play, that's a good time for a big fight scene. If there's fewer than that, and Suma is with them but plotting against them, this is the point where she tries to double-cross them by attracting its attention

only to be attacked herself, providing an opportunity for the Circle to flee in the confusion. If there's fewer than three and Suma is *not* there, it's time for a tense game of squid-and-mouse where the Circle sneaks through the maze trying to avoid the thing. Eventually, they should be able to slip past it and climb back up the side of the abyss (another dreamlike experience which feels like it takes hours but shouldn't require any time at the game table). Should the Solars confront the monster, it attacks with no more tentacles per assault than the number of Solars in the Circle, and will withdraw once its tentacles are defeated. Whether it attacks again or not before the characters escape the trench is up to the Storyteller.

Stalking Wolf

At some point during their trek through the jungle to one or another of the anchors' resting places, the players should spot the wolf emanation watching them from a far-away cliff or rock prominence. Once they spot it, it retreats from view.



Meeting the Other Spirit

After retrieving their first anchor(s)—either the lute or the armory—it's time to give the players the chance to meet the other spirit. Exactly how that works is going to vary depending on what's happened so far.

- If the Solars met Teo first but it didn't travel with them into the caves, then when they exit with the lute, Teo is nowhere to be found, and Suma is spying on them—Iay or Mirror Flag can use their Charms or Suma can come forward and introduce herself if that doesn't work, as usual. If they meet up with Teo after this, it will claim

Suma threatened it off while they were exploring the caves.

- If the Solars met Teo first and it traveled with them into the caves, then Suma confronts them as they leave, claims she knows the location of another anchor, and will only agree to show them if the elemental doesn't come along. Even if they insist, the elemental can't accompany them into the ocean. Suma will try not to answer questions while the elemental is present.
- If the Solars met Suma first and she betrayed them in the trench, the elemental meets them when they reach the shore. If it comes up, Teo thought Suma was up to something and was investigating, and is surprised to discover a group of Solars.

- If the Solars met Suma first and she did not betray them in the trench, then *she* can lead them to the cave, and when they emerge, she's nowhere to be found and they're greeted by Teo, who can lead them to the caldera. Again, if they meet up with Suma later, she can claim the elemental threatened her off.

There's nothing wrong in theory with having Suma and elemental both around at the same time, but since they have radically opposed agendas and any attempt at exposition by one in the presence of the other really *ought* to provoke argument—and most groups aren't fond of sitting around and listening while two Storyteller characters argue with each other—it's best to keep each alone while they make pitches.

The Caldera

It's time to collect the last anchor.

The volcano rises from the western side of the island, a blasted, jagged slope of obsidian and basalt, dotted with crags from which spew smoke and the occasional lava plume. Reaching the caldera requires a climb up the side of the mountain, which takes some time but



isn't difficult enough to require rolls. Suma can't take the heat of the volcano, and if she's accompanying the Solars she'll have to give up halfway up the slope. The player characters, on the other hand, experience a dream of heat but suffer no mechanical effects. Teo is happy to accompany them.

From the volcano's rim, the caldera itself comes into view—a massive lake of lava around a central, raised islet of raw rock, roughly circular, wide enough that two combatants on opposite sides of the islet are at medium range from each other. The tapestry is draped atop a plinth in the center of the islet. Connecting the rim of the volcano to the islet are multiple twisty bridges of rock rising from the lava.

The moment the Solars step set foot on the islet, the ember eyes of the wolf emanation appear between them and the tapestry at the center, and the sulfurous smoke of the lava begins streaming toward them to create its body. A moment later, while that wolf's body is still forming, five more sets of eyes appear and form smaller bodies around and behind the player characters along the rocky paths. To claim the tapestry, players will have to defeat the wolf and its pack. At this point, Mirror Flag's diplomatic immunity is worthless—the demon must fulfill its binding as guardian of the artifact, loath as it may be to do so.

Confrontation With the Demon

Once the player characters gather enough of the anchors together (the lute, the tapestry, and at least *some* of the armory) the demon's bindings begin to weaken and the dream begins to collapse.

Around a central zone of stability the Solars occupy, the environment begins to shift and take on traits of everywhere they've been—the volcano is suddenly underwater, and the inner walls of its rim are covered in the huge statues that adorn the western cliffs. They're depictions of a legion of heroic figures—heroes of the sun and moon and fate and the elements—casting down and killing or

binding countless huge monsters. What was a lake of lava around the caldera's central islet is now a forest of sunken kelp beds, crimson and orange. Wolf emanations—hundreds of them—look down upon the players from the volcano's rim, and in the water above them, a shape like the monster emanation but much vaster floats. Eight of the monster-squid's tentacles drift and reach outwards, but its two longer arms end, not in leaf-shaped sucker-pads, but in the heads of two serpent emanations, both of which stare intently down at the Solars, waiting.

Where the Solars are standing has become the only “real” area within the dream. Both Suma and Teo, if they were absent, find themselves here with the Solar Circle.

(Also, any weapons from the armory the players didn't take with them out of the trench are suddenly laying on the ground at the player characters' feet.)

The entire environment, the whole world that surrounds the players, *is* the demon, and they have its attention. It waits for them to initiate action.

If they address it and ask to be let out of the dream, the serpent emanations will ask, in unison, “Do you revoke our binding?”

At this point, if Suma is present, she'll interject—“No, you can't!” She'll try to convince the player characters to refuse. She may attack them, if she believes there's a chance she can beat them. Teo, on the other hand, will try to convince them to let the demon free.

In either case, this confrontation can play out in two main ways. If the players agree to revoke the binding, the dream will collapse completely and they'll find themselves standing at the entrance to what they thought was their tomb before the scenario began, alongside Suma and the elemental (if those survive), holding any artifacts they were carrying, the rest at their feet. Of the demon there'll be no sign. From there, you'll need the **Exalted Third Edition** main rulebook to continue.

If the players *do not* agree to revoke the binding, the demon will manifest its vapor-form amidst the players and attack them and Suma, and Teo will *probably* fight by its side—but the firebird may ally with the players' characters instead, depending on what loyalties their actions have inspired.

If the players defeat the demon, the dream collapses just as if they'd freed it—they find themselves at the tomb entrance with any surviving spirits and loot, and with no sign of the demon.

ALL THESE FIGHTS ARE TOO EASY!

If the players have been handily winning their fights up until now *and* enjoy the combat system enough that too-easy wins are starting to disappoint them, throw a second independent wolf emanation into this fight alongside the original and the pack.

Volfer

Volfer doesn't speak of his Exaltation. When pressed, he'll say only this: "I had it handled; the Sun didn't need to get in my business." He's a brute and a tough and a pit-fighter, and knows his worth only through violence. And he does enjoy violence.

And yet, he's not a bully, if only because easy fights do nothing for him. He may enjoy the feel of a nose breaking against his fist, but he wants landing the hit to be a challenge. And he loves to see the prideful brought low, the officious humiliated, and the tyrannical pulled down into the mud. Though no one could accuse him of having a heart of gold, the downtrodden often find reason to be thankful for his presence anyway. From a safe distance.

Image: With his weathered face, broad shoulders, bare chest, bronzed skin, and wild hair, Volfer is the picture of an undisciplined and self-trained fighter. He bears a tattoo across his back that reads "Invulnerable and invincible."

Intimacies: *Defining:* "I enjoy bringing down the self-superior;" *Major:* Companions (guarded trust); "Life is hard, so enjoy it when you can;" *Minor:* "I resent challenges to my worth"

Equipment: Chopping sword, partial armor (bronze pauldron and hip guards). His Parry of 5 uses his Melee Ability and requires his chopping sword; if he's disarmed, it drops to 4, uses his Brawl Ability, and he can only apply it against bashing attacks unless he stunts.

Anima Powers

- At bonfire/iconic anima, Volfer resets to Initiative 4 rather than 3 after landing a successful **decisive** attack.
- Volfer adds 1 die to all intimidating social influence.

• Once per day, refreshing at dawn, Volfer can spend 10 motes to refresh outstanding reset conditions on any combat or movement Charms that have them (right now, just Thunderclap Rush Attack).

Charms

Volfer has Excellencies (p. 25) for Athletics, Awareness, Brawl (applies to Parry if disarmed), Dodge (applies to Evasion), Integrity (applies to Resolve), Melee (applies to Parry if armed), Performance, Presence, Resistance, and Survival. With Excellencies or other Charms, he can raise his static values as follows: Parry +4 (or +3 if disarmed), Evasion +2, Resolve +3. He has no way to raise Guile.

Thunderclap Rush Attack (Brawl, reflexive, instant)

For 3m, at any point in the round, Volfer can move one range band toward an opponent within short range and attack it. The target cannot defend against this attack with a clash. This doesn't have to be a Brawl attack, but does use Volfer's turn for the round. Volfer can only use this attack once per target per scene, but he can reset this limit against a target by crashing it (or by using his anima power).

Stubborn Boar Defense (Integrity, permanent)

Once Volfer has resisted a persuade action, he gains +2 to his Resolve if the issue is raised again.

Excellent Strike (Melee, supplemental, instant)

For 3 motes, Volfer gains an automatic success on one Melee attack, and his player can re-roll any 1s on the attack roll until 1s no longer appear.

Fire and Stones Strike (Melee, supplemental, instant)

On making a **withering** attack, Volfer may pay up to 5 motes before rolling—if the attack hits, each mote adds one die to the post-soak damage. On making a **decisive**

attack, he may pay up to 3 motes before rolling; for every mote spent, he may add one threshold success from the attack roll to the blow's raw damage.

One Weapon, Two Blows (Melee, reflexive, instant)

If Volfer lands a **withering** attack that reduces an opponent's Initiative from greater to lesser than his own, he may pay 3 motes to immediately make a reflexive Melee attack against that foe, which may be **withering** or **decisive**.

Tiger's Dread Symmetry (Presence, permanent)

Volfer gains an extra die to all Presence rolls and can re-roll 3 non-successes during any intimidating social influence attempts he makes.

Durability of Oak Meditation (Resistance, reflexive, one tick)

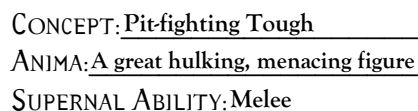
For 3 motes, Volfer can reduce the raw damage of an incoming **withering** or **decisive** attack by two; if the attack is **decisive** and Volfer is not in Crash, he also gains four Hardness.

Spirit Strengthens the Skin (Resistance, reflexive, instant)

When he suffers a **withering** attack, after the attack hits but before damage is rolled, Volfer may increase his soak by 1 per mote spent, to a maximum of +4.

Ox-Body Technique (Resistance, permanent)

Two purchases of Ox-Body Technique grant Volfer two additional -1 health levels and four additional -2 health levels.



PERCEPTION_____●●●○○
INTELLIGENCE_____●●○○○
WITS_____●●●○○

[illegible][illegible]

Being mocked, humiliated, or belittled.

CURRENT: TOTAL: CURRENT: TOTAL:

[illegible]

PARRY: 5 RESOLVE: 4
EVASION: 3 GUILE: 2
RUSH: 4 DISENGAGE: 5
JOIN BATTLE: 6

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EX3

Karal Fire Orchid

Karal Fire Orchid is the daughter of a powerful Dragon-Blooded family from the Threshold city of Lookshy. She did not Exalt as a Dragon-Blooded herself, but she honored her mother through service to the Lookshyan military, rising eventually to command more than 600 troops. Her 40-year career ended with her retirement to a farming villa, but when the Fair Folk attacked nearby settlements, she took up arms and armor one last time.

She expected to die in defense of her home. Instead, she heard the Unconquered Sun's voice, exhorting her to strike down the unrighteous and share her wisdom with those who need it. She fought off the raiders, but knew then she was now Anathema to her family and city, so she fled to ponder the blessing and burden given to her.

Fire Orchid believes it's her purpose to pass her strength and wisdom to others, and to ensure they can survive in the world without exploiting those around them.

Image: Fire Orchid's face is lined, but Exaltation has given her back the vigor of youth. Her red hair, once fading to grey, is now streaked with platinum-silver, and in her scarlet-enameled armor she moves with the strength, stamina, and purpose of an elite soldier in her prime. She bears her many scars as marks of pride.

Intimacies: *Defining:* "Those who live by the exploitation of others have lost their way;" *Major:* Those who serve beside me (loyalty); "It's up to the strong to defend the weak;" *Minor:* "Creation's unending, pointless violence wearies and disgusts me."

Equipment: Straight sword, backup short sword, reinforced breastplate. Fire Orchid's mobility penalty is -1. Her Parry of 5 uses her Melee Ability and requires her straight sword; if she switches to her short sword, it becomes 4. If she's disarmed, it drops to 2, uses her Brawl Ability, and she can only apply it against bashing attacks without a stunt.

Æthra Power

- For 10 motes, 1 Willpower, Karal Fire Orchid can supplement a **decisive** attack against a creature of darkness (demons, ghosts, etc.), preventing her Initiative from resetting to base value after the attack. At bonfire/iconic anima, this costs 5 motes, 0 Willpower. She can do this once per day; the power resets when the sun is at its zenith.



- For 7 motes, Karal Fire Orchid can order an immaterial spirit to manifest on the physical plane via a (Charisma + Presence) persuade action with one automatic success. They are compelled as if by a Defining Intimacy, but may still have other Ties or Principles with which to resist. If Fire Orchid succeeds at this persuasion, the spirit materializes at no cost to itself.

Charms

Karal Fire Orchid has Excellencies (p. 25) for Athletics, Awareness, Bureaucracy, Integrity (applies to Resolve), Lore, Melee (applies to Parry if armed), Performance, Presence, Resistance, Ride, Socialize (applies to Guile), and War. With Excellencies or other Charms, she can raise her static values as follows: Parry +3 (armed only), Resolve +4, Guile +2. She has no way to raise Evasion.

Increasing Strength Exercise (Athletics, simple, one scene)

For 3 motes or 3 Initiative, Fire Orchid can increase her Strength by one; this adds one die to the raw damage of her **withering** attacks. The Charm also adds one die to the raw damage of her **decisive** attacks, even though Strength doesn't usually affect those directly.

Enduring Mental Toughness (Integrity, reflexive, one tick)

For 1 mote, Fire Orchid can ignore wound, illness, or crippling penalties to her Resolve or Guile for one tick.

Excellent Strike (Melee, supplemental, instant)

For 3 motes, Fire Orchid gains an automatic success on one Melee attack, and her player can re-roll any 1s on the attack roll until 1s no longer appear.

Dipping Swallow Defense (Melee, reflexive, instant)

For 2 motes, Fire Orchid can ignore all penalties (except surprise penalties) to her Parry against one attack; if she

successfully parries an attack she invokes this Charm against, she gains one Initiative.

War Lion Stance (Melee, reflexive, one scene)

By committing 3 motes, Fire Orchid may choose one ally within close range; thereafter, she can take a reflexive defend other action to protect that ally if he's attacked. The effect is cancelled if she or her charge move out of close range; she must end and re-invoke the Charm to use it in defense of another ally.

Solar Counterattack (Melee, reflexive, instant)

For 3 motes, Fire Orchid may invoke this Charm in response to any attack she attempts to parry; this allows her to make a reflexive **decisive** Melee attack (*Counterattack*) against the attacker, which does *not* count as Fire Orchid's combat action for the round. This counterattack occurs after the opponent's attack roll, but before its damage roll.

Listener-Swaying Argument (Presence, supplemental, instant)

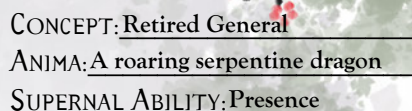
For 3 motes, Fire Orchid can enhance one of her instill or persuade actions; the action gains one automatic success. It also gains one *non-Charm* bonus die for every two points the target's Resolve is boosted by *any* means (this includes Intimacies), to a maximum of three bonus dice.

Ox-Body Technique (Resistance, permanent)

Two purchases of Ox-Body Technique grant Fire Orchid two additional -1 health levels and four additional -2 health levels.

Motive-Discerning Technique (Socialize, supplemental, instant)

For 3 motes (*Mute*), Fire Orchid can apply double 9s to a read intentions action.



Iay Selak-Amu

Iay spent his youth apprenticed to the witch of the Windward Isle in the far West, learning the songs and prayers that kept the Wyld from dissolving the island into the ever-hungry sea. When she died, he took up her role, walking the boundaries of the land and reminding the world of its existence. Dreams brought him to a remote settlement in danger, but he was too late, and as the tide drowned and dissolved it, he was lost. Days later he woke in his tiny boat adrift in the Wyld, and felt sure the hour of his death had come, but as the sun set, a voice told him not to die. He Exalted as a Solar of the Twilight Caste.

Iay returned to the witch's old place of power and studied all the secret lore she'd never shown him. He learned the deepest secrets of her magic and more; he tapped into the fundament of Creation and felt its pulse. Then he left the Windward Isle, and his wife and children, to learn more.

Image: Iay is tall, thin, and good-looking, with long, straight black hair. He wears heavy clothing of oilskin and whalehide.

Intimacies: *Defining:* "I crave knowledge"; *Major:* Threats to Creation (defiance); *Other Solars* (desire for companionship); *Minor:* My family (regret at leaving them)

Equipment: Harpoon; heavy clothing (equivalent to light armor); medicinal herbs, salves, and supplies. Iay's mobility penalty is -0. His Parry of 3 uses his Melee Ability and requires his harpoon; if he's disarmed, it drops to 1, uses his Brawl Ability, and he can only apply it against bashing attacks unless he stunts.

Animas Power

- For 5 motes, Iay Selak-Amu can project an aura of force through his anima, reflexively gaining 5 Hardness for one turn. At the bonfire/ iconic anima level, this power activates itself automatically. This doesn't stack with other sources of Hardness but can be used during Initiative Crash.
- For 10 motes, Iay flares his anima; on his next turn it consumes his body and he vanishes. If he moves or suffers damage during this time, the effect fails. The following sunset, he reappears at a place of occult power within 10 miles, chosen by the Storyteller.

Charms

Iay Selak-Amu has Excellencies (p. 25) for Awareness, Dodge (applies to Evasion), Integrity (applies to Resolve), Investigation, Lore, Medicine, Melee (applies to Parry if armed), Occult, Resistance,



Sail, and Survival. With Excellencies or other Charms, he can raise his static values as follows: Parry +2 (armed only), Evasion +2, Resolve +2. He has no way to raise Guile.

Reed in the Wind (Dodge, reflexive, instant)

For every 2 Initiative Iay spends in response to an attack, he may raise his Evasion by 1. Additionally, while Iay cannot normally use magic to raise his Evasion by more than +2, against an attack he invokes Reed in the Wind in response to, he can raise it by +3, either via this Charm alone or in combination with his Dodge Excellency.

Wound-Mending Care Technique (Medicine, simple, instant)

Iay spends 3 motes, 1 Willpower, and fifteen minutes to an hour tending to a patient using bandages, salves, and other medical supplies; the results are miraculous. His player rolls (Intelligence + Medicine); the roll gains double 9s. If the patient rests until the end of the day, she heals that many levels of bashing or lethal damage. If she heals two or more health levels, she gains a Willpower point.

Excellent Strike (Melee, supplemental, instant)

For 3 motes, Iay gains an automatic success on one Melee attack, and his player can re-roll any 1s on the attack roll until 1s no longer appear.

Spirit-Detecting Glance (Occult, reflexive, one scene)

By committing 3 motes, Iay may see (but not touch) immaterial spirits for the rest of the scene.

Uncanny Perception Technique (Occult, permanent)

Whenever an immaterial spirit is nearby, Iay “hears” the faint sound of cracking ice, enough to know when to activate Spirit-Detecting Glance. He gains +3 dice to (Perception + Awareness) roll to detect spirits.

Terrestrial Circle Sorcery (Occult, permanent)

Iay can cast spells (see below). When Iay sleeps, his player may describe strange spirit-haunted visions that plague him; if so, he regains no Willpower, but rolls (Wits + Occult) and gains one banked sorcerous mote per success, which last until the next time he sleeps. If he spends them all to cast Death of Obsidian Butterflies, each mote counts double. Once per story, his player may stunt to retroactively describe how the current situation

was somehow symbolized by his past dreams; Iay immediately gains (Stunt level +1) banked sorcerous motes, which last for the duration of the scene.

Ox-Body Technique (Resistance, permanent)

One purchase of Ox-Body Technique grants Iay one additional -1 health level and two additional -2 health levels.

Body-Mending Meditation (Resistance, simple, one day)

Iay may rest for an hour and spend 10 motes (*Mute*) to roll (Stamina + Resistance); his natural healing speeds by a factor of (successes). Alternately, if Iay uses Wound-Mending Care Technique on himself, he can simply add successes rolled on this Charm directly to the roll for that Charm to determine its effectiveness.

Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit (Survival, reflexive, one day)

For 5 motes, Iay can survive in the most hostile conditions without special preparation, from the coldest glacier to the hottest desert. Any rolls to forage for food or shelter reduce their difficulty by 2, to a minimum of 1.

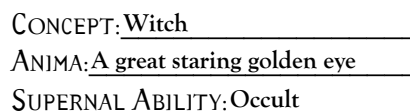
Spells

Death of Obsidian Butterflies

For 15 sorcerous motes and 1 Willpower, Iay sculpts Essence into a torrent of razor-edged black glass butterflies. He rolls (Perception + Occult), with one bonus success, as a **decisive** attack applied to all enemies in a line out to medium range, wide enough to strike all opponents within a single range band and high enough to strike aerial enemies at short range to the ground. Enemies may apply Parry against this attack, but not Evasion. The attack has raw damage equal to Iay’s (threshold successes + 1), and does not reset Iay to base Initiative. After the spell has been cast, their obsidian debris litters the battlefield.

Infallible Messenger

For 5 sorcerous motes and 1 Willpower, Iay sculpts Essence into a small, six-winged messenger spirit to convey his words to another character. The spirit can cross hundreds of miles in an hour, and upon arrival, it’s visible and audible only to its intended target. It can convey a spoken message of about five minutes in length before dissipating. Iay can convey social influence through his Infallible Messenger, but cannot enhance such attempts with Charms.



PERCEPTION _____ ●●●●○
 INTELLIGENCE _____ ●●●●○
 WITS _____ ●●●●○

[illegible][illegible]

Witnessing the irrecoverable loss of
history, culture, or homes.

CURRENT: TOTAL: CURRENT: TOTAL:

[illegible]

PARRY: 3 RESOLVE: 2
EVASION: 3 GUILE: 1
RUSH: 3 DISENGAGE: 5
JOIN BATTLE: 6

52
EX3

Faka Kun

Faka Kun is of the Djala, hairless desert pygmies with chalk-white skin marked by large, panda-like black spots, popular as slaves among the wealthy for their novel appearance. She herself is a famous acrobat and thief, using her travels with the Gerontine Circus between the major cities of the South as cover while she robbed the mansions and treasure-troves of the wealthy. During one such robbery, she was caught, but as she turned to fight her captors she felt light suffuse her. Exalting as a Solar of the Night Caste, she escaped pursuit and went to ground.

Faka Kun wants wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, but since her Exaltation, her thoughts have turned to its purpose. She currently seeks the resources to free her tribe from the Varang City-States and establish them as an independent power.

Image: Faka Kun is short and bald, chalk-white except for spots over her eyes, on her shoulders, and elsewhere on her torso and legs. She wears flamboyant red clothing that whips and flutters in the wind.

Intimacies: *Defining:* "I will achieve wealth beyond avarice,;" *Major:* Slavers (indignant hatred); "A big score requires a loyal team;" *Minor:* "I am fond of showing off"

Equipment: Clothing, brace of knives for throwing or wielding, rope. Faka Kun wears no armor. Her Parry of 3 uses her Melee Ability and requires a knife in hand. If she's disarmed, it remains 3 but uses her Brawl Ability, and she can only apply it against bashing attacks without a stunt.

Anima Powers

- For 3 motes (*Mute*), Faka Kun can dampen her anima, treating peripheral mote expenditure as personal for one instant.

- For 3 motes (*Mute*), Faka Kun can ignore up to a -3 penalty to one Stealth roll.

- When Faka Kun's anima is at bonfire/iconic, it wraps her visage and form in solar flame. In this state her identity cannot be discerned, even by all-seeing magic.

Charms

Faka Kun has Excellencies (p. 25) for Athletics, Awareness, Dodge (applies to Evasion), Integrity (applies to Resolve), Investigation, Larceny, Presence, Socialize (applies to Guile), Stealth, and Thrown. With Excellencies or other Charms, she can raise her static values as follows: Evasion +5, Resolve +4, Guile +2. She has no way to raise Parry.

Graceful Crane Stance (Athletics, reflexive, one scene)

For 3 motes, Faka Kun has perfect balance, and can stand or run on things too narrow or weak to support her normally (such as individual leaves), with no chance of falling or breaking through.

Monkey Leap Technique (Athletics, supplemental, instant)

For 2 motes, Faka Kun may leap forward or straight up one range band, using her movement for the turn. She can easily leap atop a 20-foot wall using this technique. If she continually leaps every turn, the cost is reduced to 1 mote after the first activation.

Reed in the Wind (Dodge, reflexive, instant)

For every 2 Initiative Faka Kun spends in response to an attack, she may raise her Evasion by 1. Additionally, while Faka Kun usually cannot use magic to raise her Evasion by more than +5, against an attack she invokes Reed in the Wind in response to, she can raise it by +6, either via this Charm alone or in combination with her Dodge Excellency.

Reflex Sidestep Technique (Dodge, reflexive, instant)

For 5 motes, Faka Kun may respond to an ambush, trap, or other damaging effect she's completely unaware of; this sets her Evasion to 2 against the attack and adds an additional point of Evasion for every 1 or 2 that attack rolls. If this brings her Evasion to 5, she may apply additional Dodge Charms to raise it further.

Leaping Dodge Method (Dodge, reflexive, instant)

Upon successfully dodging an attack, Faka Kun may pay 1 mote and 2 Initiative to leap backwards, forwards, up, or down a single range band.

Perfect Shadow Stillness (Stealth, reflexive, instant)

For 1 mote and 1 Willpower point, Faka Kun may re-roll any Stealth-based action, keeping any 10s and re-rolling all the other dice. If she succeeds at a stealth attempt through the use of this Charm, she gains a Willpower point.

Blinding Battle Feint (Stealth, supplemental, instant)

For 3 motes, Faka Kun may Join Battle with (Dexterity + Stealth) instead of (Wits + Awareness). This also counts as an attempt to vanish from view; if Faka Kun beats her opponents' Awareness-based Join Battle roll, she is automatically concealed.

Precision of the Striking Raptor (Thrown, supplemental, instant)

For 1 mote, the dice pool for one of Faka Kun's **withering** attacks is calculated as if it were made from close range (that is, [Dexterity + Thrown + 4]). If she's already making the attack from close range, this Charm lowers the target's Defense by one. This Charm alone doesn't allow Faka Kun to attack from beyond her weapon's normal range.

Joint-Wounding Attack (Thrown, supplemental, instant)

For 3 motes, Faka Kun may attempt to cripple an opponent with a **decisive** attack. If it does at least three damage, it inflicts a -3 penalty to all the opponent's dice pools until the end of the scene (*Stackable*), whether via a stunning blow to the head, a scratched eye, or another appropriate stunt.

Triple-Distance Attack Technique (Thrown, supplemental, instant)

For 1 mote, Faka Kun may extend the range of a thrown attack out to long range. Note she must still take an Aim action to attack from medium or long range.

Mirror Flag

Once there was traveling performer, famed as a student of the gods of a great city in the East, who roamed Creation telling stories of injustice and rebellion against it. Wherever she went, rebellion fermented and the unjust were overthrown. How marvelous, that Creation should conform to her stories!

Once, a troupe of traveling actors stood accused of theft by the gods of the Eastern city of Great Forks. One of the accused wove a tale in their defense, and while it was rejected and the other actors hanged, it won her the favor of the judge. Ever after she claimed she'd been ignorant of her fellows' guilt.

Once, a wealthy merchant had a daughter bored by finance but with a passion for the arts. She fled to join a troupe of actors, and only returned years later to claim her inheritance when he died. But while the records showed her clearly as his heir, none of his friends recalled he'd ever had a daughter.

The Mirror Flag wears masks under her masks under her masks.

Image: Of middling height and always concealed under mask and cowl and gleaming armor, Mirror Flag moves with the dramatic flourish of an actor on the stage. Her every motion and pronouncement is a weighty pose.

Intimacies: *Defining:* Who am I truly? (fear); *Major:* "A troupe must work together to excel;" "Stories teach us how to live;" *Minor:* "I yearn for the admiration of others"

Equipment: Mirrored golden thespian's mask; golden and black armor, cape, and cowl; juggler's knives; sanxian (lute). Mirror Flag's mobility penalty is -1 but doesn't penalize her stealth attempts. Her Parry of 2 uses her Melee Ability and requires a knife in hand. If she's disarmed, it remains 2 but uses her Brawl Ability, and she can only apply it against bashing attacks without a stunt.

Animus Powers

- For 10 motes, 1 Willpower, Mirror Flag can sanctify an oath she witnesses. If she wishes, her anima briefly flares when she does so, scribing the words of the agreement on the air. Thereafter, an oath-giver who breaks the pact suffers from a terrible curse, devised by the Storyteller, reflective of the oath broken.
- Mirror Flag has diplomatic immunity when treating with the enemies of Creation—demons, the Fair Folk, etc. So long as she approaches them on legitimate business, they may not attack her or her companions without just cause, though they may attempt to goad her or her allies into breaking the peace, which would void the protection.



Charms

Mirror Flag has Excellencies (p. 25) for Awareness, Dodge (applies to Evasion), Integrity (applies to Resolve), Larceny, Linguistics, Occult, Performance, Presence, Socialize (applies to Guile), and Stealth. With Excellencies or other Charms, she can raise her static values as follows: Evasion +3, Resolve +2, Guile +4. She has no way to raise Parry.

Sensory Acuity Prana (Awareness, reflexive, one scene)

For 5 motes, Mirror Flag gains double 9s on all her Awareness rolls for the rest of the scene.

Keen Hearing and Touch Technique (Awareness, simple, one scene)

For 3 motes, Mirror Flag heightens her sense of hearing and touch. She can listen clearly to conversations through thick stone walls, hear creatures burrowing below her feet or clinging to trees above her, etc. For applicable actions that would normally be difficulty 2, she can succeed without a roll; more difficult actions get -1 difficulty and one automatic success. She can activate it for 6 motes, 1 Willpower to set its duration to indefinite.

Reed in the Wind (Dodge, reflexive, instant)

For every 2 Initiative Mirror Flag spends in response to an attack, she may raise her Evasion by 1. Additionally, while Mirror Flag usually cannot use magic to raise her Evasion by more than +3, against an attack she invokes Reed in the Wind in response to, she can raise it by +4, either via this Charm alone or in combination with her Dodge Excellency.

Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise (Larceny, simple, until she next sleeps)

For 6 motes, Mirror Flag may roll (Intelligence + Larceny) to disguise herself; she gains double 9s and two automatic successes on this attempt, which takes about five minutes. Her mastery of Essence allows her to wildly vary her appearance, changing her apparent build, gender, or ethnicity, doubling or halving her age, altering her voice and accent, gaining or losing 10 inches in height, and even changing her scent. Anyone she interacts with for more than five minutes who possesses supernatural senses is entitled to a (Perception + Awareness) roll to see through the disguise, with a difficulty equal to the successes on Mirror Flag's initial roll, but their roll also subtracts two successes.

Spirit-Detecting Glance (Occult, reflexive, one scene)

By committing 3 motes, Mirror Flag may see (but not touch) immaterial spirits for the rest of the scene.

Uncanny Perception Technique (Occult, permanent)

Whenever an immaterial spirit is nearby, Mirror Flag "hears" the faint sound of tuning instruments, enough to know when to activate Spirit-Detecting Glance. She gains +3 dice to (Perception + Awareness) rolls to detect spirits.

Listener-Swaying Argument (Presence, supplemental, instant)

For 3 motes, Mirror Flag can enhance one of her instill or persuade actions; it gains one automatic success. It also gains one *non-Charm* bonus die for every two points the target's Resolve is boosted by any means (including Intimacies), to a maximum of three bonus dice.

Harmonious Presence Meditation (Presence, reflexive, one scene)

For 5 motes, for the rest of the scene Mirror Flag gains three bonus dice to all forms of social influence from all abilities except Stealth, and the cost of all her other social influence Charms are reduced by one mote, to a minimum of 1. She can pay 7 motes instead of 5 to set its duration to indefinite.

Motive-Discerning Technique (Socialize, supplemental, instant)

For 3 motes (*Mute*), Mirror Flag can apply double 9s to a read intentions action.

Humble Servant Approach (Socialize, reflexive, instant)

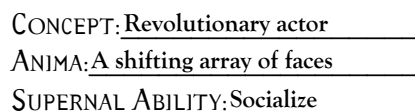
For 1 mote, Mirror Flag may enhance a read intentions action to discover what a target wants from her, applying a -2 penalty to the target's Guile. In order to use this Charm, she must have already succeeded in another read intentions action against the target while observing him speak to someone else.

Shadow Over Day (Socialize, reflexive, instant)

For 1 mote (*Mute*), Mirror Flag may reflexively raise her Guile by 1.

Perfect Shadow Stillness (Stealth, reflexive, instant)

For 1 mote and 1 Willpower point, Mirror Flag may re-roll any Stealth-based action, keeping any 10s and re-rolling all the other dice. If she succeeds at a stealth attempt through the use of this Charm, she gains a Willpower point.



PERCEPTION_____●●●○○
INTELLIGENCE_____●●●○○
WITS_____●●●○○

[illegible][illegible]

Being caught out in a deception
or lie, without revealing the
deceit voluntarily.

CURRENT: TOTAL: CURRENT: TOTAL:

WEAPON NAME	ACC	DMG	DEF	OVW	TAGS	DICE POOL
Unarmed	+4	+7 (9)	+0	1	Bashing, Brawl, Natural	7
Juggler's knife (T)	Varies	+7 (9)	+0	1	Lethal, Thrown (Short)	Varies
Juggler's knife (M)	+4	+7 (9)	+0	1	Lethal, Melee	7
Knife (Close)	+4					9
Knife (Short)	+3					8

TAGS: _____

PARRY: 2

RESOLVE: 3

EVASION: 2

GUILE: 5

RUSH: 2

DISENGAGE: 5

FINAL SOAK: 7

JOIN BATTLE: 6

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EX3



Once, in the time before the gods forgot their names, when the world was flat and floated on a sea of chaos, there was an age of gleaming cities, untamed wilderness, enlightened devils, greedy spirits, and mighty heroes. This was the age of the Exalted, champions empowered by the highest of gods.

Tomb of Dreams will jumpstart your group's Exalted game—all you need to start playing **Exalted Third Edition** is this book, pencils, and 10-sided dice. Included here are the game's core rules, five pregenerated characters, and a self-contained scenario that can start a new campaign or that Storytellers can use in an ongoing chronicle. And for groups that already have the **Exalted Third Edition** main rulebook, **Tomb of Dreams** will serve as an introduction for new players and a quick reference during play—anyone intimidated by that prodigious volume need only read Part 1 of this book to get started.

What legends will they tell of your deeds?

