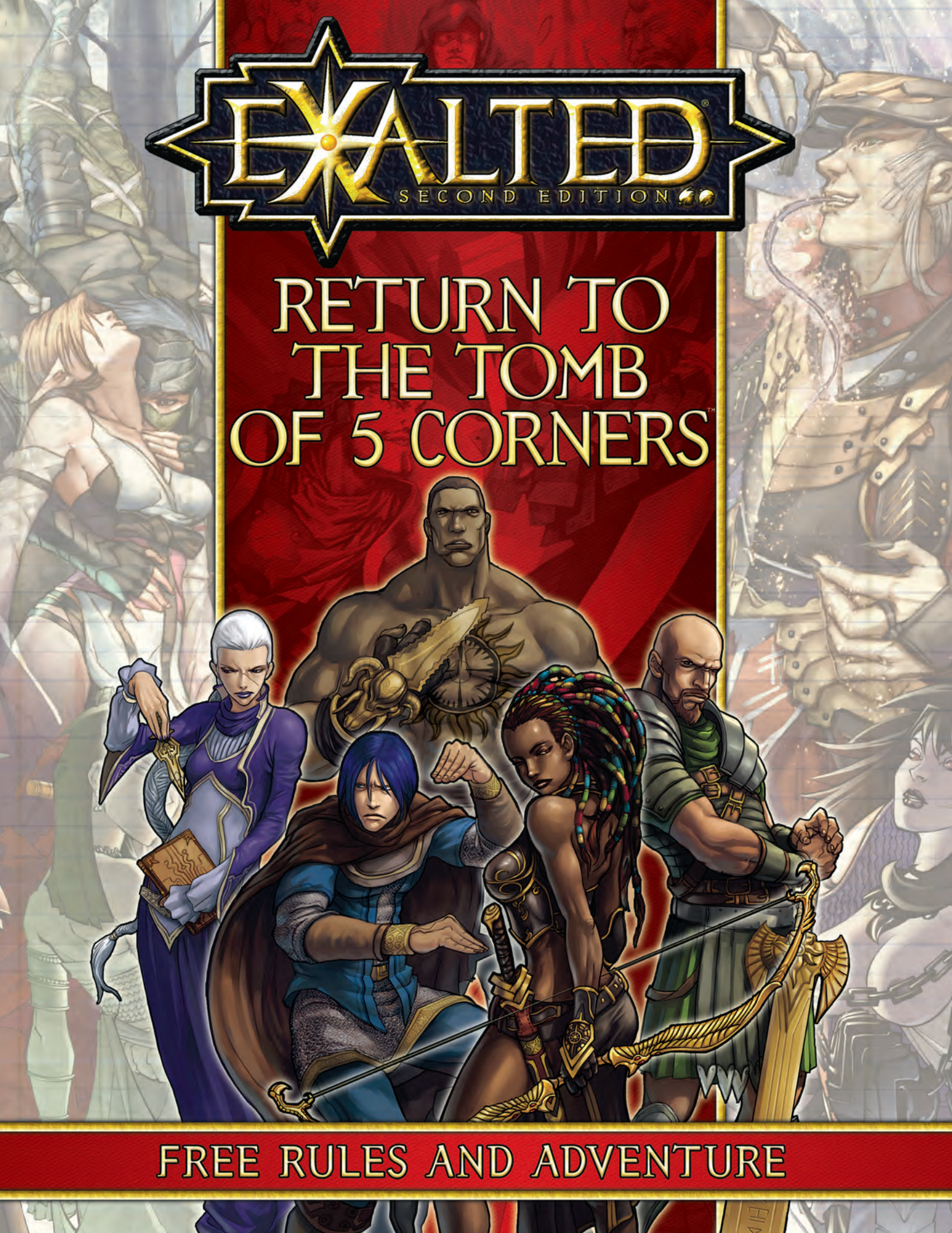
EXALTED®
SECOND EDITION

RETURN TO THE TOMB OF 5 CORNERS™



FREE RULES AND ADVENTURE

Crystal
Diamond Hearth
The White Sea
Icehome
Gethamane
Fella
Inara
Whitewall
Chanta
Rubylak
The Skullstone Archipelago
Onyx
Azure
The Coral Archipelago
The Neck
The Great Western Ocean
Cherak
Mount Metagalapa
The Isle of Voices
Chanos
Sijan
Greyfalls
Eagle's Launch
The Imperial Mountain
Pangu
Port Calin
Great Forks
Juche
The Imperial City
Lookshy
Nexus
Abalone
Lord's Crossing
Sdoia
The Blessed Isle
The Wavecrest Archipelago
Arjuf
Celeren
Denandsor
Thorns
The Inland Sea
Kirighast
City of the Steel Lotus
Yane
Chiaroscuro
Bluehaven
The Lap
Paragon
N
Gem
800 miles

THE WORLD OF EXALTED

One night, Azhrarn Prince of Demons, one of the Lords of Darkness, took on him, for amusement, the shape of a great black eagle. East and west he flew, beating with his vast wings, north and south, to the four edges of the world, for in those days the earth was flat and floated on the ocean of chaos.

—Tanith Lee, Night's Master

In ancient times, before the world was bent, the gods were slaves, and from the Heavenly City of Yu-Shan, the Primordials ruled Creation. In time, the gods tired of their slavery, but were oath-sworn never to move against the Primordials directly, so they granted human champions the power to oppose the masters of the world. These were the first Exalted.

The Primordial War shook Creation, and many things were lost forever, but in the end, the Exalted were triumphant. They delivered Heaven unto the gods and, in payment, were granted rulership of Creation, and thus began the First Age.

The greatest of the gods was the Unconquered Sun, and the greatest of the Exalted were his Chosen, the Solar Exalted. For more than two millennia, the Solars ruled Creation with justice and forethought, but a curse ate at their hearts, slowly driving them toward excess and depravity. In time, their advisors, the Sidereal Exalted, and their soldiers, the Terrestrial Exalted, conspired to overthrow them, and in the Solars' hour of need, their mates, the Lunar Exalted, abandoned them. The Solars were betrayed and slaughtered.

Whenever a Solar dies, his Essence finds another mortal of promise and Exalts her. It is reincarnation of a sort. The Sidereals broke this cycle, trapping perhaps 300 of the divine Essences of the betrayed Solars in a great prison sunk beneath the Inland Sea, and a lesser Second Age fell upon the world.

For over 1,000 years, the Dragon-Blooded ruled over Creation, systematically hunting down and destroying over and over again those few Solar Essences that escaped imprisonment and remained in the cycle of reincarnation, while around them the world diminished and decayed.

But no more.

The Scarlet Empress, the ruler of the Dragon-Blooded Dynasty, has vanished, and her 11 Great Houses have fallen to infighting over her throne. Into this Time of Tumult, the Solar Exalted are at last reborn in great numbers, their prison shattered by an encroaching shadow.

Will they save Creation, or destroy it?

How to Play Exalted

Welcome to the second edition of White Wolf's popular fantasy roleplaying game. **Exalted Second Edition** takes a game of savage adventure with a massive, detailed setting and implements tweaks and improvements developed over five years of play. For those readers who haven't played **Exalted** or even any roleplaying games before, it's a game where you assume the heroic persona of a champion chosen by the gods and granted power to shape the destiny of the whole world,

returned after an age of imprisonment beyond death. **Exalted** draws from a wide variety of influences, from ancient heroic epics both Eastern and Western (*The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Ramayana*, *Journey to the West*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Outlaws of the Water Margin*) and pulp fantasy (the works of Robert E. Howard, Fritz Leiber, Michael Moorcock and Tanith Lee) to modern wuxia action movies (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; *Hero*; *Iron Monkey*), anime and certain other cartoons (*Ninja Scroll*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*, *Vision of Escaflowne*, *Samurai Jack*, *Reign the Conqueror*), manga (*Bastard*, *Blade of the Immortal*, *InuYasha*, *Lone Wolf and Cub*) and video games (the *Dynasty Warriors* series, the *Final Fantasy* series, the *Prince of Persia* series, *Chrono Trigger*). If there's something you like in any of these stories, there's something for you in the world of **Exalted**.

To play **Return to the Tomb of Five Corners**, all you'll need is this booklet, some pencils and some 10-sided dice. You will probably want 10 dice per player, though players can always share.

Return to the Tomb of Five Corners is best played by five people. Four players assume the roles of returning Solar Exalts, each taking one of the sample characters included in this booklet. The fifth player assumes the position of Storyteller, reading the adventure beforehand, overseeing the rules, describing environments with which the players' characters can interact, narrating the results of actions and playing all the secondary characters the players will meet along the way. The Storyteller and all the players should read the character sheets and the section of this booklet entitled "The World of Exalted" (the part you're reading now), but only the Storyteller should read the section entitled "The Tomb of Five Corners."

Rolling Dice

Exalted Second Edition uses the Storytelling System, in which 10-sided dice are used to inject uncertainty into the unfolding drama of play. The Storytelling System is very simple: Any time you are asked to roll, you will roll as many dice as you have dots in the appropriate trait or traits on your character sheet. This is called your *dice pool*.

Example: The Storyteller might ask you to roll (Perception + Awareness). If your character has Perception 3 and Awareness 2, you would roll five dice.

Each die you roll that comes up 7 or greater is called a *success*. 10s usually count as 2 successes. Note that some dice are marked 0-9. In these cases, 0 counts as 10.

Rolls also have a *difficulty*, which is how many successes you need to roll to succeed. Unless otherwise specified, the difficulty is 1. If you roll fewer successes than you need, you've failed your roll, and your character does not succeed in her action, which can sometimes lead to further complications.

If you roll no successes at all, and one or more of the dice comes up showing a 1, you've *botched* your roll. A botch is a

catastrophic failure. Very often, a regular failure is a simple setback, and you'll be able to have your character try again or try another option, but with a botch, the results won't be so easy to recover from.

Examples: When rolling the above-mentioned (Perception + Awareness) dice pool of five dice, you might get the following numbers: 1, 5, 7, 8 and 10. That's four successes, one each for the 7 and 8 and two for the 10. If you got a 1, 3, 5, 5 and 6 instead, that would be no successes and a 1, resulting in a botch. A roll of 2, 3, 5, 5 and 6 would be a simple failure.

When figuring out the number of successes you've rolled for occasions when each success has bearing on the final effect, don't include successes insufficient to meet the difficulty or successes subtracted by outside influences.

Example: If you've rolled 1, 5, 7, 8 and 10 on your (Perception + Awareness) roll, but the difficulty of the roll is 3, we say you've rolled two successes, because only the third and fourth successes count. The first and second successes are negated by the difficulty. If, additionally, there were some other effect in play that subtracted one success from the roll, we would say you've rolled only one success.

Sometimes, your dice pool itself will be modified by bonuses or penalties, which will increase or reduce the number of dice in your pool. At no point can penalties reduce your dice pool to below your character's Essence trait. The two exceptions to this rule are wound penalties and penalties for performing a flurry, which *can* reduce a dice pool to below your character's Essence trait. (More information on wound penalties and flurries can be found below.)If wound penalties or flurry penalties reduce a dice pool to less than one die and the roll has no bonus successes, the roll and the associated action cannot be attempted.

Character Sheets

The **Exalted Second Edition** main rulebook provides rules for creating your own characters, but for now, the players should read through the character sheets provided with this booklet, and then, each should choose one character to play throughout the adventure. At the top of each character sheet is essential information, followed by Attributes, Abilities and Advantages, and on the other side is a character description, Intimacies, anima powers, Charms and either a Combo or sorcery.

Concept and Motivation

A character's *concept* is a one- or two-word description of her role in Creation. This is usually what the character was before her Exaltation and might be something such as mercenary, pit-fighter, explorer or courtesan. A character's *Motivation* is a summation of the character's strongest driving goals. You should keep your character's Motivation in mind when deciding how she would react to a situation.

Caste and Anima

Every Exalt has natural affinities that are part of the power gifted to them by the gods. A *caste* is a grouping of Exalted that share common Charms and Abilities. All the Solar Exalted have castes based on the divine purpose given them by the Unconquered Sun. Your character sheet contains descriptions of your character's caste. Each Solar has a normally invisible symbol on her forehead, called a caste mark, which shines forth when she uses her power.

Each of the Solar Exalted also has an *anima*, which forms the heart of her supernatural might and reveals itself when the Solar invokes that power. An anima will shine forth in golden light, shimmering around the Exalt as a great beast of old, as a pillar of fire or as the fearsome mien of the Unconquered Sun.

Attributes and Abilities

Attributes are divided into three categories (Physical, Social and Mental) and describe the traits inherent in your character, such as Strength or Intelligence. *Abilities* describe things your character has learned or skills he has practiced.

Advantages

Charms and Backgrounds

Charms are supernatural powers your character has because she is Exalted. Charms are dealt with in more detail below, and the character sheets have descriptions of how the individual Charms function. *Backgrounds* are a catch-all category that refers to many aspects of a character's persona or situation that don't fit into Attributes and Abilities. Generally, Backgrounds refer to things your character has, such as artifacts, or people your character knows, such as allies.

Willpower

Willpower is a measure of your character's self-confidence and internal control. Willpower works different from most traits. It has a permanent rating that stays constant (the dots) and temporary points that can be spent (the boxes). Any time you spend Willpower, mark off one of the boxes. Every morning when the characters awaken, their players should roll their Conviction Virtue (see below) and regain one point of Willpower per success. Available Willpower points can never exceed Willpower dots, with one exception (see below under "Limit Break").

The most basic way to spend a point of Willpower is to help ensure success on a roll. By spending one point, you may gain one automatic success on one roll (though you can't spend more than one point at a time this way). This doesn't always ensure complete success in cases where the difficulty is greater than 1, but it does add to the total and renders a botch impossible.

Virtues

Virtues measure how passionately your character is committed to a certain type of behavior and way of thinking. Each time you wish your character to violate the dictates of a Virtue in which he has a score of 3 or greater, roll dice equal to the Virtue in question. If the roll fails, your character may act as desired, but if it succeeds, your character must act according to the dictates of the Virtue unless you spend a temporary Willpower point to *suppress* the Virtue. A Solar Exalt who suppresses the Virtue associated with his Virtue Flaw gains a point of *Limit*. Details of Limit follow.

Characters must fail a Compassion roll to: allow any enemy to perish miserably, ignore the pleas of the oppressed or impoverished, abandon the diseased to their afflictions, jilt or throw over a lover or perform similar acts.

Characters must fail a Conviction roll to: abandon a cause they have committed themselves to, give up in the face of hardship or disease or abandon their companions in times of need.

Characters must fail a Temperance roll to: act dishonestly or show bias in a matter of importance, overindulge themselves, throw themselves into a situation without deliberation, or break oaths or otherwise abuse trusts.

Characters must fail a Valor roll to: turn down a duel of honor or a call to single combat, flee a battle, swallow an insult without seeking retribution or turn down a dare or challenge.

Virtues aren't all restrictive, though. Another way to spend Willpower is to *channel it through a Virtue*. By spending a Willpower point, you may add as many dice to a single roll as you have dots in a particular Virtue, as long as the Virtue is in question supports the action for which you're rolling.

Compassion aids in: protecting or aiding the sick, innocent or oppressed; fighting for justice or attempting to bring aid to the needy; fighting for or engaging in romantic love.

Conviction aids in: withstanding hardship, disease and oppression; exercising command and leadership in times of hardship; fighting in hopeless situations or against terrible odds.

Temperance aids in: withstanding temptation, taunting and other forms of baiting; keeping your tongue when intoxicated; fighting the effects of befuddlement, illusions, drugs or poisons.

Valor aids in: heroism in battle and single combat; withstanding magical fear and horror, feats of daring, physical or otherwise.

You may channel a given Virtue a number of times per story equal to your characters' dots in that Virtue (**Return to the Tomb of Five Corners** is one story). Every time you channel a Virtue, mark off one of the boxes below it. You can't channel more than one Virtue per roll, nor can you spend Willpower for an automatic success on the same roll you channel a Virtue to enhance.

Limit Break

Each of the Exalted bears a terrible curse within her heart, spit out by the Primordials they slew in the name of the gods. No matter how filled with Compassion, Conviction, Temperance or Valor an Exalt may be, the curse will manage to break her Virtue, causing her to forsake it for a time, take it to dangerous extremes or even act contrary to its ways. Each Solar has a Flaw detailed on your character sheet. Every Flaw has a Limit Break condition attached to it — essentially, a situation that tends to cause the Exalt to lose control of herself and act out her Flaw. Every time this condition is met, the Exalt's player must roll the Virtue associated with the Flaw. For every success she rolls, the character gains a point of Limit. When a character's total Limit reaches 10, whether due to her Flaw or suppressing a Virtue, she suffers Limit Break, falling under the influence of her Virtue Flaw, immediately reducing her Limit to 0 and gaining a number of Willpower points equal to the Virtue associated with her Flaw (which can cause her total available Willpower points to exceed her Willpower dots). A player can have her character act out a reduced version of the Flaw, in which case she does not gain any temporary Willpower points.

Essence

Exalted flow with the Essence of Creation, and it is this energy that grants them their might. Essence fuels their Charms and their anima powers. *Essence* refers to the permanent rating your character possesses. Each Exalt also has three *mote pools*. A mote is the smallest unit of Essence, recognized by savants & sorcerers throughout Creation, and is spent to power the supernatural abilities of the Exalted. *Personal motes* are those which are easily spent without inviting unwanted attention. *Peripheral motes* are those the use of which flares the Exalted anima, causing it to shine brightly. Finally, there are *committed motes*. Whenever a mote is spent on an ongoing effect (whether to power a Charm with duration longer than instant or to attune an artifact), move motes from one of the other two pools to the Committed pool. Motes cannot be regained as long as they're committed, but they pass out of the Committed pool when the effect they power ends.

When committing motes out of the Peripheral pool, the anima flares as normal (see "Anima Banner," below), but then dies down as if the motes had just been spent. It doesn't stay flared as long as the motes are committed. (This is a common misreading of the **Exalted** rules.)

When engaged in strenuous activity such as combat, Exalts don't recover motes. When engaged in normal activity such as leisurely travel, they recover four motes per hour. When resting completely, they recover eight motes per hour. Recovered motes always refill the Personal pool first, refilling the Peripheral pool only if the Personal pool is full.

Health Chart

This trait measures the degree to which a character is wounded or injured. Health is explained in a later section called "Health."

This section of the sheet also lists three values called *soak*. The first represents a character's bashing soak, the second a character's lethal soak and the third a character's aggravated soak. Soak is explained in a later section called "Damage and Soaking."

Anima

All castes of the Solar Exalted can channel Essence directly through their animas to generate magical effects. In addition to those anima powers listed on your character sheet, each Solar Exalted can spend a single mote to:

- Cause his caste mark to glow brightly (as if the character had spent 4-6 Peripheral motes; see "Anima Banner," below).
- Cause his anima to glow brightly enough to read by (as if the character had spent 8-10 Peripheral motes; see "Anima Banner," below).
- Know the precise time of day.

Anima Banner

All Exalted have an "anima," an aura of power that surrounds them. Normally, this aura is so faint that it is imperceptible to normal human senses, but when a Solar spends Peripheral motes, the anima intensifies to form an "anima banner." Every 15 minutes that the Exalt does not spend Peripheral motes, the anima falls one level (with two exceptions: see chart).

Peripheral Motes Spent	Effect
1-3	The character's caste mark glitters for an hour after the Exalted has ceased to burn motes.
4-7	The character's caste mark burns and will shine through anything placed over it. Stealth Charms and other concealing magic fails, and the difficulty of all Stealth rolls increases by 2.
8-10	The character is surrounded by a shining aura bright enough to read by, and his caste mark is a burning golden brand. Stealth is impossible.
11-15	The character is engulfed by a brilliant bonfire of Essence, which burns from his feet to above his head and is visible for miles.
16+	The character is surrounded by a burning image totemic to his person — a warrior might be surrounded by a great golden bull, a sorcerer might be surrounded by an elaborate mandala, and so on. This fades to the 11-15 mote level during any action the character doesn't actively spend motes.

Stunts

Exalted is a game of enthusiastic drama, and to aid this, it encourages *stunting*. There are three degrees of stunts in **Exalted**:

In a *one-die stunt*, the player simply describes his character's action in an interesting manner — more interesting than "'I hit him with my mace.'" A character performing a one-die stunt gains an extra die to whatever roll he makes to attempt the action described. If the action succeeds, his character regains two motes.

In a *two-die stunt*, the player also makes use of the scenery somehow in the description of his character's action. Performing a two-die stunt awards the player two extra dice to his roll, and if he succeeds, his character regains the player's choice of four motes or a point of Willpower.

A *three-die* stunt is when a player describes his character's action in a manner so fascinating and impressive that everyone at the table says "'Damn, that's cool!'" Three-die stunts award three bonus dice to the roll, and success grants the character the player's choice of six motes or a point of Willpower.

Players may also stunt defense, though defense is not normally rolled. Roll the stunt dice and add the successes to the character's Defense Value for the duration of the attack or flurry being defended against. For the purposes of regaining motes or Willpower, a defensive stunt is successful if the attack is deflected.

Players may stunt as often as they wish (though three-die stunts are usually rare). Players making two- or three-die stunts gain the ability to edit the scenery to a degree. They cannot change established details, but they can introduce new scenery elements or flesh out existing ones as long as these additions don't seem out of place. This takes some of the burden of fully describing the scenery out of the hands of the Storyteller and places it within the power of the players, and lets them contribute ideas to play beyond simply the actions of their characters. Such "dramatic editing" is not mandatory, however, and players are free to simply use scenery elements already established by the Storyteller if they so wish. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of all stunt awards. Storytellers may veto dramatic editing if the feature the player wishes to introduce would contradict something in the environment the Storyteller hasn't gotten around to mentioning yet or wishes to keep concealed. The Storyteller may also veto any element that just seems out of place or breaks the mood, but should be careful with exercising this right in too picky a fashion.

The Storyteller may also stunt for characters he controls, but should do so sparingly and be conservative in estimating his own stunt rewards. Mortal characters (bandits, mutants) have their stunt awards decreased by one die.

Drama

One of the most exciting parts of **Exalted** is when characters are locked in battle or engaged in explosive action. This section covers rules for combat between small groups of characters. The **Exalted Second Edition** main rulebook also has rules for massed battle between armies with players taking the roles of commanders and generals, but that system is beyond the scope of this booklet.

Time

Exalted Second Edition measures time in *ticks*. A *tick* is the smallest individual unit of time in which an action can occur, equivalent to about one second. The tick count starts at zero whenever someone engages in an action measured in ticks and counts upward until such actions are no longer being taken by any character. Usually, this means the tick count starts at zero at the beginning of combat and ends when combat is finished.

To determine the order in which characters act, see "Actions," next, especially the description of the Join Battle action.

Actions

During combat and other dramatic scenes, characters perform actions to accomplish their goals. Actions resolve on the tick in which they're declared. Once a character has taken an action, she must wait a number of ticks equal to the *Speed* rating of the action before she may act again. Most actions also have a *DV penalty*, determining how much the action reduces the character's Defense Value (see below) until her next action, whereupon her Defense Value refreshes. Actions performed on the same tick are resolved simultaneously. It's entirely possible for two characters to kill each other with two simultaneous sword blows.

One easy way to keep track of ticks in combat is to use counters. White Wolf sells beads made to keep track of Essence, and these work for ticks as well, but so do pennies or anything else conveniently small and plentiful. Keep a pool of counters at the center of the play area, and whenever a character takes an action, have the player claim a number of counters equal to the action's Speed. The Storyteller counts ticks upwards, and at each tick, the player puts one counter back into the central pool and may act again once he's put all his counters back.

A list of possible actions follows, using this format: **Name (Speed/DV penalty):** Description. For a more detailed list of possible actions, see the **Exalted Second Edition** main book.

Join Battle (Varies/None): At the beginning of combat, every character who wishes to participate must take a Join Battle action. Roll each character's (Wits + Awareness). The character with the most successes acts on tick zero, and the number of successes he rolled become the *reaction count* for that combat. Every other character subtracts their successes from the reaction count and the resulting number (maximum six) is the next tick upon which they can act.

Example: Morning Breeze and Kade both enter combat against a pack of zombies. All participants roll (Wits + Awareness).

Morning Breeze rolls five successes, while Kade rolls two, and the zombies roll one success. The reaction count for that combat is five. Morning Breeze acts on tick zero. Kade's next action is on tick three. The zombies' next action is on tick four.

When a character performs a Join Battle action to enter a combat already in progress (bursting into a room where a fight is occurring, for instance, or when the sample character Rinan takes a Cast Sorcery action), his player rolls (Wits + Alertness) and subtracts his successes from the reaction count as normal, and may next act in a number of ticks equal to the result (maximum six). If he rolls more successes than the reaction count, he may act immediately, but the reaction count of the combat doesn't change.

Ready Weapons (5/-1): Characters with weapons sheathed at the beginning of combat must draw and ready them before using them to attack. For characters that attack unarmed or who are already carrying their weapons at the ready when they perform a Join Battle action, this is unnecessary. Readying a weapon may be performed as part of a Flurry (see below).

Attack (Varies/-1): The most basic action in combat, an attack's Speed depends on the weapon being used. To make an attack, choose a target and roll ([the attack's Accuracy] - wound penalties). Subtract a number of successes equal to the opponent's highest applicable DV (see "Defense Value," below). If any successes are left, the attack has hit. To resolve an attack's effects, see "Damage and Soaking" (also below). Characters with ranged attacks may attack targets at distances of up to the Range of the attack in yards at no penalty, at twice the Range at a penalty of -1 die or at three times the Range at a penalty of -2 dice. A ranged attack can't fire beyond three times its Range.

Activate Charm/Combo/Power (Varies/Varies): Characters may activate Charms, Combos or anima powers. A character who activates a Charm cannot activate another Charm until his next action. Some Charms are not an action in and of themselves and instead supplement other actions. Other Charms provide reflexive actions and can be used any time. Charms are more fully described under "Charms," below, and individual Charms are described on the character sheets. Unless otherwise specified the Speed of a Charm is 6 and the Charm has a DV penalty of -1.

Guard (3/None): Characters may wait in a guarded fashion, suffering no DV penalty. Characters may abort a guard action at any time, but DV does not refresh until the end of the action following the guard.

Move (0/None): Characters may move (Dexterity - [wound penalty + armor mobility penalty]) yards per tick (minimum one yard) in addition to whatever other action they perform. When climbing or swimming, characters halve this rate.

Dash (3/-2): Characters may sprint ([Dexterity + 6] - [wound penalty + armor mobility penalty]) yards per tick (minimum two yards). Though a character may abort the dash and perform another action at any point during a dash, DV does not refresh until the end of the action following the dash. Characters may not move and dash on the same tick.

Jump (5/-1): Characters may jump ([Strength + Athletics] - [wound penalty + armor mobility penalty]) yards vertically in a single action, or twice that horizontally, with no dice roll. Landing on a slick or uncertain surface may require a (Dexterity + Athletics) roll to stay upright, though. A flurry (see below) can contain only one jump. Characters may move normally in addition to jumping on a tick in which they jump. Only use this action's mechanics if the jump takes a character somewhere she they couldn't have gotten to without actually jumping — it's perfectly fine to use the move or dash action and just *describe* it as a jump as part of a stunt if the character could have arrived at his final location without jumping.

Rise from Prone (5/-1): Characters who have fallen prone will most likely wish to get back up as quickly as possible.

Flurry (Varies/Varies): Characters may take multiple simultaneous actions, called a flurry. A flurry's Speed is equal to the highest Speed of any action in the flurry, and the flurry's defense penalty is equal to the defense penalties of all the actions in the flurry added together. Characters cannot make more attacks with a single weapon in a flurry than the weapon's Rate. The first action in a flurry suffers a dice pool penalty equal to the number of actions in the flurry, and each subsequent action suffers a penalty of one greater than the action previous. Actions without rolls, such as jumps or readying weapons, obviously do not suffer dice penalties, but they still count as actions to determine the penalties to the other actions in the flurry.

A character under attack by a flurry suffers a cumulative penalty to his DV against the flurry's attacks: No penalty against the first attack, -1 DV against the second, -2 DV against the third, etc.

Example: Morning Breeze wishes to perform a flurry consisting of a jump followed by as many attacks with his slashing sword as its Rate allows. A jump has a Speed of 5. A slashing sword has Speed of 4 and a Rate of 3. Morning Breeze will be able to jump and then make three attacks with his sword — a total of four actions. The jump suffers no penalty, but if it were a rolled action, it would suffer a penalty of -4 dice. The first attack with the slashing sword suffers a penalty of -5 dice; the second, a penalty of -6 dice; and the third, a penalty of -7 dice. The total Speed of the flurry is 5 (so Morning Breeze will not be able to act again until 5 ticks have passed), and his total defense penalty until his next action is -4 (because each of those actions normally has a defense penalty of -1, and there are four of them). The enemy Morning Breeze is attacking suffers a -1 DV penalty against the second attack in the flurry and a -2 DV penalty against the third attack.

Miscellaneous (5/Varies): *Characters may wish to perform an action tangentially related to combat, such as lighting a torch, picking a lock or activating a First Age mechanism. Such activities are assumed to be Speed 5. If a player devotes his character's entire concentration to the activity, his Defense Value for the duration of the action is set to zero. Alternately, he may choose to have his*

character keep one eye warily on the combat surrounding him, in which case the defense penalty is a mere -1 but he suffers a -2-die penalty to any rolls associated with the miscellaneous action.

Inactive (3/Special): *This isn't an action characters can take, but rather a state in which they can be. An inactive character is one who's been incapacitated or otherwise prevented from moving or acting. An inactive character's DV is 0.*

Defense Value

Every character has a variety of *Defense Values*, or *DV*s. Each character has a single Dodge DV (listed on the back of the character sheet), and each character has a Parry DV for every weapon he or she currently wields (listed with the weapon's other traits as "PDV"). Effects that penalize DV affect all of these DVs at once.

Characters subtract a number of successes against incoming attacks equal to the highest of these DVs. Without a stunt, an unarmed character cannot apply his Parry DV to a ranged attack or an attack that inflicts lethal or aggravated damage.

Damage and Soak

Once an attack has landed, it's time to calculate damage. There are three types of damage in **Exalted**: bashing, lethal and aggravated. What sort of damage an attack causes is listed alongside the attack's damage rating as B, L or A.

Bashing damage is caused by blunt trauma such as punches or hits from clubs. It's the easiest sort of damage to soak and the least likely to kill a victim quickly.

Lethal damage is caused by attacks meant to kill immediately — attacks made with swords, arrows and other sharp weapons.

Aggravated damage is rare, dangerous and usually supernatural in origin.

Soak represents the inherent toughness and protection a character possesses that allows him to survive attacks that hit. Characters have a separate soak rating for each damage type.

To calculate the damage an attack inflicts, take the attack's damage trait (listed with the other weapon traits as "Dmg") and add the successes on the attack roll. This is the attack's *raw damage*. From the raw damage, subtract the target's appropriate soak rating. Roll the resulting number of dice to determine how many levels of damage the attack inflicts. Soak cannot reduce damage dice to below the Essence rating of the attacker. Wound penalties do not penalize damage rolls, and 10s don't count as two successes each.

Knockdown and Knockback

If a character suffers an attack that inflicts more raw damage than her (Stamina + Resistance), she must succeed at a difficulty 2 ([Dexterity or Stamina] + [Athletics or Resistance]) roll or else be knocked prone. The roll to resist falling is reflexive; that is, it happens automatically and does not require an action. Prone characters must take the rise from prone action to re-enter combat.

At the Storyteller's option, in addition to simply being knocked prone, a character who suffers an attack that qualifies for knockdown may be knocked backward one yard per three dice of raw damage inflicted by the attack, crashing through and destroying any unimportant scenery that happens to be in the way. Characters suffering knockback never suffer additional damage as a result of the knockback effect, even if they're knocked through stone pillars or other hard surfaces that would normally inflict damage on impact. Likewise, characters suffering knockback are never pushed into dangerous falls. Knockback is simply an excuse to shred scenery in a cinematic fashion.

Health

Each character sheet contains a health chart to allow damage to the individual to be tracked and its effects on his actions assessed. Each row of boxes after the first has an associated *wound penalty* that increases with the severity of the wounds. Any time a character has boxes of damage marked on his health chart, he must subtract the wound penalty beside the lowest row of health boxes in which he has damage marked.

A character with a wound in the *Incapacitated* box is inactive. If all his damage boxes are lethal or aggravated and he takes one more point of damage, he begins dying. A *dying* character without powerful magical aid will die within a number of turns equal to his Stamina. He cannot take any actions, though the Storyteller should allow him to croak out some final inspirational words before expiring.

Tracking Health

Each type of damage is recorded differently. Bashing damage heals first, lethal heals second, and aggravated heals last, so it is important to keep the bashing damage near the bottom of the chart, the lethal in the middle and the aggravated at the top. Bashing damage is marked with a slash, as in the example below:

"0 [/]

Lethal damage is marked with an X and pushes down any previous levels of bashing damage, like so:

"0 [X]

"1 [/]

Aggravated damage is marked with a large asterisk and pushes down any previous levels of bashing or lethal damage, as follows:

"0 [~~X~~]

"1 [X] [/]

It takes about three hours to heal a point of bashing damage. Lethal and aggravated damage both heal at the same rate: a "0 box heals in six hours of rest or twelve hours of activity, a "1 box heals in two days of rest or four days of activity, a "2 box heals in four days of rest or eight days of activity, and "4 and incapacitated boxes heal in a week of rest or 2 weeks of activity, though an incapacitated character won't be able to do anything *but* rest.

Social Combat

Social conflict is resolved in a manner similar to physical combat. The overall structure is the same, though the rolls usually involve different traits. As well as mighty warriors, Solar Exalted are charismatic generals and persuasive diplomats, capable of winning the loyalty of nations and converting enemies into allies, and social combat is the system through which these conflicts are resolved.

Social combat measures time in *long ticks*. Each long tick is equal to approximately a minute of time. Because of this, if someone interrupts social conflict with physical conflict, "dropping out" of social combat time, the tick count for regular combat starts up — there's just not enough time to argue your case in a sword fight.

Actions

Actions in social combat mirror those in physical combat. The Speed of a social combat action is how many long ticks a character must wait after performing that action to act again. Instead of Defense Value, characters in social combat use Mental Defense Value (explained below), so social combat actions have MDV penalties rather than DV penalties, but MDV penalties functions the same as DV penalties do for physical actions, penalizing the acting character's Mental Defense Value until he may act again.

What follows is a brief summary of social combat actions, presented in the format of **Name (Speed/Mental Defense penalty):** Description. **Exalted Second Edition** treats social combat in considerably more detail.

Join Debate (Varies/None): This action is resolved identically to Join Battle, save the times are in long ticks instead of regular ticks.

Attack (Varies/-2): A social "attack" is an attempt to persuade another to your character's point of view or way of thinking. Eloquent arguments allow players to apply stunt bonuses as normal. Social attack mechanics and resolution are covered below.

Guard (3/None): A guarded character observes his social opponent's speech and waits for an opponent to interject. It functions exactly the same as taking a guard action in physical combat.

Flurry (Varies/Varies): Social flurries follow the same rules as physical flurries.

Miscellaneous (5/Varies): A character may engage in activities other than the conversation at hand and has the same two options as taking a miscellaneous action in physical combat. However, a player who wishes to devote his character's entire concentration to miscellaneous action does not have his MDV set to zero. Instead, he's effectively out of social combat and is immune to its effects.

Inaction (Varies/Varies): Completely inactive characters — those who are unconscious or otherwise unable to participate at all — are immune to the effects of social combat.

Social Attacks

A social attack is a ([Charisma or Manipulation] + [Performance, Presence or Investigation]) roll. Charisma is used for honest arguments while Manipulation is used in attempts to deceive. Performance attacks affect everyone in range (including allies) and have Speed 6 and Rate 1. Presence attacks affect just one opponent and have Speed 4 and Rate 2. Investigation attacks are used to interrogate opponents and have Speed 5 and Rate 2.

Social attacks are resisted by Mental Defense Values, or MDVs. The Dodge MDV represents resolutely ignoring the arguments of one's opponent. The Parry MDV represents counter-argument. The Dodge and Parry MDVs of all the sample characters are noted on the back of the character sheets.

Characters with a higher Appearance have the advantage in social combat. A character applies a bonus to her MDV against incoming social attacks by characters with a lower Appearance, equal to the difference in the two Appearance ratings. A character with a lower Appearance suffers a penalty to her MDV equal to the difference. This bonus or penalty cannot exceed three, however.

Additionally, Intimacies, Virtues and Motivation provide bonuses or penalties to resisting social attacks. A character resisting an attempt to persuade her to fulfill one of her Intimacies is at -1 MDV to resist. If the attack is an attempt to persuade her to go against one of her Intimacies, she gains +1 MDV to resist. An attempt to persuade a character to follow the tenets of a Virtue she possesses above 3 inflicts a -2 MDV penalty, and an attempt to persuade her to go against the tenets of a Virtue she possesses above 3 provides a +2 MDV bonus. Motivations provide -3 MDV penalty or a +3 MDV bonus in the same manner. Only the largest bonus or penalty applies.

Social Damage

The victim of a successful social attack has two choices. He can either follow the social attack's suggestion for a scene or he can reflexively (without taking an action) spend a point of Willpower to resist. If the suggestion opposes the target's Motivation, the target *must* resist. After spending two Willpower points in this manner, a character is immune to further social attacks within the same scene, unless those social attacks are backed by a stunt.

A successful social attack, aside from compelling behavior for a scene, can force a character to take an action dedicated to establishing a new Intimacy or to degrade an existing Intimacy. Characters will generally resist degrading existing Intimacies, but will not resist adopting new ones unless the new Intimacy directly contradicts an existing loyalty. It takes a number of such actions equal to a character's Conviction to fully establish a new Intimacy or fully remove an existing one (characters may also take these actions of their own will). Only one such action per scene can be dedicated to a given Intimacy. Characters generally cannot have more

Intimacies than their (Willpower + Compassion). Further Intimacies "fall off" at a rate of one per night of rest. Players may choose which Intimacies their characters keep and which are lost.

Charms

Charms are the powers of the Solar Exalted, supernatural extensions of their natural Abilities. A mortal can win a swordfight; a Solar can win a swordfight against a Demon Prince. A mortal can make a speech; a Solar can make a speech so persuasive as to sway a nation. A mortal can design a machine; a Solar can design a wonder so incredible as to live on throughout history as the symbol of an age.

Characters may only use one specific Charm per action (though he may activate that single Charm as many times as he can afford and it is applicable). If a character has used a Charm on or since her last action, she may not use another until her next action. Flurries count as a single action for this purpose.

While many Charms are unique and are described on the character sheets, there is a specific type of Charm, called a First Excellency Charm, that always functions the same no matter what Ability it's tied to. First Excellency Charms are very simple and can be used in two ways. First, a character may use an Excellency Charm to add dice to any roll involving the ability the First Excellency is tied to, at a cost of one mote per die. Second, if a characters has a DV or MDV derived from an Ability for which she has a First Excellency, she may used that First Excellency to add dice to a DV or an MDV. In this case, each mote buys one die, and the successes rolled add directly to the DV or MDV being boosted, for the duration of defending against one attack.

In either case, the First Excellency Charms cannot buy more dice than the relevant Attribute + Ability for the action or DV. For the Parry DV, that's (Dexterity + [Martial Arts or Melee]), for the Dodge DV, that's (Dexterity + Dodge), for the Parry MDV, that's ([Charisma or Manipulation] + [Performance, Presence or Investigation]), and for the Dodge MDV, that's (Willpower + Integrity).

When used to benefit a flurry, each action within the flurry must be enhanced with a separate activation of the First Excellency Charm, though players need not enhance every action within a flurry.

Combos

Combos are special sets of Charms that the characters have trained with to the point where they can be used together. The purpose of a Combo is to provide an exception to the usual rule against using two Charms during the same action. Whenever a character uses a Charm he has in a Combo, he may opt to spend a point of Willpower to activate the Combo. Once this is done, he may activate any of the other Charms in that Combo even if it isn't his next action yet. Combos only last for the duration of a single action.

Combos are special moves. They're always flashy and obvious, and accompanied by some sort of memorable anima flare effect, even if they're activated with motes of Personal Essence.

How to Do Everything Else

Exalted Second Edition has more rules for almost any activity your characters might want to undertake, but if you're limited to just this booklet, it's not difficult to make up systems for a variety of other actions. Generally speaking, an action involves an (Attribute + Ability) roll at an appropriate difficulty. As one example, sneaking about without being seen or heard is a Dexterity + Stealth roll. Difficulties are roughly as follows: Difficulty 1 is standard (sneaking by some distracted bandits in an ill-lit chamber), difficulty 2 is difficult (following a guard through a crowded city), difficulty 3 is challenging (sneaking past alert guards), and difficulty 5 is for legendary endeavors (sneaking *through* a crowded room without being seen simply by watching where everyone is gazing and never being where anyone looks).

Adventure Background

The background for **Return to the Tomb of Five Corners** is presented here for players and Storytellers both to read. This way, play can begin in Medias Res, with everyone on the same page and the players taking action from the moment the game begins rather than needing to listen to the Storyteller narrate the adventure's background first.

The Solar heroes had just returned from a successful campaign against the bandit king Barrow Black and his army, the Eyes in the Hills. When they returned to the city of Nexus with their company of mortal followers in tow, they found a message waiting for them. The four Solars had long speculated as to the location of their fifth member, for all have had flashes of recollection from the First Age, and they know they once counted a fifth Solar Exalt amongst their number, a member of the Eclipse Caste who completed their Perfect Circle fellowship.

The message waiting for them, carried by a man named Little Shoe, was a note that read as follows:

My Circlemates,

Though we have never met, I feel I know all of you. When the stories of your deeds reached me, I was newly Exalted, alone and confused, but somehow, the tales triggered memories of a life before this one, where we stood side-by-side and fought as one. I'm sure you all know the feeling of which I write, just as I'm sure you all know the emptiness your absence brings me.

When I began my search for the companions my memories promised me, I followed my visions to an ancient ruin, believing perhaps the landmark I sensed would be a meeting point. I thought we'd be drawn together to a common goal, but the place I found was empty.

This note is a compromise. I wish I could see you in person, but I dare not leave my find. The ruins to which I was led by the memories of my past life contain relics of the First Age, treasures beyond value that belong rightfully to all of us. I can't fully unlock this ruin alone, and I fear that if I leave to find you myself, we will return to nothing but a plundered shell. Please, follow the messenger with whom I've entrusted this note, and together, we will claim our inheritance.

The note was unsigned, but sealed in golden wax and pressed with the unmistakable sigil of the Eclipse Caste.

Little Shoe explained to the Solars that he was entrusted with this note in the trading town of Northeast Spoke by a beautiful woman with pale skin and dark hair, wearing a white robe, and that he'd been carrying it for six months, trying to find the Circle. Their campaign against the Eyes in the Hills had been long, and ultimately, he'd decided his best chance would be to wait in Nexus for the characters to return. After some debate, the Solars decided to depart for the ruins at once, leaving their tired mortal followers to recuperate in Nexus and await their return.

The Solars traveled across the Yellow River that lies to the north of Nexus, and then further north and east for four days, until they reached Northeast Spoke. In Northeast Spoke, they heard rumors of local bandits sporting the symbol of the Eyes in the Hills, once again demanding the payments taken by Barrow Black before his army was scattered. Could these be remnants of Barrow Black's band, fled to the north after their defeat at the hands of the Circle, or perhaps another group of robbers who sought to take advantage of Barrow Black's reputation? The rumors point further north, into the Valley of Death, a desolate expanse that had been avoided by the people of the region for as long as anyone can remember.

Once they arrived, the area seemed familiar, and all the Solars had flashes of First Age memory. They knew now where the ruins were and asked Little Shoe to wait for them in the town while they proceeded north to the meeting point.

After another half-day of travel, they have nearly arrived.

What About the First One?

Some players may be familiar with the original **The Tomb of Five Corners** adventure, released as a demo for **Exalted First Edition**. **Return to the Tomb of Five Corners** is not a sequel, but an altered version of that adventure. No familiarity with **The Tomb of Five Corners** is necessary to understand **Return to the Tomb of Five Corners**, and **Return to the Tomb of Five Corners** assumes the events of the original **The Tomb of Five Corners** never occurred. For players who have played the original, certain elements will be familiar, but enough has changed that your memories of the original adventure will not be a reliable guide to the "best" way to proceed through **Return to the Tomb of Five Corners**.

THE TOMB OF FIVE CORNERS

Important Note

If you plan on playing through **Return to the Tomb of Five Corners**, you shouldn't read this section of the text. You'll spoil it for yourself. Choose one of the four sample characters and familiarize yourself with his or her capabilities and history, but don't read this part.

If you're going to be the Storyteller, on the other hand, read through the whole adventure before running it. It may be a good idea to read through it twice, in fact, to ensure you haven't missed anything.

The note the characters found waiting for them in Nexus is genuine. The lost Eclipse Caste Circlemate of the Solar heroes really did find the ancient sanctuary of her Circle, and she really did send Little Shoe to find her Circlemates while she guarded the ruins. But that isn't the whole story. In her time alone, the Deathlord called the Mask of Winters found her and kidnaped her, bending her to his will and corrupting her into one of his deathknights, an Abyssal Exalt. Her name has been taken by the Neverborn, her heart has hardened, and now wearing the title Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood, she waits for her former allies in the northernmost wastes of Creation, at the defiled temple of peace that was her previous incarnation's tomb.

Additionally, the Mask of Winters has provided for her a new ally. Using foul necromancy, he has shaped the Essence of the Underworld into a simulacrum of Barrow Black's ghost. The Mask of Winters was unable to find the true ghost of Barrow Black (who was laid to rest by Morning Breeze's anima power), but the superstitious thugs who served under the bandit lord don't know this, and the Mask of Winters intends to rally the surviving bandits once again under Barrow Black's banner. The Mask of Winters' plan is to use the bandit army to cause chaos and destruction in the central Scavenger Lands while the Deathlord builds his army in the south, but for now, this simulacrum waits with the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood, both to aid her in her fight against the Solars and to ensure she remains loyal to the Deathlord.

Storytellers should feel free to elaborate on the material within this adventure. It's conceived as a simple set of six setting-pieces in which the characters can do a bit of exploration, have some acrobatic fight scenes and engage in a bit of personal drama at the end, but Storytellers shouldn't hesitate to add more complexity to it should they wish.

In Medias Res

Read this part aloud:

As you crest one of the hills that dot the blighted landscape of the Valley of Death, a barrow-mound comes into view. A pile of excavated soil sits beside a hole leading deep into the earth, and nearby, a wagon stands, its wheels sunk into the ground as if it had been waiting for some time. Upon the side of the wagon is painted a black hill with an inset eye, the symbol of the army of Barrow Black.

Stop reading aloud.

The stunted grass near the barrow-mound is crushed as if by the passage of many feet. Within the dark wagon wait two corpses, which will animate and attack the players' characters as soon as they investigate. This fight shouldn't take long — it's intended to introduce the players to the basics of **Exalted** combat.

Zombies

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3
Virtues: Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other Virtue rolls.
Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 1, Dodge 1, Martial Arts 2, Melee 1, Presence 1, Resistance 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1
Join Battle: 4
Attacks:
Fist: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Parry DV 2, Rate 3
Dodge DV: 1
Soak: 1L/3B
Willpower: 10
Health Levels: -1 [ ]
-3 [ ]
Incapacitated [ ]
Other Notes: The player of anyone fighting hand to hand with these zombies must make a successful (Stamina + Resistance) roll, difficulty 2, for his character each action, or the character suffers a -2 penalty to his dice pools due to nausea at the zombies' stench, as well as a –1DV penalty.

Kade's horse will rear and attempt to throw him off (assuming he is still riding it) unless Kade's player succeeds at a (Strength + Athletics) roll. If Kade falls, he'll take a single level of bashing damage. Following this, and whether Kade has fallen or not, the horse will attempt to flee from the zombies at full speed unless Kade succeeds at a (Charisma + Ride) roll, difficulty 2 to bring the horse under control. If he manages to stay on the horse and bring it under control, his player gains +1 to all his attack rolls while Kade fights mounted.

The passageway into the barrow is 50 yards long and too narrow for the horse to proceed inside, so Kade will have to leave it waiting outside. The passage appears to have been carved of stone and then filled in and covered over with dirt — there is a set of stone stairs, and the walls are carved with ruined images of sword-bearing warriors, painstakingly cleared of dirt and polished as if by someone with much free time and nowhere to go. Strangely, it seems that some time after the carvings were cleared and polished, they were shattered by some other process that left the rock scarred and blackened. Kade and Morning Breeze will both recognize the scarring patterns. The deathknights they saw and faced outside Thorns fired blasts of necrotic energy that produced similar piiting and discoloration.

From the bottom of the passageway, the characters can hear the sound of a dozen people eating, brawling and telling each other crude jokes. Should Naria sneak to the bottom and explore, she will see warriors she recognizes — they were all members of the Eyes in the Hills, and all fled from the battlefield rather than face the Circle in combat. Though mostly men, the bandits include a few women as well, just as tough and mean as their opposite number.

The chamber is huge, 50 yards wide with a domed ceiling, illuminated as if by sunlight despite the absence of obvious light sources. Around the edges of the chamber are five huge metal rings, each 10 feet across, set into the walls of the chamber. Behind each ring is the symbol of one Solar Caste: a sunburst; a solid gold circle; a ring half-filled with gold with an empty lower half; an entirely empty gold ring; and a gold circle surrounded by a ring. In the center of the chamber is a raised dais with a smooth top. Once, the chamber was a marvel of First Age engineering, carved from glistening white marble and edged in gold, but now, it's the filthy den of a bandit band, and the bedrolls of the brigands are scattered everywhere across the floor, along with scraps of uneaten food and looted goods.

The bandits are currently distracted. If the characters sneak down, they can catch the bandits unarmed, though if the characters make a lot of noise or have animas flaring, the enemy will detect their approach and gather swords and bows while the Solars move down the excavated passage.

If the bandits are alerted to the presence of the players' characters prior to the characters' entry to the chamber, they will open the battle with a volley of arrows (three arrows directed at each character) and then drop their bows in favor of their short swords. If the characters burst in before the brigands are aware, the bandits will go straight for their swords.

Just as the Solars recognize the bandits, the bandits will recognize the Solars. They will refuse to engage in banter before combat and attempt Join Battle actions as soon as they see the characters. Their master has impressed upon them the danger inherent in the honeyed tongues of the Solar Exalted.

If Kade activates his anima power, simply assume six of the bandits flee, rather than rolling all 12 Valor checks. This assumes some of the bandits fail the Valor checks while others succeed but choose to flee anyway.

If the characters manage to capture one of the bandits rather than killing all

Bandits

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 2
Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 1, Craft 1, Dodge 1, Integrity 1, Larceny 2, Linguistics 1, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Occult 1, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1, War 3
Join Battle: 4
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3 (with stunt), Rate 3
Short Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2
Self Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 5L, Range 150, Rate 2
Dodge DV: 0
Soak: 3L/7B (Buff jacket, 3L/4B, -1 mobility penalty)
Willpower: 6
Health Levels: -1 [ ]
-3 [ ]
Incapacitated [ ]
Essence: 1
Other Notes: Each bandit has a self bow, a short sword, a buff jacket, a long knife and a dozen broadhead arrows. Each also has a handful of silver Guild coins. Their armor is stitched with the symbol of Barrow Black.

of them, the captive will tell them all he knows. He says the ghost of Barrow Black has returned, serving a woman bearing the title "Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood." Barrow Black's ghost is gathering the remnants of the Eyes in the Hills together already and will soon launch a second offensive against the city of Nexus and the Scavenger Lands as a whole. The rings set into the walls of the room are First Age artifacts of some sort, teleportation devices. The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood and the ghost of Barrow Black have made many trips through the gate marked with the Eclipse symbol but have been unable to use the other four gates. If asked whether he knows anything about their lost Eclipse Caste Circlemate, the bandit will reply in the negative. He was brought here by the Mistress and the ghost, and the place was empty and already excavated when he and his comrades arrived.

If the characters investigate the raised dais in the center of the room, their presence will cause glowing, golden hologlyphic symbols of First Age script to appear floating above it. Rinan can read these symbols. They explain that each of the five gates, called "gates of auspicious passage," will operate automatically in the presence of the reincarnation of the Solar buried in the tomb beyond it. Within each tomb is a gate key, which looks like a small golden teardrop on a necklace. In case of emergency, four gate keys are required to open the fifth gate.

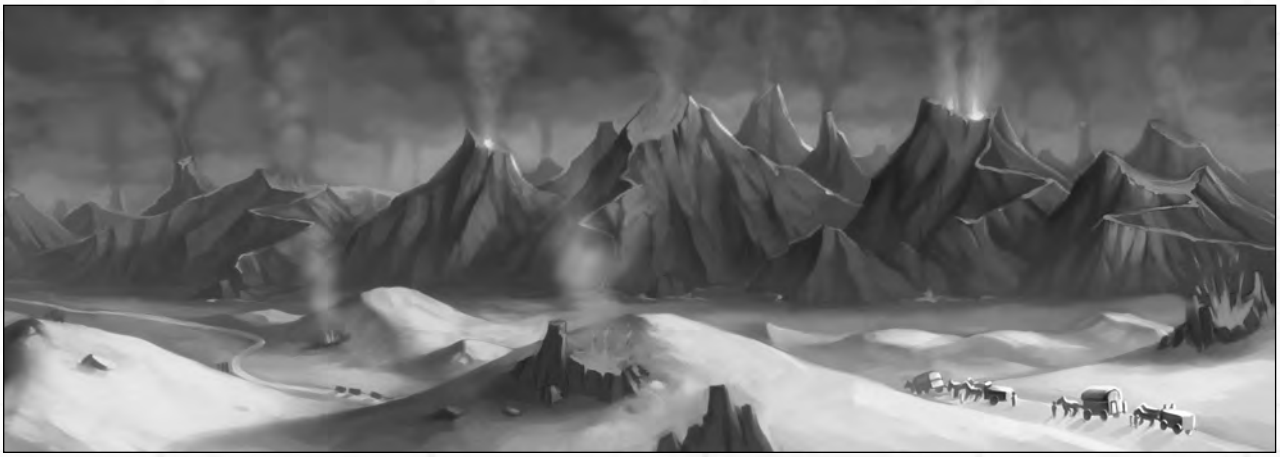
Kade can activate the Dawn Gate; Morning Breeze, the Zenith Gate; Rinan, the Twilight Gate; and Naria, the Night Gate. Activating them is a simple matter of stepping through them, whereupon a vortex of Essence will open for half a minute, and anyone who wishes to step through may do so until the Essence vortex dissipates. The characters can enter the four gates in any order they so choose.

The Tomb of the Dawn

Read this part aloud:

As the Essence-vortex clears, you're nearly blinded. The sun is bright, here, and the heat is sweltering. Aside from the gate behind you, desert stretches to the horizon in every direction but one. Half a mile before you, a rocky outcropping juts from the sand, stretching perhaps 200 feet into the air. At your feet is a path of white stones, 10 feet wide, leading to an opening in the rock's side.

Stop reading aloud.



EXALTED

Name: MORNING BREEZE
Player:
Caste: ZENITH
Concept: Monk
Motivation: Make Creation a just and righteous place
Anima: Shimmering golden predatory bird

Attributes

Strength	●●●●○	Charisma	●●○○○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●●●○	Manipulation	●●○○○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●●○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Dawn		Zenith		Twilight	
☐ Archery	○○○○○	■ Integrity	●●●○○	☐ Craft	○○○○○
■ Martial Arts	●●●●○	■ Performance	●○○○○	☐ Investigation	○○○○○
■ Melee	●●○○○	■ Presence	●●○○○	■ Lore	●●○○○
☐ Thrown	○○○○○	■ Resistance	●●●○○	☐ Medicine	○○○○○
☐ War	○○○○○	■ Survival	●○○○○	■ Occult	●●○○○

Night		Eclipse		Specialties	
■ Athletics	●●○○○	☐ Bureaucracy	●○○○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Awareness	●○○○○	☐ Linguistics	●○○○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Dodge	●●●○○	☐ Ride	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Larceny	○○○○○	☐ Sail	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Stealth	○○○○○	☐ Socialize	●○○○○	☐	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds	
Allies	●●○○○
Contacts	●○○○○
Mentor	●●○○○
Resources	●●○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Charms

Name	Cost	Name	Cost
Body-Mending Meditation	10m	Striking Cobra Technique	3m
Durability of Oak Meditation	3m		
First Martial Arts Excellency	1m/die		
First Presence Excellency	1m/die		
Iron Skin Concentration	2m		
One Weapon, Two Blows	1m		
Ox-Body Technique			
Serpentine Evasion	3m		
Snake Form	5m		

Weapons

Slashing Sword (Spd 4, Acc 7, Dmg 7L, PDV 3, Rate 3)
Punch (Spd 5, Acc 9, Dmg 4B, PDV 5 (with ration), Rate 4)
Kick (Spd 5, Acc 8, Dmg 7B, PDV 3 (with ration), Rate 2)

Anima

Limit Break

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Virtue Flaw

Compassionate Martyrdom (Compassion)

Willpower

●●●●●●○○○○
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Soak

B 3 L 1 A 0

Health

-0	☐■■■■
-1	☐☐☐☐■
-2	☐☐■■■
	■■■■■
-4	☐
Incapacitated	☐

Virtues

Compassion	Temperance
●●●●○	●●○○○
☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐
Conviction	**Valor**
●●○○○	●●○○○
☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐

Essence

●●●○○○

Personal 15 | ___
Peripheral 37 | ___
Committed

Experience

EXALTED

Name: KADE
Player:
Caste: DAWN
Concept: Mercenary
Motivation: Lead my circle to greatness
Anima: Bonfire of the pyre

Attributes

Strength	●●●●○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●○○○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●●●○	Appearance	●●●○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Dawn		Zenith		Twilight	
■ Archery	●●○○○	☐ Integrity	●●●○○	☐ Craft	○○○○○
■ Martial Arts	●○○○○	■ Performance	●○○○○	☐ Investigation	○○○○○
■ Melee	●●●●○	■ Presence	●○○○○	☐ Lore	●●○○○
■ Thrown	○○○○○	☐ Resistance	●●○○○	☐ Medicine	●○○○○
■ War	●●●○○	■ Survival	●○○○○	☐ Occult	○○○○○

Night		Eclipse		Specialties	
☐ Athletics	●○○○○	☐ Bureaucracy	●○○○○	☐	○○○○○
■ Awareness	●○○○○	☐ Linguistics	●●○○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Dodge	●○○○○	■ Ride	●●●○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Larceny	○○○○○	☐ Sail	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Stealth	●○○○○	☐ Socialize	●○○○○	☐	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds	
Allies	●●○○○
Backing (Mercenary Company)	●○○○○
Contacts	●●○○○
Followers	●●●○○
Resources	●●●○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Charms

Name	Cost	Name	Cost
Body-Mending Meditation	10m	Respect Commanding Attitude	5m
Dipping Swallow Defense	2m		
Fire and Stones Strike	1m/die		
First Integrity Excellency	1m/die		
First Lore Excellency	1m/die		
First Melee Excellency	1m/die		
First Ride Excellency	1m/die		
Hungry Tiger Technique	1m		
Ox-Body Technique			

Weapons

Great Sword (Spd 6, Acc 8, Dmg 11L, PDV 3, Rate 2)

Anima

Limit Break

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Virtue Flaw

Foolhardy Contempt (Valor)

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Soak

B 12 L 8 A 6

Health

-0	☐■■■■
-1	☐☐☐☐■
-2	☐☐■■■
	■■■■■
-4	☐
Incapacitated	☐

Virtues

Compassion	Temperance
●●○○○	●●○○○
☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐
Conviction	**Valor**
●●○○○	●●●○○
☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐

Essence

●●○○○○

Personal 11 | ___
Peripheral 28 | ___
Committed

Experience

Kade

History: You were born to one of the many villages that claim the protection of the militaristic city-state of Lookshy. Your parents pushed for you to join the illustrious army of that city, and for a time, you succumbed to their desires. The rigid rules of the military state grew tiresome to you, and so you left the service to work for yourself. Ironically, your main client has been the very city whose army you rejected. The mercenaries of your company fought for coins and glory at the behest of the same lords who once commanded you directly. Deployed against skirmishing troops north of Thorns, you lost many of your men in battle against the undead (a wrong you've vowed to see righted). The Zenith monk Morning Breeze found you upon that battlefield, and you remembered him from a previous incarnation. He was drawn to the same pillar of fire that frightened your men away. Together, the two of you made your way east to Nexus, while you dreamed of rebuilding a new company inspired by the glory of the Unconquered Sun.

In Nexus, the ruling Council sought warriors to send against the bandit king Barrow Black, and you saw the chance to earn a name for yourself. During the campaign against the brigand lord, you also discovered two more of your long-lost Circle from the First Age. Hopefully, this means that a new age is about to dawn, one in which the Solars return to their rightful places.

Image: Kade is a tall, powerfully built man in his mid-30s. He wears his hair and moustache long in the style of Northern barbarians, a habit that annoys his previous commanders in the Lookshy army. His heavy armor and sword are always at his side, and his only concession to comfort is a warm traveling cloak. He usually travels on horseback and has an eye for the best horses.

Equipment: Well-made lamellar armor (mobility penalty "2), great sword, strong, fine-quality horse with full riding gear, traveling cloak, provisions.

Dodge DV: 1

Social Combat: Dodge MDV 5, Parry MDV 2

Intimacies: The safety of his mercenary company; Revenge against the forces of the Deathlords

Virtue Flaw: Foolhardy Contempt (Valor). Any time Kade has an opportunity to prove his bravery and attempts to resist that urge, roll his Valor. For every success, he gains a point of Limit Break. When Kade's Limit Break reaches 10, he loses all fear and most sense of self-preservation for a full day, placing himself at the forefront of all battles, thoughtlessly challenging enemies to single combat, volunteering for all dangerous missions and refusing to retreat under any circumstances. If he restrains himself, he leads all charges and won't take personal safety into consideration when making plans, but needn't rush thoughtlessly into combat and can retreat if tactically advisable.

Anima Power: Kade may spend 10 motes to appear mighty and horrifying in the eyes of his opponents. His opponents are thereafter unable to bring themselves to look directly upon his terrible visage and form, unless their Valor exceeds his Essence (2), and he gains +2 DV against them as a result. Mortal opponents with Valor equal to or less than Kade's Essence must also succeed at a Valor roll or else flee his presence. This effect comes into play automatically whenever Kade's anima is flaring at the 11+ mote level.

Charms

First Excellencies: Kade possesses First Excellency Charm for the Melee, Integrity, Lore and Ride Abilities. They function as described on page 10.

Body-Mending Meditation: By committing 10 motes, Kade may activate this Charm. Roll Kade's (Stamina + Resistance). Success indicates his wounds heal 10 times faster until the end of the day.

Dipping Swallow Defense: By spending two motes, Kade may activate this Charm reflexively against an attack. It allows him to ignore all penalties that apply to his Parry DV against that attack.

Fire and Stones Strike: Kade may spend up to four motes when activating this Charm to supplement an attack. Each mote adds one extra die to the post-soak damage pool for that attack.

Hungry Tiger Technique: At the cost of one mote, Kade may supplement any one melee attack, counting successes on the attack roll double for the purposes of adding dice to the damage roll. Successes negated by the opponent's DV are not counted double for this purpose.

Ox-Body Technique: This Charm gives Kade extra health levels. They are already shown on the character sheet.

Respect Commanding Attitude: This Charm costs five motes to activate, has a Speed of 4 long ticks and affects every character in auditory range. Roll Kade's ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Performance), subtracting the MDV of the targets. Any target who does not defend against Respect Commanding Attitude must stay and listen politely to Kade for the rest of the scene, unless she spends a Willpower point.

Combo: Devastating Strike of Fire and Light

Kade's anima flares with golden fire that trails down his arm and engulfs his weapon in a shining inferno. Activating the Combo with the expenditure of a Willpower point, Kade can (and *must*) use both Hungry Tiger Technique and Fire and Stones Strike to supplement whatever melee attack he makes that action (or *every* attack in a single flurry) and also *may* use the First Melee Excellency to enhance it (or them). Thereafter, Kade *may* use the First Melee Excellency, Dipping Swallow Defense or both to defend against any attacks made against him until his next action.

Morning Breeze

History: From an early age, you were taught the Immaculate faith of the Dragon-Blooded, to seek to emulate the morals and prowess of the Five Elemental Dragons. Traveling as an itinerant monk, you sought wisdom in every corner of Creation. The rise of the undead in Thorns, a corrupted city south of Nexus, brought you into battle with foes you could not defeat with your martial strength. A blazing white light descended upon you, and you were Exalted. The Unconquered Sun spoke to you, and to this day, you seek to spread your god's truth and justice. The Dragon-Blooded murdered the Solars, lied about the gods and allowed the world to fall apart. The leadership of the Unconquered Sun's Chosen is needed, and you are here to deliver it.

You found Kade a year and a half ago north of Thorns, where he was serving as a mercenary officer for the city of Lookshy. Unable to defeat the vast armies of debased Thorns, the two of you traveled east seeking the rest of your Circle. The stars seemed to ordain that you would rejoin, as you were all recruited by Nexus' Council of Entities to fight against the bandit king Barrow Black. Having fought alongside your companions in battle against the fallen brigand lord, you now hope to turn them southward to cleanse Thorns.

Image: Despite turning his back on the Immaculate faith, Morning Breeze has not changed his style of dress. He continues to wear the robes of a monk, emblazoned with the insignia of the Unconquered Sun now, and he keeps his head shaved as a mark of humility.

Equipment: Slashing sword, sleeping mat, monk's robes and sandals, alms bowl, walking staff, provisions. Morning Breeze does not wear armor as he is trained in martial arts styles that prohibit its use.

Dodge DV: 5

Social Combat: Dodge MDV 6, Parry MDV 2

Intimacies: Kade, Rinan, Naria, honesty

Virtue Flaw: Compassionate Martyrdom (Compassion). Whenever Morning Breeze witnesses the suffering of the innocent, roll his Compassion. For every success, he gains a point of Limit Break. When his Limit Break reaches 10, for one scene of combat or one day otherwise he will seek to intercede against any suffering he witnesses in the most dramatic and self-punishing way (leaping in front of a whip intended for slaves, for example). If he restrains himself, he will still seek to prevent suffering above all else, but can be more pragmatic in his approach.

Anima Power: With but a touch and the expenditure of a mote of Essence, Morning Breeze can burn the bodies of the fallen, sending their souls to Heaven and preventing them from rising after death as zombies, skeletons, ghosts or hungry ghosts. By channeling 10 motes into his anima, Morning Breeze can shine as brightly as the noonday sun, and thereafter, against creatures of darkness (undead, demons), his effective lethal and bashing soak and his minimum attack dice pools increase by an amount equal to his Essence. This effect comes into play automatically whenever Morning Breeze's anima is shining at the 11+ mote level.

Charms

First Excellencies: Morning Breeze possesses First Excellency Charm for the Martial Arts and Presence Abilities. They function as described on page 10.

Body-Mending Meditation: By committing 10 motes, Morning Breeze may activate this Charm. Roll Morning Breeze's (Stamina + Resistance). Success indicates his wounds heal 10 times faster until the end of the day.

Durability of Oak Meditation: After an attack hits Morning Breeze but before damage is rolled, he may spend three motes to activate this Charm. If the attack has a raw damage of 8 or less, he may ignore all damage from it.

Iron Skin Concentration: When Morning Breeze is struck by an attack but before damage is rolled, he may spend 2 motes to invoke this Charm. Roll his (Stamina + Resistance) at a difficulty equal to the attacker's Essence. On a success, the damage from the attack is completely negated. On a failure, Morning Breeze's soak increases by +8B/+8L/+4A against that attack only.

One Weapon, Two Blows: This Charm costs one mote to activate. Until his next action, the Accuracy and Rate of Morning Breeze's weapon increase by one each.

Ox-Body Technique: This Charm gives Morning Breeze extra health levels. They are already shown on the character sheet.

Serpentine Evasion: When attacked, Morning Breeze may pay three motes to activate this Charm. It increases his Parry or Dodge DV by 2 against that attack.

Snake Form: Morning Breeze may commit 5 motes to slip into Snake Form, adopting a shifting, hypnotic martial arts stance. Activating this Charm is an action with Speed 3 and a defense penalty of -1. Once activated and until the end of the scene, this Charm adds 3 to Morning Breeze's bashing soak, and if an enemy attacks Morning Breeze and can see his hypnotic movements, that enemy loses three dice from her attack dice pool.

Striking Cobra Technique: When making a Join Battle action, Morning Breeze may spend 3 motes to activate this Charm. It adds three automatic successes to his (Wits + Awareness) roll.

Combo: Alacrity of the Invincible Steel Cobra

Morning Breeze's skin seems to turn to white steel scales as his motions become too fast for the mortal eye to track. By spending a Willpower point, Morning Breeze may activate this Combo, which allows him to use Durability of Oak Meditation, the First Martial Arts Excellency, Iron Skin Concentration and Serpentine Evasion all over the course of a single action. He may activate it when making an unarmed attack, which would allow him to enhance the attack with the First Martial Arts Excellency and then defend against attacks until his next action with any or all of these Charms, or he may activate it at any point after making any attack not enhanced by a Charm and before his next action.

Name: RINAN
Player:
Caste: TWILIGHT
Concept: Witch
Motivation: Comprehend the workings of Fate
Anima: Light reflecting off waves

Attributes

Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●●●○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●○○○	Intelligence	●●●●○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●●●○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Dawn		Zenith		Twilight	
☐ Archery	○○○○○	☐ Integrity	●○○○○	■ Craft (Water)	●●○○○
☐ Martial Arts	●○○○○	☐ Performance	○○○○○	■ Investigation	●○○○○
☐ Melee	●●●○○	☐ Presence	●○○○○	■ Lore	●●●○○
☐ Thrown	●○○○○	■ Resistance	●○○○○	■ Medicine	●○○○○
☐ War	○○○○○	■ Survival	●○○○○	■ Occult	●●●○○

Night		Eclipse		Specialties	
■ Athletics	●●○○○	☐ Bureaucracy	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Awareness	○○○○○	☐ Linguistics	●●○○○	☐	○○○○○
■ Dodge	●●○○○	☐ Ride	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Larceny	○○○○○	■ Sail	●●○○○	☐	○○○○○
☐ Stealth	○○○○○	☐ Socialize	●○○○○	☐	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds	
Allies	●○○○○
Influence	●●○○○
Manse	●●●○○
Resources	●○○○○

Charms			
Name	Cost	Name	Cost
First Dodge Excellency	1m/die	Impenetrable Frost Barrier	20m
First Melee Excellency	1m/die	Invulnerable Skin of Bronze	20m
First Presence Excellency	1m/die		
One Weapon, Two Blows	1m		
Peony Blossom Attack	2m/attack		
Terrestrial Circle Sorcery	1w		
Death of Obsidian Butterflies	15m		
Emerald Countermagic	10m or 20m		
The Eye and the Mouth	15m		

Weapons

Gaff Spear (Spd 5, Acc 7, Dmg 6L, PDV 4, Rate 2)

Willpower

●●●●●●○○○○

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Virtues

Compassion	Temperance
●●●○○	●●●○○
Conviction	Valor
●●○○○	●○○○○

Anima

Soak

B 7 L 4 A 3

Essence

●●●○○○

Personal 15 | ___
Peripheral 36 | ___
Committed ___

Health

-0	☐■■■■
-1	☐☐■■■
-2	☐☐■■■
	■■■■■
-4	☐
Incapacitated	☐

Limit Break

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Virtue Flaw

Ascetic Drive (Temperance)

Experience

Name: NARIA
Player:
Caste: NIGHT
Concept: Guild Operative
Motivation: Reform the Guild
Anima: Flickering dappled sunspots

Attributes

Strength	●●●○○	Charisma	●●○○○	Perception	●●●●●
Dexterity	●●●●●	Manipulation	●●○○○	Intelligence	●●○○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●●○○	Wits	●●○○○

Abilities

Dawn		Zenith		Twilight	
■ Archery	●●●●●	☐ Integrity	●●○○○	☐ Craft	○○○○○
☐ Martial Arts	○○○○○	☐ Performance	○○○○○	■ Investigation	●●○○○
■ Melee	●●●○○	☐ Presence	○○○○○	☐ Lore	○○○○○
☐ Thrown	○○○○○	■ Resistance	●●○○○	☐ Medicine	○○○○○
☐ War	○○○○○	☐ Survival	○○○○○	■ Occult	●○○○○

Night		Eclipse		Specialties	
■ Athletics	●●●○○	☐ Bureaucracy	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○
■ Awareness	●●●○○	☐ Linguistics	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○
■ Dodge	●●●●○	☐ Ride	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○
■ Larceny	●●●○○	☐ Sail	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○
■ Stealth	●●●●●	☐ Socialize	○○○○○	☐	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds	
Backing (Guild)	●●●○○
Contacts	●●○○○
Resources	●●○○○

Charms			
Name	Cost	Name	Cost
First Archery Excellency	1m/die	Spider-Foot Style	4m
First Athletics Excellency	1m/die		
First Dodge Excellency	1m/die		
First Stealth Excellency	1m/die		
Graceful Crane Stance	3m		
Lightning Speed	3w		
Monkey Leap Technique	3m		
Phantom Arrow Technique	1m/arrow		
Righteous Judgement Arrow	2m		

Weapons

Exceptional Knife (Spd 5, Acc 7, Dmg 6L, PDV 4, Rate 2)
Self Bow (Spd 6, Acc 10, Dmg 5L, Rate 2, Range 150)

Willpower

●●●●●●○○○○

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Virtues

Compassion	Temperance
●○○○○	●●○○○
Conviction	Valor
●●●○○	●●●○○

Anima

Soak

B 5 L 5 A 4

Essence

●●●○○○

Personal 15 | ___
Peripheral 36 | ___
Committed ___

Health

-0	☐■■■■
-1	☐☐■■■
-2	☐☐■■■
	■■■■■
-4	☐
Incapacitated	☐

Limit Break

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Virtue Flaw

Heart of Flint (Conviction)

Experience

Naria

History: The streets of the city of Great Forks are dangerous as most in the Scavenger Lands — and certainly no place for a child. Nonetheless, that's where you grew up. While you were still young, a Dragon-Blooded noble seized you and forced you into slavery. Ultimately, you were bought by a Guild merchant who offered to grant you freedom should you live up to your potential. The Guild trained you well, as a spy and a killer, willing to destroy its rivals and disrupt its competition. Indeed, something within you awakened, and you became a more deadly servant than the Guild ever dreamed.

In Nexus, the ruling Council of Entities sought warriors to send against the bandit king Barrow Black, and you managed to gain the permission of the Guild to strike against the brigand lord due to his attacks upon Guild caravans. You met the mercenary Kade and the monk Morning Breeze and instantly recognized the pair as friends from long ago. Shame filled you as you thought about your life of killing unsuspecting victims in the service of greedy men, and you determined to somehow make amends. The world is a dangerous place, and too often, your arrows have been the reason why.

Image: Naria is a pretty, lithe and lean young woman with an athletic body and a charming smile. She wears a dark breastplate and black, loose clothing. If she is expecting trouble, she keeps her hair wound into a knot, but if she is at ease, she lets its beautiful locks flow freely.

Equipment: A self bow, a quiver with a dozen broadhead arrows (which she uses when she doesn't wish to announce her Exalted nature), an exceptional knife, a breastplate (mobility penalty "1), provisions. Naria also carries a Guild merchant's mon, which identifies her as part of his house and grants her access to certain restricted buildings in Nexus.

Dodge DV: 5

Social Combat: Dodge MDV 5, Parry MDV 2

Intimacies: Making amends

Virtue Flaw: Heart of Flint (Conviction). Whenever Naria is frustrated by the intemperate or childish nature of the world around her, roll her Conviction. For each success, she gains a point of Limit. When here Limit reaches 10, for a full day she retreats inward and conceals all emotion, choosing only efficiency in her actions and suffering a -2 penalty to all social rolls. If she restrains herself, she may still avoid actions to which she normally has a strong emotional aversion.

Anima Power: Whenever Naria spends Peripheral motes to power a Charm, she may spend 1 additional mote to mute her anima, preventing the mote expenditure from causing her anima to flare. Obvious magical Charms such as Phantom Arrow Technique, Righteous Judgment Arrow and Spider-Foot Style instead cost double their normal Essence if she wants to prevent them from causing her anima to flare. By spending 10 motes, she may wrap her muted anima around herself, increasing the difficulty of all rolls to detect her by 2. Once she's spent 11+ motes of Essence, though she's as obvious as any Solar whose anima flares that high, her features are completely obscured by her anima, making positively identifying her impossible until the effect subsides.

Charms

First Excellencies: Naria possesses the First Excellency Charm for the Archery, Athletics, Dodge and Stealth Abilities. They function as described on page 10.

Graceful Crane Stance: By committing three motes, for the rest of the scene Naria automatically succeeds at any valid Athletics roll to keep her balance and can stand or perch with perfect poise on any surface at least as strong and wide as a human hair.

Lightning Speed: By committing three motes, Naria increases the distance she can cover with a Move or Dash action by her Athletics score in yards. She can increase this further with the First Athletics Excellency, spending motes to increase the static rating of her (Dexterity + Athletics).

Monkey Leap Technique: By committing three motes, for the rest of the scene Naria may jump with movement actions (Moves or Dashes) instead of the Jump action, and she doubles the maximum distance of her jumps.

Phantom Arrow Technique: This Charm permanently enhances Naria's facility with Essence, granting her the ability to shape her motes into ammunition. By spending one mote per attack, Naria may make ranged attacks using golden phantom arrows that dissipate as soon as they strike. Because this Charm is a permanent enhancement of her Ability, creating an arrow does not count as use of a Charm for the purposes of the one Charm per action limit.

Righteous Judgment Arrow: By spending three motes, Naria may add seven dice to the damage of an archery attack.

Spider-Foot Style: By committing four motes, for the rest of the scene Naria gains the ability to run on any surface, no matter how steep or inverted. However, she will fall if she doesn't at least take a Move action on every tick.

Combo: Judgment of the Striking Raptor

Naria's anima surrounds her arrow with the image of a spread-winged predatory bird that trails essence the deep blue of the night sky, and her movements become precise and fluid. Upon making an Archery attack, Naria may spend a Willpower point to activate this Combo, whereupon she *must* supplement the attack with Righteous Judgment Arrow (or every attack, in the case of a flurry). She also *may* enhance the attack with the First Archery Excellency and *may* use the First Dodge Excellency to enhance her Dodge DV against incoming attacks until her next action.

Rinan

History: You were born in a village where the Scavenger Lands meet the White Sea. Your mother was renowned as the local witch, and from the beginning, you were feared and respected by your people. As you grew into manhood, you assumed your mother's role as the spiritual emissary for your village. You learned to birth babies, to craft intricate nets and to hunt for the bounty of the sea. Unfortunately, you also learned to read the most visible fortunes in the stars and foresaw the destruction of your village. For years, you worked to devise some ward for your people, but even the immense power of Exaltation did not bring you the wisdom to prevent disaster. A terrible storm ripped your home from its cliffside perch and cast your small boat far to the south. Returning to your village, you found that only your mother's strange hut still stood, somehow preserved by the Essence of Creation. Alone, you traveled south again, seeking whatever pathway the storm meant to set you upon.

You encountered Kade and Morning Breeze, whose spirits resonated with the marks of fate, as they departed Nexus. Recognizing them from your past life, you joined them to fight against Barrow Black.

Image: Rinan is a tall, thin, attractive man, with long, straight black hair. He wears oilskins and tall whalehide boots, and uses a harpoon for fishing and defense. It rarely leaves his hands in these troubled days.

Equipment: Harpoon, clothing, herbs and the hearthstone of his mother's manse (while it touches his skin, his mote recovery increases by four motes per hour). Rinan's high soak values are due to his leather clothes acting as light armor (mobility penalty -1).

Dodge DV: 3

Social Combat: Dodge MDV 5, Parry MDV 2

Intimacies: His village's ruins, his Circle, curiosity

Virtue Flaw: Ascetic Drive (Temperance). Whenever Rinan is confronted by evidence of his own weakness or inadequacy, roll his Temperance. For each success, he gains a point of Limit. When his Limit reaches 10, for one full day he retreats from the world, denies himself all comfort and gives away or destroys his important possessions. If he restrains himself, he needn't retreat from the world or give away possessions, but he still denies himself all comfort and refuses to engage in small talk.

Anima Power: Whenever Rinan is struck by a successful attack, he may spend five motes after the damage is rolled to reduce the damage inflicted by three (which can reduce it to zero), though he cannot invoke his anima multiple times against the same attack. This effect applies automatically against all attacks once Rinan's anima is flaring at the 11+ level.

Charms

First Excellencies: Rinan possesses the First Excellency Charm for the Dodge, Melee and Presence Abilities. They function as described on page 10.

One Weapon, Two Blows: By spending one mote, Rinan may add 1 to the Rate and to the Accuracy of his spear until his next attack.

Peony Blossom Attack: Rinan may attack with a magical flurry. For every two motes spent, the flurry may contain one attack, to a maximum of four. These attacks do not suffer the usual flurry penalty to his attack pools, and the flurry has a total defense penalty of only -1. Characters subject to this flurry effect suffer no DV penalty against the first attack, a penalty of -1 DV against the second attack, -2 DV against the third attack and -3 DV against the fourth.

Combo: Sunlight Flashing on Tidal Waves

The glittering light of Rinan's anima pounds rhythmically with the blows from his spear, as if it were sunlight reflected from powerful waves. By spending a Willpower point when he activates Peony Blossom Attack, Rinan may enhance the attacks in the magical flurry with the First Melee Excellency and, until his next action, may use the First Melee Excellency to boost his Parry DV against incoming attacks.

Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Rinan is an accomplished sorcerer. To cast a spell of the Terrestrial Circle, Rinan must first spend the mote cost of the spell, and one Willpower point, to take a Shape Terrestrial Circle Sorcery action (Speed 5, defense penalty -2). Once all five ticks have passed, the spell is released, its effects are resolved, and Rinan must make a new Join Battle action to rejoin combat. If Rinan takes damage at any point during the Shape Terrestrial Circle Sorcery action, his player must succeed at a (Wits + Occult) roll, subtracting a number of successes equal to the damage inflicted. If the roll succeeds, Rinan may cast the spell. If the roll fails, the spell is interrupted and takes no effect, and the motes spent on it are lost.

Death of Obsidian Butterflies: Roll Rinan's (Perception + Occult), adding three successes. This spell calls forth a torrent of razor-sharp, black-glass butterflies that flash over Rinan's shoulder to attack every target ahead of him in a pattern 30 yards wide, 100 yards long and 10 yards high. These are considered hand-to-hand attacks for purposes of defense and have a number of attack successes equal to the result on the casting roll. They have a raw damage of 8L plus any remaining successes on the casting roll. When the spell ends, the butterflies fall to the floor, mostly shattered, and do not dissipate.

Emerald Countermagic: Unlike other spells, the Shape Terrestrial Sorcery action to cast Emerald Countermagic is a reflexive one with an effective Speed of 0. Rinan may use this spell in one of two ways. He may spend 10 motes to protect himself against the effects of any Terrestrial Circle spell for the duration of his Cast Sorcery action and his next action after that, or he may spend 20 motes to shatter any Terrestrial Circle spell within 150 feet, including spells being shaped or cast.

The Eye and the Mouth: For 15 motes, this spell summons a magical eye and mouth that remain in existence to aid Rinan for 10 minutes. The eye can read any text, and the mouth can translate it.

Impenetrable Frost Barrier: For 20 motes, Rinan may summon a barrier of swirling ice and frost that extends 15 feet from his body. Within the barrier, all incoming missile attacks subtract six successes as the ice coats them and the winds pull them off course.

Invulnerable Skin of Bronze: For 20 motes and until the sun next crosses the horizon, this spell transmutes Rinan's skin into supple but nigh-unbreakable bronze. He gains +6L/+12B soak and ignores the effects any attack with a raw damage equal to or less than 6L or 12B.

The preceding text, and the "Read this part aloud" texts of each of the other four tombs, assume the characters enter the gates during the day.

The rocky outcropping the characters see before them is the Tomb of the Dawn, located in the far reaches of the Southern desert of Creation, near the Elemental Pole of Fire. Any character whose player succeeds at a (Wits + Lore) roll will recognize the geography as that of the South.

The stone path to the Tomb of the Dawn is ensorcelled with First Age magic to render it immune to the elements. This sorcery also keeps it clear of sand and debris and ensures that anyone walking upon it isn't negatively affected by the heat of the desert, though it does nothing to shield travelers against the *sensation* of temperature. Realizing this requires a successful (Wits + [Lore or Occult]) roll at difficulty 3.

The opening at the front of the tomb is 15 feet wide and 50 feet tall, flanked on both sides by identical statues of hewn rock, as tall as the doorway, made to look like men in armor carrying swords plunged point-down into the sand. Kade's character will recognize the faces of the statues — they're him, or at least they're the spitting image of the Solar he used to be. These statues are simple rock, without enchantment.

The inside of the Tomb of the Dawn is a circular expanse, 100 feet across. The floor is the sand of the desert. The path of white stones stops at the entrance to the tomb, but inside, the air is cool and a pleasant relief after the heat of outside. At one point in time, this was a training and practice room for warriors to drill and loose themselves in katas. Kade will remember this if the characters spend any time lingering on the ground floor.

As Kade enters the tomb, a rumbling sound fills the air, and from the sand in the center of the floor ascends a spiral staircase wrapped around a pillar, made of the same rock as the walls. When fully extended, this staircase spans the full 75-foot gap from the floor to the ceiling, connecting to a hole that leads into a second room above the first.

The second floor of the tomb is circular like the first, but only 80 feet across, 50 feet from floor to ceiling and filled with vertical pillars. The pillars are three feet wide, spaced three to six feet apart in an uneven, somewhat random pattern, dense enough that from the center of the room, where the staircase meets the floor, it is difficult to see the walls for all the pillars in the way.

Hidden in this room, behind and between pillars such that they cannot be seen by characters standing where the staircase emerges from the floor, are nine opponents. Eight of them are the honor guard of Kade's previous incarnation, and they guard him even in death. They wear steel breastplates and carry straight swords. The ninth is the corpse of Kade's previous incarnation itself, wearing gold-plated armor and carrying a massive flat-tipped golden sword, with a blade four feet long and a full foot wide. None of the ancient dead wear helmets, and all are desiccated and mummified by the dry air of the desert and more than 1,000 years' time spent waiting.

If the characters explore the room, Kade will discover the ancient Solar corpse first, standing perfectly still between two pillars, seemingly alone and inanimate, in the same pose as the statues flanking the entrance to the tomb.

Around the neck of the ancient Solar's remains is this tomb's gate key. The moment anyone tries to remove the gate key from around the former Solar's neck, all the ancient dead in the room will take Join Battle actions. They will likewise take Join Battle actions in response to the characters doing the same, if the characters decide not to remove the necklace until after they've neutralized the suspiciously upright mummy. The eight lesser zombies will approach and retreat amidst the pillars to conceal their numbers during the fight. The remains of the ancient Solar will move unerringly toward Kade throughout the combat, as if testing his worthiness as a Solar Exalted. For the eight lesser opponents, use the traits for the zombies in the wagon outside the tomb hub, save that their soak is increased to 5L/5B, their Dodge DV is decreased to 0 by their breastplates,

Dawn Caste Walking Dead

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3
Virtues: Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other Virtue rolls.
Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 1, Dodge 1, Martial Arts 2, Melee 4, Presence 1, Resistance 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1
Join Battle: 4
Attacks:
Reaver Daiklave: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 14L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2
Dodge DV: 0
Soak: 12L/14B/9A (Articulated plate, 9L/9B, -3 mobility penalty)
Willpower: 10
Health Levels: -0 [ ]
-0 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-4 [ ]
Incapacitated [ ]
Essence: 1
Other Notes: Immune to all social combat attempts. Due to its powerful weapon, the Dawn Caste Walking Dead cannot have its damage rolls reduced to fewer than three dice, despite having an Essence of only 1. Have fun describing how the powerful strikes of his golden sword shatter the stone pillars and otherwise tear up the scenery whenever they miss the players' characters!

they attack with straight swords (Speed 4, Accuracy 5, Damage 8L, PDV 2, Rate 2), and they neither rot nor inflict nausea. For the Solar remains, use the traits on the previous page.

Remind Kade's player that Kade remembers the golden sword and armor as belonging to him in a past life. The sword is an artifact crafted of the magical metal called orichalcum, and it seemingly calls to him as "his." The gold-plated steel armor is not an artifact, yet it remains uncorroded and nearly perfect after more than a millennium due to the tomb's funerary craft.

If Kade dons the articulated plate armor, his soak increases to 11L/13B/9A. However, articulated plate has a mobility penalty of -3, and this hampered mobility will decrease his Dodge DV to 0.

If Kade uses the sword, called a reaver daiklave, it is initially too heavy to wield, but by committing five motes to it he can make it light and nimble (this is a property of the orichalcum from which it is crafted), a process called *attunement*. He will instinctively know how to attune the weapon as soon as he attempts to pick it up with the intent to use it. Attuned by Kade, the reaver daiklave has the following traits: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 13L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3. While wielding the reaver daiklave, Kade's damage rolls cannot be reduced to fewer than three dice by soak.

With the Dawn key in hand, there is little reason for the characters to stay in the Tomb of the Dawn any longer. Though the architecture has its own stark beauty, the place is sparse and empty, long abandoned and forgotten by the rest of Creation.

The gate of auspicious passage through which the player characters came to the Tomb of the Dawn will activate automatically as soon as they step through it. When they return to the hub chamber, it will be as they left it. Let them rest or do whatever they wish before embarking through the next gate.

The Tomb of the Zenith

Read this part aloud:

As the Essence-vortex clears, you see all of Eastern Creation spread out before you. In the distance, the River Yanaze pours into the Inland Sea. You see this as clearly as you see how, 200 miles up its course, it is fed by River of Tears, and 300 miles beyond that it, the Gray and Yellow Rivers merge to form the Yanaze itself.

There is only one place in the world you could possibly be standing. You are 300 miles above sea-level, halfway up the slope of the Imperial Mountain, in the center of the Blessed Isle, at the center of Creation. In all directions on the slope around you lie the ruins of a shattered city. To your left, stairs lead up and around the gate.

Stop reading aloud.

This is a shrine dedicated to the worship of the Unconquered Sun, unvisited and unused since the Usurpation in which the Dragon-Blooded overthrew and slew the Solar Exalted at the end of the High First Age. The ruins surrounding the gate and the statue are the ruins of the City of Meru, the capital of the Solar Deliberative that once covered the whole of the Imperial Mountain and was destroyed in the Usurpation. Recognizing the ruins is a difficulty 3 (Intelligence + Lore) roll.

Behind the gate, not visible from where the characters stand, are the remains of a once-massive statue of the Unconquered Sun. All that currently remain are two golden feet, six feet tall at the ankle. The rest of the statue was apparently broken off its moorings and pulled down the mountain. If the characters inspect the ruins directly below the statue, they can see remnants of the path it carved through the cityscape as it fell, though afterward this was partially obscured by the destruction of the rest of the city.

Though only a pair of feet, some power remains in the statue, and Morning Breeze will recognize this. If he leads a prayer to the Unconquered Sun here, all characters who join him will regain all spent motes (though committed motes remain committed). This only functions once. The second effect of the prayer is that a passage will open in the stone platform between the feet of the statue, revealing stairs leading down. Allow an (Intelligence + Lore) roll at difficulty 3 if the prayer doesn't occur to any of the players. If no one prays, in searching the area one of the characters will inevitably trigger some hidden lever that will activate the opening of the passage anyway, but this is less dramatically appropriate and should only be used as a last resort.

In either case, the passage will be guarded by arcing bolts of golden Essence. Any character moving too close to the bolts will feel the heat of the energy discharge. Anyone who walks through the bolts deliberately will be subject to an attack that automatically hits and has a raw damage of 8A. For every step taken down the stairs, the character doing the exploring will be subject to an additional such attack, to a maximum of five. Each attack visibly reduces the amount of arcing Essence in the corridor, and after five such attacks, the corridor will be clear and safe for anyone to traverse. Yes, Morning Breeze *can* completely neutralize these attacks by using his Durability of Oak Meditation Charm five times in a row.

At the bottom of the stairs is a simple room painted with frescos portraying the glory of the Unconquered Sun. In the center of the room is an altar, upon which rests a simple white robe, a pile of ashes, a plain wooden alms bowl, the Zenith gate key and a golden weapon consisting of seven orichalcum-steel-alloy rods, each a foot long, patterned in a fine scale texture and connected by lengths of orichalcum chain. The ashes are the remains of Morning Breeze's previous incarnation, cremated by the Zenith Caste anima power. Recognizing that the ashes are human remains requires a difficulty 3 (Perception + Medicine) roll if none of the players guess correctly on their own.

The weapon is a serpent-sting staff, and it will call to Morning Breeze as his own. If Morning Breeze wishes to attune to and wield it, a process that will require him to commit five motes, it will provide for him the following traits: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 14B, Parry DV 7, Rate 4. The serpent-sting staff is a martial arts weapon, which means Morning Breeze wields it with the Martial Arts Ability and he may thus use the First Martial Arts Excellency to boost his attack dice pools and Parry DV when wielding it.

The ruins of the city surrounding the statue have been thoroughly looted, and it would take months of climbing to travel to the mountain's base. Once the characters have obtained the gate key and finished admiring the view, there's little reason for them to stay.

The Tomb of the Twilight

Read this part aloud:

You stand knee deep in skulls. The gate platform is a charnel heap. Before you is a cathedral of gold and brass and ivory, but it's been overgrown by trees and other greenery to the point that the underlying architecture is almost completely obscured. Notably, the entryway is blocked by the trunk of a huge redwood. More trees surround you in all directions. Above, you can see a village has been built around the tree trunks, with houses and connecting bridges raised 40 feet in the air. There is a single rope ladder hanging from one walkway nearby. You see no activity within the village and hear no sounds of life. There are no birdsongs, no animals rustling in the foliage and no wind. The forest is totally, unnaturally silent.

Stop reading aloud.

The structure ahead is a decommissioned factory-cathedral. In the First Age, Solars used installations such as factory-cathedrals to produce artifacts and wonders. In the final days of the Circle of Five Corners, Rinan's previous incarnation was killed and secretly replaced by a powerful demon. When the Circle discovered this, their chosen punishment for the demon was that it be imprisoned forever in the factory-cathedral that was also due to serve as Rinan's previous incarnation's tomb. They considered this punishment more severe than merely obliterating it. With proper care, the wards would have held forever, but then came the Usurpation. In time, the forest grew up around the structure and eventually, after the original nature of the place was long forgotten, human settlers arrived. They built their village in the trees surrounding and growing from the factory-cathedral, and eventually, they found their way inside. When this happened, the humans released the demon, still wearing the face of the Solar Rinan was. The demon killed most of the village's inhabitants, removed their skulls and threw them to

earth, and hung the rest of their remains upside-down from the ceilings of the villagers' former homes. Eventually, the settlement's sole outcaste Dragon-Blooded sorcerer managed to trap the demon within the factory-cathedral again, after which the survivors all left, regarding the now-abandoned village as cursed. This was centuries ago.

As the Solars explore the village, they will come across the victims of the demon, eternally undecaying, hanging from the ceilings of their domiciles, the materials of the roofs interwoven with their toes. Their skin has not been broken; their faces and heads hang horribly slack, with the underlying bone removed and cast to earth.

The entrance to the factory-cathedral is a hole drilled in its roof, accessible from the second level of the forest village, 80 feet above the ground. The hole is blocked by a sorcerous Essence-shield that glows violet, and just beyond the shield stands the demon, in golden-armored splendor. When the demon sees them, she will smile and ignite her false Twilight Caste Mark, and then wait. She has had millennia to cultivate patience, after all. On the trees surrounding the entrance are carved an account of the sorcerer's battle with the demon. Summarized, it says the villagers unwittingly unleashed a Solar Anathema from the tomb, that it killed many and was eventually imprisoned once again. Though none of the Circle speak or read the language of the forest people (which is some unknown tribal tongue), Rinan can translate the account with his spell, the Eye and the Mouth. Rinan can also shatter the Essence-shield with his Emerald Countermagic spell.

The demon is angry. She wants her freedom, and she wants revenge against the Solars who imprisoned her (or their reincarnations, if that's all she can get), but she is weakened and lacking in resources. When the Solars free her, she will summon five demonic servants to harry them and then vanish to plot revenge.

The demonic servitors will set the forest alight with their very touch and will attempt to push the Solars back from the entrance to the factory-cathedral so they are forced to fight within the flames. However, rather than inflicting environmental damage, the flaming, collapsing forest canopy simply serves as an excellent backdrop for stunts. The flames spread fast, but die out on their own as soon as all five servitors are slain, and the wreckage of the charred forest will have fallen in such a way as to provide a conveniently climbable path back to the entrance of the cathedral.

The factory-cathedral itself is vast within, with many incomprehensible magical devices, often smashed in frustration by the demon in the time from its binding to the present. Finding the tomb chamber is not difficult, as the cathedral is laid out as a sensible workshop rather than an enigmatic labyrinth.

Within the tomb chamber, the characters will find a journal, written by the previous incarnation of the Circle's Eclipse Caste, telling the story of how they discovered the demon had replaced their Twilight Caste and how they came to the decision to imprison rather than destroy it. Since it is written in Old Realm, Rinan can read it without using the Eye and the Mouth. Storytellers may wish to keep the account summarized or might wish to elaborate upon it with details of their own devising, if they believe such exposition won't bore the players.

Aside from the gate key, the tomb chamber also contains a large orichalcum-laced coffin, with a shattered lid and a pair of orichalcum hearthstone bracers that Rinan will remember wearing during his past incarnation. These golden artifacts must be worn as a pair to function. If Rinan dons and attunes them by committing four motes (total), they provide him with a two-die bonus to his damage dice pools and a *three*-die bonus to his Dodge DV — whenever he applies his Dodge DV against an attack, roll three dice, and each success increases his dodge DV by one. Also, the hearthstone bracers finally provide him with a socket for his hearthstone. If he places this hearthstone, called a wind-hands gemstone, into the round setting on the back of the left bracer, it allows him to ignore all penalties to his Dodge and Parry DVs when defending against ranged attacks, and allows him to parry lethal ranged attacks without a stunt even when unarmed. Furthermore, the hearthstone increases his mote restoration rate as if it were touching his skin while he's wearing it on the bracer.

Once they've secured the gate key, it shouldn't be difficult for the characters to make their way back down to the gate platform, though they may wish to further investigate what remains of the village or provide proper burial for the

Demonic Servitors of Flame

These beings are not true demons, just demonic Essence shaped into caricatures. They resemble lithe, stylized humanoid warriors composed entirely of fire.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 3; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Virtues: Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other Virtue rolls.

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Martial Arts 4, Stealth 3

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Talons: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 7L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Dodge DV: 2

Soak: 2L/4B

Willpower: 10

Health Levels: -1 [ ]
-3 [ ]
Incapacitated [ ]

Other Notes: Any character attacking a demonic servitor of flames bare-handed suffers three dice of lethal damage from burns.

demon's victims and such before leaving. Storytellers are encouraged to elaborate on the village's contents as much as they wish.

The Tomb of the Night

Read this part aloud:

As the Essence vortex clears, the first thing you hear is waves. You're standing on a raised stone platform surrounded by ocean. Ahead of you, many carved pillars and platforms rise out of the water at roughly the same height as this one. In the distance, perhaps one hundred yards away, a grey stone structure descends below the waves. Around several of the pillars, some detritus or storm wrack has accumulated. As the vista comes into focus, it becomes clear this isn't random debris — it's a settlement of some sort, lashed to the sides of the pillars.

Stop reading aloud.

The pillars rise 20 feet above the ocean. They are not smooth, but rather carved in such detail that they can be easily climbed. If at any point one of the characters is thrown into the ocean, it's a small matter of swimming to the nearest pillar and climbing back up. Even Kade, in his heavy armor, can at least swim toward a pillar as he sinks and, once he reaches it, simply must begin the ascent with a bit of underwater climbing.

Between the pillars are varying amounts of empty space, anywhere from one yard to twenty. The only way between them is to jump. Kade, with his low jump distance, will need to take a long, winding route to get to the Tomb of Night on the other side of the pillars, while Naria, with her massive leaps, can easily get there in a straight line.

The inhabitants of the rough settlement clinging to the sides of the pillars like a barnacle colony will notice the new arrivals almost immediately. Gilled, with moist, membranous skin, wide mouths and glassy, dead eyes, they combining the more loathsome elements of fish, frog and human physiology. Armed with crude short spears and speaking some rhythmic chant in a language unknown to any of the player characters, the mutants will mobilize a violent offensive against the intruders as soon as they see any begin to progress toward the tomb. There are 40 combatants, but as soon as 20 are killed or driven away, the rest will abandon their dwelling and swim out of arrow range, simply floating up and down in the water and watching the characters, waiting for them to leave. If Kade activates his anima power, assume 10 of the gill-men flee rather than making 40 individual Valor checks.

If the characters want to investigate any of the dwellings, they'll find the hive-like structures open only at the bottom. They seem to be composed of discarded bits of driftwood and other plant matter and broken chunks of coral, woven together with the bones of fish and held in place by some sort of excreted mucus or resin. None of these dwellings contain anything at all of value.

Pelagothrope Mutants

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3
Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 2
Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Martial Arts 1, Melee 2, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Thrown 2
Join Battle: 5
Attacks:
Claws: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 3L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3
Short Spear: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 7L, Parry DV 2, Rate 2
Dodge DV: 2
Soak: 1L/3B
Willpower: 5
Health Levels: -1 [ ]
-3 [ ]
Incapacitated [ ]
Essence: 1
Other Notes: The pelagothropes can breath just as easily underwater as in the air. They can jump five yards vertically or 10 horizontally. Their climb and swim movement rates are identical to their normal movement rate (two yards per tick) and not halved.

The actual Tomb of Night is a pillar 20 yards wide. Atop the pillar rests a coffin on a slightly raised section of floor, four yards across, open to the air. The gap between the edge of the raised section of floor and the nearest pillar is 10 yards, accounting for the two-yard gap between the pillar-tomb and the nearest smaller pillar. If there's an entrance to the interior of the pillar, it isn't evident.

The platform is trapped, which anyone can tell with a successful (Perception + Larceny) roll once they're next to it. Anyone standing on the outer section of the pillar is attacked once per tick by a bolt of golden Essence that springs from the edges of the raised section of floor. The trap is Accuracy 5, Damage 3L. The golden bolts will do their damage and then fade away or dissipate instantly once they reach the edge of the pillar, should they miss. These attacks can be parried or dodged, but will immediately be followed by more golden bolts should the character being attacked still be standing on the outer rim of the platform. Because of these golden bolts, the pelagothropes saw the pillar as sacred and avoided it.

The coffin resting on the central raised section of pillar is made of the same gray rock as the rest of the structure, and is sealed tightly shut to everyone but Naria. Naria herself

can open the coffin with barely any effort at all. Within lies the shriveled form of her previous incarnation, clutching a golden bow to his breast and with the gate key around his neck. She will recognize the short powerbow as her own, and if she attunes it, a process which requires the commitment of four motes, it will possess the following traits: Speed 6, Accuracy 13, Damage 8L, Rate 2, Range 300.

The mutants will not further trouble the characters as they leave.

The Tomb of the Eclipse

Read this part aloud:

The wind howls. As the Essence vortex clears, you are nearly blinded by the sun reflecting off the snow. The red snow. Two hundred yards ahead of you lies a temple, partially collapsed. There was a battle here, ages ago. Red-stained bones of all sizes and shapes jut upward from the field of frozen blood that stretches in all directions across the uneven landscape, as far as any of you can see. The wind has honed the bones to razor edges, and as your vision clears, the sound rises to a shriek, as if protesting your very presence.

Stop reading aloud.

By the time the Usurpation came, the Solars of the Circle of Five Corners were already dead and buried. All but one. The Circle's Eclipse was the sole survivor of the disastrous offensive against Hell itself the Circle mounted as revenge for the murder of its Twilight. Having buried her comrades mere weeks before, she was caught alone by the betrayal in the city of Meru and used her magic to flee to her personal sanctum, a temple of peace in the Far North. Here, the armies of the Dragon-Blooded and the Sidereals crashed against her and her few mortal allies, and they and the forces of the Dragon-Blooded and Sidereals — mortal and tamed monster alike — died by the tens of thousands. Eventually, they pulled her down, buried her, laid wards on the tomb, captured her divine Essence and imprisoned it beneath the sea. The players stand in the remnants of that battlefield, untouched for over one and a half millennia.

This is why the tombs the Solars have visited up to this point were protected as if their presence was expected, their return accounted for and encouraged. The Sidereal-designed tombs of the Solars brought down in the Usurpation are not so easy to plunder. It took the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood a long time to finally breach her own tomb.

To get to the temple, the characters will have to cross 500 yards of snow. At the presence of the Circle of Five Corners, the skeletons of three saber-toothed great cats and one tyrant lizard will animate and attempt to tear them apart.

The battlefield is highly variable. The tyrant lizard is far from the largest skeleton nearby, and a chase to the temple should involve the characters running between and across 40-foot ribcages while the tyrant skeleton crashes through huge bone walls just behind them, saber-tooth skeletons keeping pace with the characters by running along heaps of bones parallel to the route to the temple or any number of other dramatic environmental interactions.

Once the characters have made it past the monstrous skeletal guard, either escaping them or destroying them, they'll find themselves at the entrance to the temple. The temple itself is huge, far larger than any of the structures they've encountered so far, including the Tomb of the Dawn and the factory-cathedral. It rises 1,000 feet in the air. Whatever force the Mistress finally used to breach the entrance caused massive sections of the roof to cave inward, and the formerly domed ceiling now reaches up to the sky like a jagged crown.

Inside, the temple is a maze of hallways, sitting rooms, foyers and rooms of worship, all decorated with elaborate paintings and objects of art. Aside from many above-ground levels, the temple apparently has an elaborate subterranean section as well. However, many walls and ceilings have been collapsed by the same force that damaged the roof, and much of the temple is inaccessible for now.

Saber-Toothed Great Cat Skeleton

Four feet tall at the shoulder and six feet long, these skeletons have huge curved incisors made more deadly by the honing effect of the wind and ice.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Virtues: Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other Virtue rolls.

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Dodge 3, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Martial Arts 3, Presence 3, Resistance 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 7L, Rate 1

Claw: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Rate 2

Dodge DV: 3

Soak: 2L/5B

Willpower: 10

Health Levels: -0 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-4 [ ]
Incapacitated [ ]

Other Notes: Vulnerable to Morning Breeze's anima power.

The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood will know of the characters' entrance as soon as they make it and, being familiar with the layout of the temple from several weeks of exploration, will avoid stepping into the sight of the players' characters immediately. Instead, she'll engage them in social combat, her voice always echoing down from this hallway or that staircase. Every long tick, in addition to taking whatever social action they so desire, have every player roll his or her character's (Perception + Investigation) as a reflexive action if they attempt to follow the voice and track down the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood. The characters find her once one of them has accumulated 10 successes.

The room in which the characters finally find the Mistress is the base of a great red-carpeted staircase, 30 feet wide and spiraling upward at least 10 floors. The encounter starts with the Mistress three floors above the characters, at a distance of 45 yards away.

Tyrant Lizard Skeleton

Ten feet tall at the shoulder and forty feet long, this monstrous, skeletal undead reptile walks on powerful three-toed legs and attacks with its huge jaws and small arms, each of which sports but two clawed fingers.

Attributes: Strength 14, Dexterity 3, Stamina 12; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Virtues: Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other Virtue rolls.

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Dodge 1, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Martial Arts 4, Presence 5, Resistance 4, Stealth 1, Survival 3

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Bite: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 14L, Rate 1

Claw: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 8L, Rate 2

Dodge DV: 2

Soak: 12B/6L

Willpower: 10

Health Levels: -0 [ ]
-0 [ ]
-0 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-4 [ ]
-4 [ ]
Incapacitated [ ]

Other Notes: Vulnerable to Morning Breeze's anima power.

Throughout the social combat, the Mistress will taunt the characters, accusing them of abandoning her, boasting that her new master, the Mask of Winters, will help her crush them and attempting to convince them that they will be spared if they join her in damnation. Her primary goal is to sap their will and weaken them in preparation for the violent encounter she knows is coming, but if she were to successfully turn them to her side, she'd view it as a positive.

For an event such as this, a confrontation between four Solars and his newest Abyssal, the Deathlord Mask of Winters is personally inhabiting the consciousness of his ghost-shaped automaton. Barrow Black speaks with the voice of the Deathlord, the sepulchral tones sounding as if they bubble up from the bottom of a deep well. He will avoid directly aiding the Mistress in her arguments, preferring to see how well she can do on her own, but he won't hesitate to taunt the player characters with his plan to rebuild the army they've just defeated, 10 times stronger, using the ghosts of the soldiers they killed on the battlefield. He will even thank them for delivering such a perfect opportunity into his hands.

If the characters drain all of the Mistress's Willpower with attempts to sway her to their side or to instill in her the belief that she will lose the upcoming fight, she will grow uncertain and attempt to flee past them to the snowfield outside and then to the gate. If this occurs, the Mask of Winters will assure the characters that he'll see to it she's in a better state of mind to kill them the next time they meet. He will then disperse the simulacrum and vanish. In this way, the characters can skip the final showdown entirely.

If at any point the characters initiate combat with the Mistress and the Deathlord-possessed simulacrum, both opponents will eagerly respond in kind. The Mistress will fight to the death, arrogantly believing she'll reform in the Underworld the moment she dies.

If the players have been particularly savvy when it comes to the tactical combat engine in play up until now, Storytellers may wish to add a handful of zombies to the final combat, just so the players' characters can hurtle them around and incorporate their destruction into stunts. If the players have been less than masterful at using their characters' Abilities to their full potential, you may wish to not do so. Also, in that case, consider not using the Mistress' Whirlwind of Bloody Oblivion Combo, because it's a very dangerous technique and she could potentially kill all four players' characters with it unless they know what they're doing.

The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood

Resplendent in black articulated plate with crimson highlights and a matching crimson cape, the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood carries a soulsteel reaper daiklave. This sword has a five foot blade a mere four inches wide and one inch thick at the base, curved and tapering to a fine point. When she begins spending Essence, her caste mark (a circle surrounded by a ring) appears as a wound upon her forehead, splitting her skin and bleeding profusely down her face. Her anima is a swirling mass of purples, reds and blacks that solidifies once she spends 16+ motes into the iconic image of two clawed hands grasping each other as if confirming a deal, each bleeding from the palm.

Motivation: Regain her First Age legacy as one of the rulers of the world

Intimacies: Serve the Mask of Winters, revenge herself on her former Circle

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2; Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5; Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 3

Abilities: Awareness 3, Dodge 5, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1, Lore 2, Melee 3, Occult 3, Performance 3, Presence 1, Resistance 1, Socialize 2, Survival 1

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Reaper Daiklave: Speed 4, Accuracy 13, Damage 7L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Soak: 10L/11B/9A (Articulated plate, 9L/9B, mobility penalty -3)

Health Levels: -0 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-4 [ ]
Incapacitated [ ]

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Motes: 46 (5 committed)

Other Notes: Anyone wounded by the Mistress' reaper daiklave loses 3 motes, first from the Peripheral pool and then from the Personal pool when Peripheral is empty. These motes are consumed by the sword; the Mistress doesn't add them to her mote pools.

Anima Power: By spending 10 motes and a point of Willpower, the Mistress may sanctify any pact made in her presence, provided she can touch the flesh of whoever swore it. Thereafter, if the character who swore the pact violates its terms, he will suffer three catastrophic botches at three points in the future. These botches always come at the worst possible time. If her anima is flaring at the 11+ mote level, the Mistress can sanctify pacts without spending Willpower or motes.

The Barrow Black Simulacrum

Six and a half feet tall, with a familiar crooked nose and leering smile, his chopping sword slung over his back and his self bow drawn, this copy of Barrow Black inhabited by the remote consciousness of a Deathlord is a familiar and unwelcome sight in the eyes of the player characters, though they may not be familiar with the mind behind its eyes.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 5, Manipulation 7, Appearance 1; Perception 5, Intelligence 6, Wits 7

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 5, Temperance 4, Valor 5

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 5, Investigation 5, Larceny 1, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Performance 4, Presence 6, Resistance 2, Socialize 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Join Battle: 9

Attacks:

Chopping Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 6, Damage 8L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

Self Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 5L, Range 150, Rate 2

Dodge DV: 2

Soak: 7L/10B/6A (Chain hauberk, 6L/7B, mobility penalty -3)

Willpower: 10

Health Levels: -0 [ ]
-1 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-2 [ ]
-4 [ ]
Incapacitated [ ]

Essence: 1

Other Notes: The Barrow Black simulacrum will attempt to hang back and attack with his self bow, letting the Mistress handle the melee work. If forced into melee combat, his chopping sword's damage pools cannot be reduced to fewer than two dice, despite his Essence score of only 1. The Mask of Winters possesses Charms that render him effectively immune to any social combat efforts the players can bring to bear, at least at this distance. Thus, his Motivation, Excellencies and MDVs are irrelevant and not noted here. If the characters kill the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood, the simulacrum will fade away after the Mask of Winters uses its voice to vow revenge on the characters for killing his new pupil.

Charms

First Excellencies: The Mistress has the First Excellency Charm for the Melee, Dodge and Performance Abilities.

Crypt Bolt: The Mistress may produce a blast of necrotic energy from her palm. This attack is Speed 4, DV -2, Accuracy 7, Damage 2L/mote, Range 30, Rate 1. She may spend up to four motes powering this attack.

Five Shadow Feint: When making an attack, the Mistress may reduce her opponent's DV against that attack by one for every two motes she spends activating this Charm.

Fivefold Shadow Form: For 2 motes, the Mistress may reduce the attack pool of an incoming attack by 8 dice. If this reduces the attack to 0 dice or fewer, the attack automatically misses.

Flickering Wisp Technique: For 4 motes, the Mistress may perfectly dodge any one attack, vanishing in a flash of darkness and rematerializing up to three yards away. She must activate this Charm before her opponent rolls his attack dice pool.

Unfurling Iron Lotus: The Mistress may attack with a magical flurry action. For every two motes spent, the flurry may contain one attack, to a maximum of four. These attacks do not suffer the usual flurry penalty to her attack pools, and the flurry action has a total defense penalty of only -1. Characters subject to this flurry effect suffer no DV penalty against the first attack, a penalty of -1 DV against the second attack, -2 DV against the third attack and -3 DV against the fourth.

Combo: Whirlwind of Bloody Oblivion

The Mistress' black aura whirls around her, surrounding her with a storm of captured gore torn from her bleeding caste mark. When using this Combo, the Mistress spends one Willpower point on her action and activates Unfurling Iron Lotus. She may enhance the strikes of the magical flurry with her First Melee Excellency. Until her next action, she may defend against any incoming attacks by boosting her Parry DV with her First Melee Excellency, or she may simply activate Flickering Wisp Technique to perfectly dodge the attacks instead.

Shadowlands Circle Necromancy

The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood casts necromancy spells in the same manner as Rinan casts sorcery. First, she must spend a point of Willpower, as well as the mote cost of the spell, and take a Shape Shadowlands Circle Necromancy action (Speed 5, DV -2). Once that action is complete and all five ticks have passed, the spell takes effect, whereupon she must take a Join Battle action to rejoin combat.

Raise the Skeletal Horde: For every 3 motes she spends, the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood may raise one human corpse as a zombie or skeleton. Use the zombie traits from the beginning of the adventure. In the cold climate of the Far North, the zombies don't rot or inflict nausea on their opponents, so zombies and skeletons have identical traits.

After the Mistress is killed or driven off and the simulacrum vanishes, the Solars will be left with a very large temple to explore, though they may need to excavate the sections blocked off by the collapsed roof. The Mistress has already uncovered two treasures, a pair of books called *The White Treatise* and *The Black Treatise*. Both popular in the First Age amongst sorcerers and still popular in the Second Age, the former contains detailed instructions for learning Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, while the latter contains learning instructions for what are allegedly the first five spells ever invented: Death of Obsidian Butterflies, Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Countermagic, Invulnerable Skin of Bronze and Stormwind Rider. All five of these spells can be found in **Exalted Second Edition**, should any of the characters wish to use the books to learn them. Additionally present in the temple is a chest of silver and jade, sufficient to allow each character to make one Resources 5 purchase in Nexus (or many more purchases of lesser value).

From Here

Though **Return to the Tomb of Five Corners** is structured to provide a degree of closure, we have also deliberately left many plot threads unresolved. Should the players wish to continue playing with these characters rather than creating new ones and starting a new series once the group has access to **Exalted Second Edition**, the Storyteller may wish to take advantage of any or all of these dangling plot threads.

First, the characters left their mortal companions to recuperate in Nexus while the Solars left alone to explore the Tomb. Kade's Followers Background indicates a mercenary company of 100 loyal men, which should hint at the scale of the campaign waged against Barrow Black's army. Now that the Circle's company has proved itself to Nexus' Council of Entities, the Council will surely have more work for it to do. The Scavenger Lands are never a peaceful place. Additionally, there are many private interests that would be willing to hire such an effective team as well.

Second, there are the treasures recovered by the Circle. The trinkets the characters regained from the corner tombs are minor compared to the value of the Tomb of Five Corners itself. It is one of the only remaining networks of functioning gates of auspicious passage left on Creation — perhaps *the* only remaining such network. A close second is the value of the factory-cathedral built into the Tomb of Twilight. At the present, it is ruined, but with sufficient study and effort, the characters could rebuild it. And what further secrets could exist buried beneath the Tomb of the Eclipse?

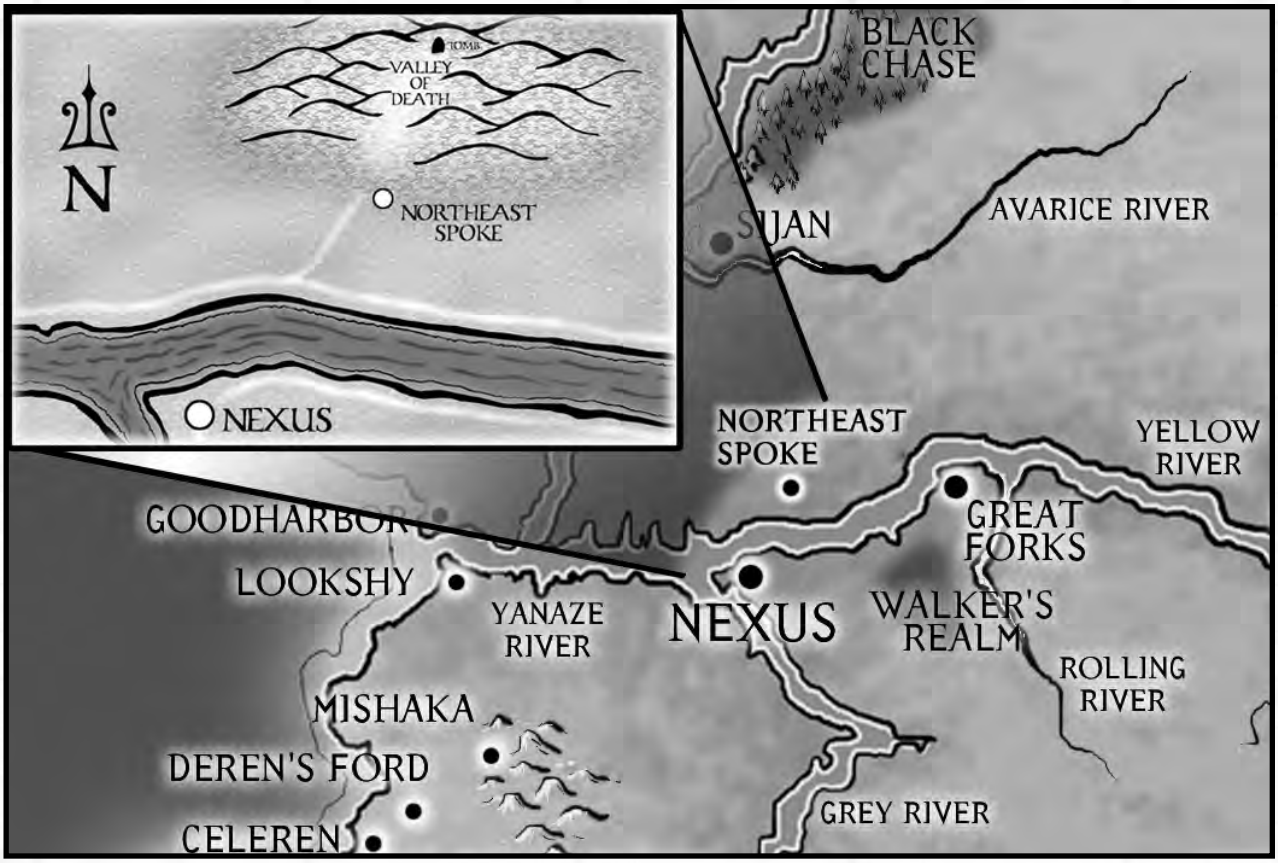
Third, there is the simulacrum of Barrow Black created by the Mask of Winters and the army he will raise with it. Though the characters have most likely destroyed this simulacrum, there is no reason why the Mask of Winters couldn't create another. The Eyes in the Hills, the army of Barrow Black, may well rise again.

Fourth, there is the demon unleashed by the players at the Tomb of Twilight. Free, it will surely take action against the characters at some point in the future.

Finally, there is the issue of the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood. How did the characters deal with her? Did she escape, or was she killed? If she escaped, does she remain loyal to the Mask of Winters, or have the players' characters instilled her with doubts? A Deathlord is a powerful enemy, and a deathknight is a valuable resource. If she escaped with doubts as to her cause, she may be recaptured by the Deathlord and brought back under his sway, or she may retain her freedom and serve as an ambiguous ally/rival to the Circle for the rest of the series.

If, on the other hand, they killed her, the Mask of Winters will soon have another Moonshadow Caste Abyssal with memories of a past life and death at the hands of the players' characters. How will *this one* react? Will he burn for revenge, or will he try again to convert them to his cause? Additionally, after they die, the souls of most Abyssal Exalted are condemned to Oblivion while their Abyssal Essences return to their Deathlord masters, but the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood possessed a Charm that ensured she'd return as a ghost. Alone and stranded in the frozen wastes of the Northern Underworld, bereft of the power of Exaltation and stripped of her Deathlord backing, the only being she will *hate* more than the Circle of Five Corners for inflicting that fate upon her will be the Mask of Winters for abandoning her.

But what can a single ghost do against the might of a Circle of Solars and one of the 13 Deathlords of the Underworld? She is not stupid. She knows she can't stand up to them alone… but there's always some way, and she'll be very dedicated. Her revenge on the both of them will be terrible.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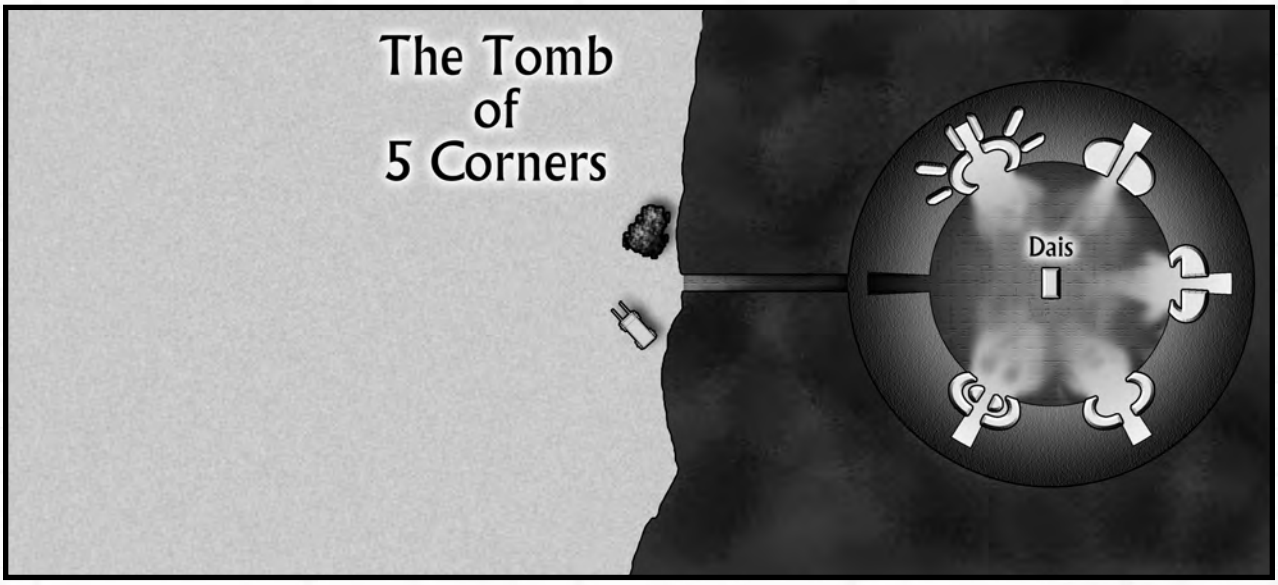
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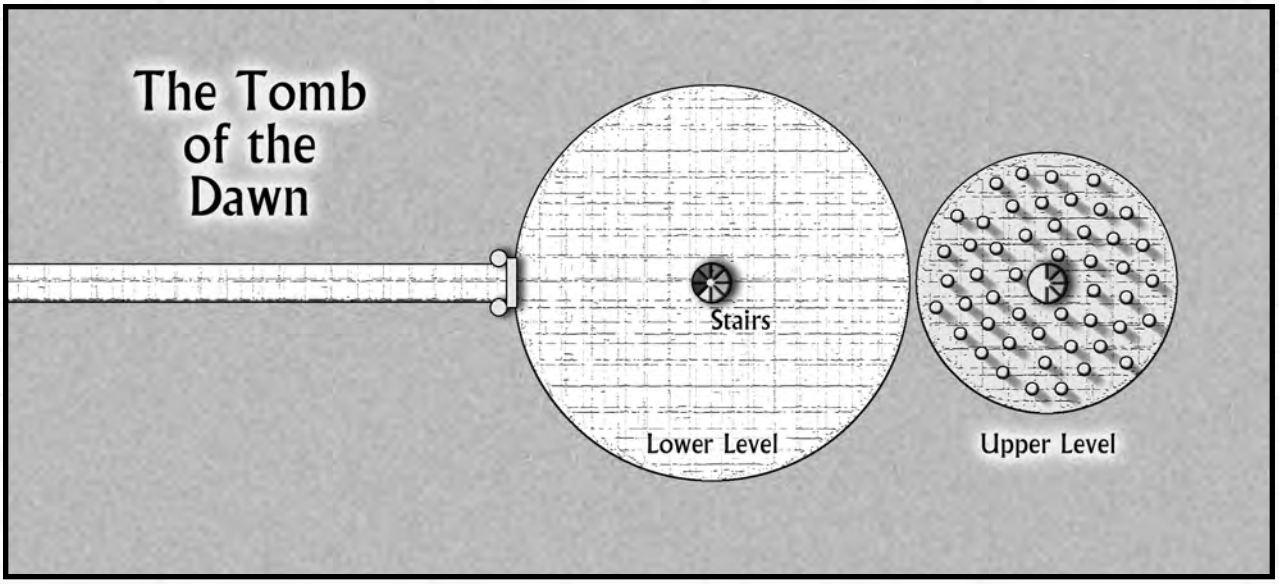
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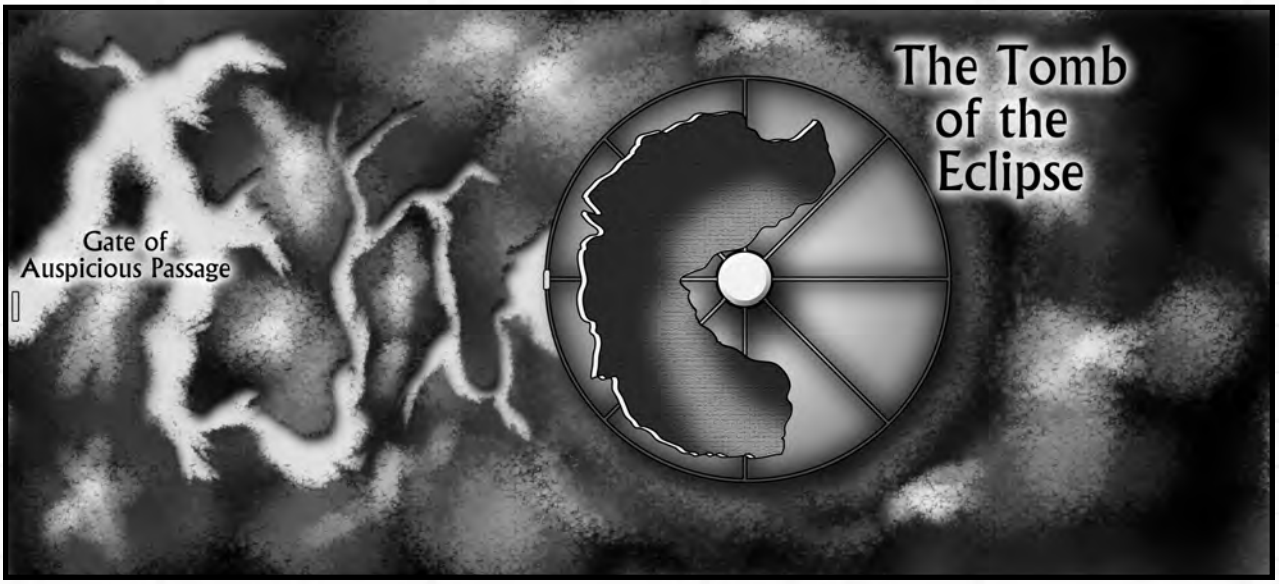
Lower Level
Upper Level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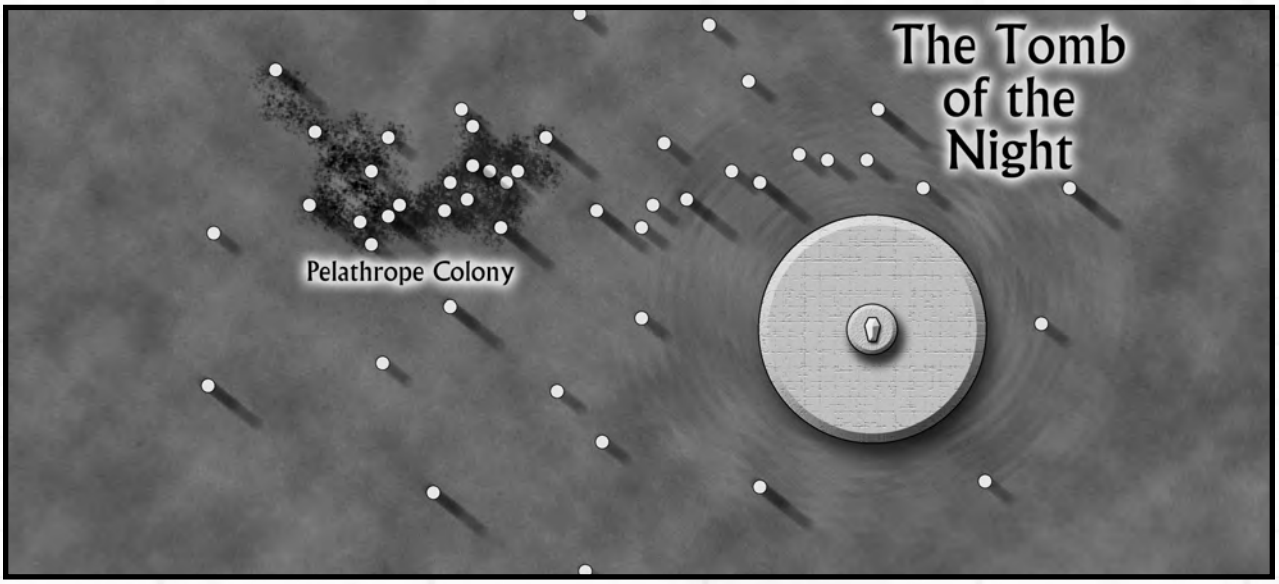
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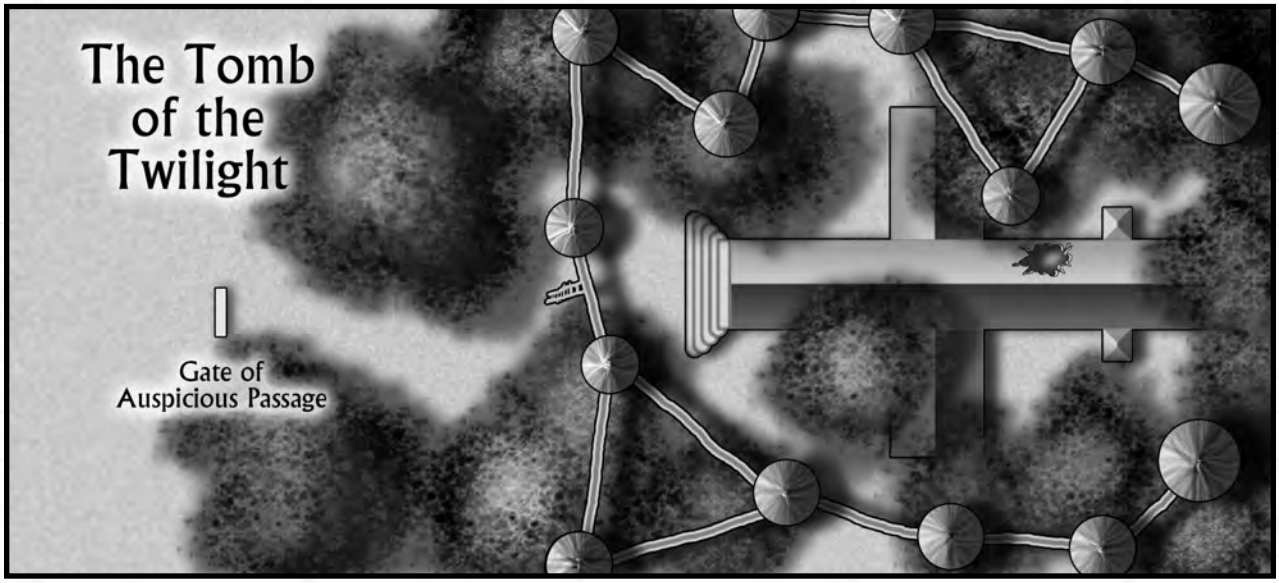
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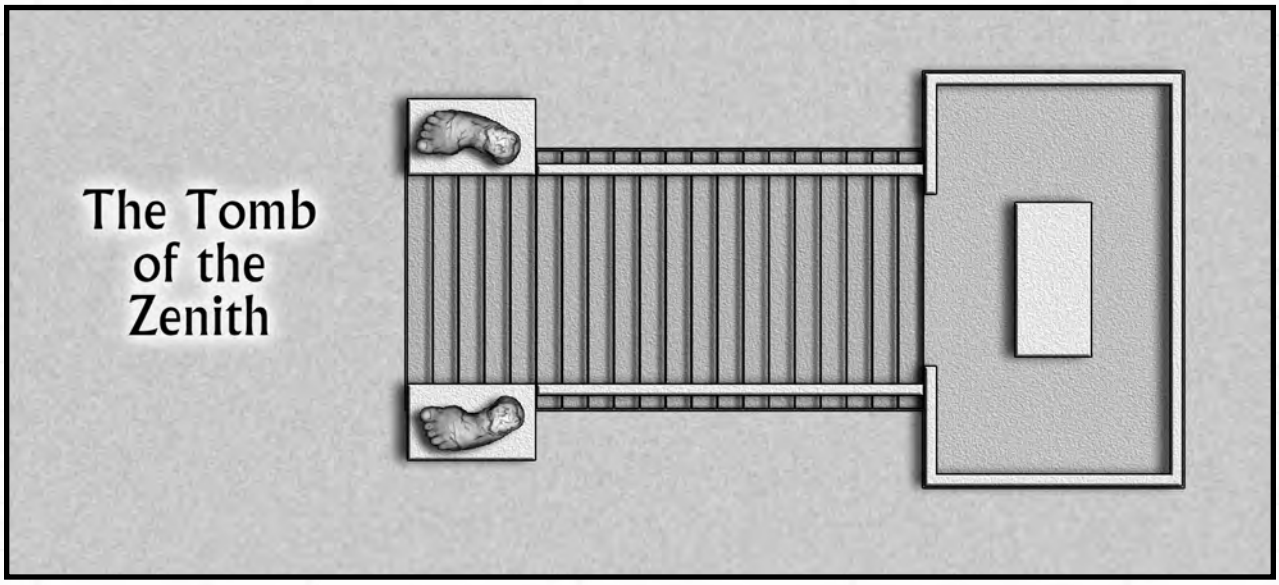
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