

# THE TOMB OF 5 CORNERS™

Free  
Rules  
&  
Adventure



Free Rules and Adventure for

**EXALTED**

# THE TOMB OF 5 SCORNERS™

## An Age of Savage Adventure

Exalted is an elegantly simple game, but you can explore the Age of Sorrows and delve into its vastly detailed setting for endless hours of entertainment.

It is the Second Age of Man. Once, the Scarlet Empress of the Dragon-Blooded held the Realm in an iron grip, but with her disappearance, all hell has broken loose. Civil war is at hand, and Demon Princes, Deathlords and the inscrutable Fair Folk hammer at the gates of Creation. Into this time of darkness are reborn the Solar Exalted, heroes once slain by the Dragon-Blooded. Will these living legends herald the return of the Golden Age — or the end of Creation?

## The Tomb of Five Corners

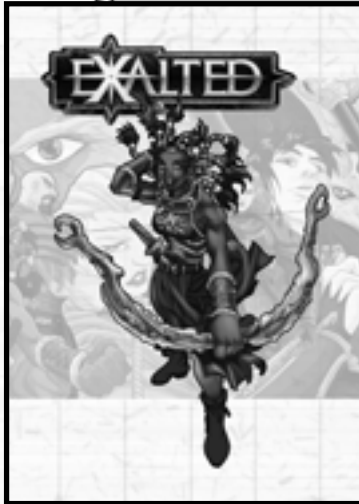
A band of mighty heroes are brought together by hazy visions of their past lives and of the tomb wherein their forsaken bodies lie, defended by deadly traps and surrounded by untold riches. Four of the stalwart souls find their way to a valley north and east of the city of Nexus, rediscover the bonds of their ancient brotherhood and determine to join together to recover their forgotten artifacts of power. Soon, they find that even the most Exalted of fellowships can be broken — one of their Circle was to meet them, and now, it seems she has been kidnaped by one of the foul Deathlords. Amid the hallowed stones of their own graves, the heroes overcome the blasphemies of necromancy and face fierce foes in a battle that leaves little doubt that the lords of the Abyss must be turned back before they destroy Creation and descend upon its corpse like vultures.



[www.white-wolf.com/exalted](http://www.white-wolf.com/exalted)



# EXALTED



## AN AGE OF HEROES

**Exalted** begins a whole new line of fantasy products from White Wolf. This hardcover rulebook invites you to become one of the Solar Exalted, an heir to an Age of Heroes. Created to be saviors and Prometheans to humanity, the first Solars were corrupted and slain by their own brethren. But now, new Solar Exalted are being reborn into the Second Age of Man. Can you survive in a world that needs yet reviles you? The fate of this new world is in your hands.

## EXALTED: THE DRAGON-BLOODED

### BORN IN SPLENDOR

Sophisticated, decadent, cruel and fabulously wealthy, the Dragon-Blooded are spiritually akin to the Elemental Dragons themselves and are Exalted above the mass of humanity. Through their bloodlines, these queens and princes of Creation control all of the world that's worth owning. Yet, dark times are at hand for the Realm, and the kingdom teeters on the brink of civil war. Will the Scarlet Empire survive its first succession crisis?

### BORN TO RULE

The first in a series of hardcover rulebooks making the other types of Exalted available for play, **Exalted: The Dragon-Blooded** includes extensive detail on the world and society of the Terrestrial Exalted, as well as full rules for creating and playing Dragon-Blooded characters. Inside is everything needed to portray these warlike aristocrats, from guides to their manners to systems for the supernatural martial arts practiced by the Immaculate Order.



## EXALTED: THE LUNARS



### BORN IN SAVAGERY

Cunning, ruthless and barbaric, the shapechanging Lunar Exalted are feral scourges who lurk at the edge of civilization. Beyond the borders of the Threshold lie vast tracts of wilderness inhabited by these hot-blooded barbarians. Now, as the Realm teeters on the brink of civil war, the Lunar call their children and followers to rise. This is their hour of triumph.

### BORN TO CONQUER

The second in a series of hardcover rulebooks making the other types of Exalted available for play, **Exalted: The Lunars** includes extensive details on the world and society of these new character types. Inside is everything needed to portray these savage shapeshifters, from guides to their tribal societies to rules for the mind-twisting lunacy of the Deep Wyld.

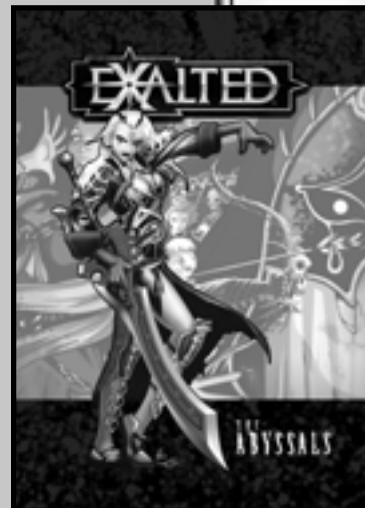
## EXALTED: THE ABYSSALS

### BORN IN THE SHADOWLANDS

Black disciples of the Deathlords, the Abyssal Exalted are the mailed fist of the dead. And yet, they are also human, and many are tormented by the curse of their unholy power. Some walk among men as harbingers of the Deathlords, while others rebel against their destiny and ride as forlorn heroes of the living. Are the Abyssal Exalted the ultimate weapon of Oblivion or its ultimate nemesis?

### BORN TO DESTROY

The third in the series of hardback rulebooks that makes the other types of Exalted available for play, **Exalted: The Abyssals** includes extensive detail on the Underworld and the Deathlords – and the Abyssal Exalted as players' characters. Inside is everything needed to portray these servants of darkness, from their black curse to rules for their powerful necromancy.



## EXALTED: THE SIDEREALS

(AVAILABLE OCTOBER 2003)



### BORN BENEATH THE STARS OF PROPHECY

They travel among the gods as officials of high station and walk secretly among men as the servants of the Five Maidens. For them, destiny and fate run like wax. Yet, for all their might, the Sidereals are mortal, and Heaven, as well as Creation, has entered a time of tumult. Will the Sidereal Exalted retain their station or perish in a celestial civil war?

### BORN TO MASTER DESTINY

The fourth in the series of hardback rulebooks that makes the other types of Exalted available for play, **Exalted: The Sidereals** includes extensive detail on the Celestial City of Yu-Shan, the politics of Heaven and the strategies of the Sidereal factions, as well as full rules for creating and playing these characters. Inside is everything needed to portray these servants of destiny, from their deadly martial arts to their powerful command over destiny and fate.

VISIT THE WORLD OF EXALTED ONLINE AT  
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# THE WORLD OF EXALTED

**Exalted** is a game of epic fantasy set during the Second Age of Man, a time before our own. It is an age of magic and adventure, when heroes of legend are reborn into a time of woe.

At the dawn of the First Age, the gods gave power to men that they might slay the gods' Primordial enemies. Anointed by the gods, these beings were thereafter known as the Exalted.

The greatest of the Exalted were the Solars, the Chosen of the Unconquered Sun, the mightiest of the gods. So great was their power that, when a Solar died, his power was quickly made manifest in a new individual — a reincarnation of sorts, but into a mature adult rather than a newborn.

The Exalted triumphed over the enemies of the gods, and in reward, the gods gave the Exalted dominion over the Earth. For a timeless age, the Exalted ruled justly over Creation, and their kingdom was invincible.

But the enemies of the gods had pronounced a terrible curse against the Exalted. This dark magic ate away at the hearts of the Chosen. The benevolence of the Solars turned to tyranny, and peace turned to civil war.

It was prophesied that the madness of the Solars would bring about the destruction of the world. Seeing no other

alternative, the lowliest of Exalted, the Dragon-Blooded, murdered the decadent Solar Exalted and locked their souls away.

And so, a Second Age descended upon Creation.

The greatest of the gods' servants no longer walked the earth, and the Realm of the Dragon-Blooded was but a shadow of the lost old Realm. Solar Exalted whose power escaped to be

reborn were slain by Dragon-Blooded inquisitors known as the Wyld Hunt, and the Realm claimed dominion over Creation. For more than a thousand years the Solar Exalted remained imprisoned and defeated — until now.

The Scarlet Empress, the Dragon-Blooded ruler of the Realm and controller of the Wyld Hunt, vanished five years ago. Without her might to enforce order in the Realm, the Great Houses of her

Scarlet Dynasty have fallen to squabbling over the reins of power. And in this time of crisis, the Solar Exalted have returned. It is as if a gate was opened and the heroes of old rushed through it and returned to the world.

Your character is among those individuals who have become Solar Exalted. You are a being of legend, as mighty as a demigod and as cunning as an asp. Will you be the savior of Creation or one of the terrible menaces that beset your world?



## HOW TO PLAY EXALTED

Welcome to the world of **Exalted**. We're glad you decided to try White Wolf's exciting game of epic fantasy today. **Exalted** is a storytelling game in which you use the imaginative Storyteller system to explore an age of savage adventure. This introduction will familiarize you with the basics of the Storytelling system and allow you to leap right into playing **Exalted**.

To play, you will need some 10-sided dice and this booklet. Most dice sets, including the **Exalted** dice set, consist of ten dice, and you can always share with other players if you need more. Be aware that some 10-sided dice are numbered 0-9; in this case, 0 functions as 10.

This introductory adventure is best played with five people. One of you will act as the Storyteller, who will read the adventure, administer the rules and narrate what happens as the game progresses. Think of the Storyteller as part referee, part director. The other four, the players, will each take the role of one powerful hero, describing that character's actions as he performs great deeds.

## CHARACTER SHEETS

In **Exalted**, you will take on the role of an epic hero in the Age of Sorrows. Character sheets and histories have been provided for you, but in the future, you can create your own characters using the rules from the **Exalted** main book. A character sheet contains all of the information about your character. The dots on your character sheet define the capabilities of the character, and let you, the player, know how many dice to roll. We will explain rolling dice after we have first looked at the character sheet itself.

The character sheet is divided into five sections. At the top is essential information, followed by Attributes, Abilities, Advantages and a section at the bottom for everything else.

## CONCEPT AND NATURE

A character's *Concept* is a one- or two-word description of her role in Creation. This is usually what the character was before becoming an Exalted and might be something such as mercenary, pit fighter, slave or courtesan. A character's *Nature* is a one-word summary of her true self and her driving motivations. A character's Nature may seem typical for her Concept, or it may be surprising to others. You should keep your character's Nature in mind when deciding how she would react to a situation.

## CASTE AND ANIMA

Every Exalted has natural affinities that are part of the powers given them by the gods. A *caste* is a group of Exalted that share common Charms and Abilities. All of the Solar Exalted have castes based upon the divine purposes given them by the Unconquered Sun. Your character sheet contains descriptions of your character's caste and Charms, which are also noted on the front of the sheet. Each Solar has a normally invisible symbol, called a Caste Mark, on her forehead that shines forth when she uses her power.

**Exalted** is based on the premise that the Essences of the ancient Solar Exalted have returned to Creation as heroes reborn. Each of the Exalted 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 Exalted as a great beast of old, as a pillar of fire or as the fearsome mien of the Unconquered Sun. Each Solar can call upon her anima to perform signature feats according to her caste.

## ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES

*Attributes* are divided into three categories (Physical, Social and Mental) and describe the traits inherent to 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 an Exalted. Look on your character sheet for information on your character's specific Charms. The term *Background* is a sort of catch-all that refers to many aspects of a character's persona and situation that don't fit into Attributes or Abilities. Generally, Backgrounds refer to things your character has, such as Artifacts or Resources, or people your character knows, such as Contacts or Allies.

## EVERYTHING ELSE

### VIRTUES

The world of **Exalted** is a world of driving passions and dark emotion. *Virtues* measure how passionately the character is committed to a certain type of behavior and way of thinking. They govern how your character sees particular situations, as well as how he's likely to respond to them.

### VIRTUE FLAW

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 Exalted may be, the curse will manage to break her Virtue, causing her to forsake it for a time or even act contrary to its ways. Each time an Exalted with a Virtue of 3 or greater acts contrary to the dictates of that Virtue, he must roll dice equal to the Virtue in question. If he achieves any successes, then he must act according to that Virtue unless he spends a point of temporary Willpower to avoid doing so. A Solar Exalted who suppresses his Virtue gains a point of *Limit Break*. Details of Limit Breaks and rolling dice follow.

**Characters must fail a Compassion roll to:** allow an 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 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.

### LIMIT BREAK

The curse laid upon the Exalted by the enemies of the gods perverts the Virtues they otherwise embody. Each Solar has a





Flaw related to her greatest Virtue. This Flaw is detailed on your character sheet. Every Flaw has a Limit Break condition attached to it — essentially, a situation that tends to cause the Exalted to lose control of himself and act out his Flaw. Every time this condition is met, the Exalted's player must roll a number of dice equal to the Virtue associated with the Flaw. For every success he rolls, the character gains a point of Limit. When the character's total Limit reaches 10, whether due to his Flaw or to suppressing a Virtue, he suffers Limit Break, immediately reducing his Limit to 0 and forcing him to act out his Flaw.

### WILLPOWER

*Willpower* is a measure of a character's self-confidence and internal control. Willpower works differently from most traits; it is often spent rather than rolled. See "Rolling Dice" for more information on spending Willpower. Any time you spend Willpower, mark off one of the boxes. Spent Willpower may be regained over time, at the Storyteller's discretion, as detailed in **Exalted**.

### 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, which is important in determining the temporary points she may expend and the limitations of certain Charms. Each Exalted character also holds a stock of Personal Essence points, which are those easily spent without inviting unwanted attention, and Peripheral Essence, whose use flares the Exalted anima, causing it to shine brightly. Every time you "spend an Essence point" deduct it from your Personal or Peripheral points. Essence may be recovered over time, as detailed in **Exalted**. Some artifacts require an Exalted to expend points, which are irrecoverable so long as the artifact is kept. These points are called Committed, and your character sheet may already show them deducted from your Essence totals.

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

## A FEW RULES

### ROLLING DICE

The Storyteller system is very simple: Any time you are asked to roll, you will roll a number of dice equal to the dots filled in by the appropriate trait or traits. The most common roll you will be asked to make is an Attribute + Ability roll. For example, the Storyteller might ask you to roll Perception + Awareness. If your character has Perception 3 and Awareness 2, you would roll five dice. There are other rolls, though, but always remember: one die per dot.

Dice are rolled only when you wish your character to do something out of the ordinary or something that requires some skill. Walking across a room would not require a roll; walking across a room without waking the sleeping guards would!

### SUCCEEDING, FAILING AND BOTCHING

Whenever you attempt an action that might fail, the Storyteller may ask you to roll a number of dice equal to specific dots on your charactersheet. Each die you roll that comes up equal to or higher than 7 is one success. Each 10 that you roll counts as two successes. Sometimes, one success is all you need, though the Storyteller may require more than one success for difficult or complicated actions. The number of successes you roll is especially important when contesting against somebody else.

For Example: If a player had five dice to roll for her Perception + Awareness, she might gain the following numbers on the roll: 1, 5, 7, 8, 10. This would result in four successes, one each for the 7 and 8 and two more for the 10.

Sometimes, you will roll no successes or fewer successes than the Storyteller requires. This result means you have failed your roll. When you fail, your character does not succeed at her action, though, occasionally, other unpleasant results accompany failure, so do not be surprised if the Storyteller uses the opportunity to introduce further complications.

There is something even worse than a failure: It is called a *botch*. Whenever you roll zero successes and at least one die shows 1, you have "botched" your roll. A botch is a catastrophic failure, and the results are guaranteed to be nasty!

Sometimes, you simply can't afford to fail. In those situations, you have the option of spending Willpower. Any time the Storyteller asks you to roll, before rolling the dice, you may spend a single Willpower point for one automatic success. While this does not guarantee that you will get as many successes as the Storyteller requires, it prevents botching and adds to any successes you do roll. You may only spend Willpower one at a time and only once in a turn.

Virtues are very important in **Exalted**. Instead of spending Willpower for an automatic success, you can spend one Willpower point to add a number of dice equal to the dots your character has in a Virtue related to the action you are attempting. You may gain this bonus a number of times equal to the dots in the specific Virtue during each "story." As an example, the adventure in this booklet lasts for one story.

**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 or woe; fighting in hopeless situations or against the odds.

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

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

### 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 point of Essence to:

- Cause his Caste Mark to glow brightly (as if the character has spent 4-7 points of Essence, see "Anima Banner" below).

**REMINDERS...**

- One die per dot
- A success is a die that shows 7 or greater
- A 10 equals two successes
- A botch happens when you roll no successes and at least one die shows a 1
- Before you roll, you may spend a Willpower point for an automatic success, but only one Willpower at a time, once per turn
- Alternatively, before you roll, you may spend one Willpower point to add a number of dice equal to a Virtue that can aid your action

- Cause his anima to glow brightly enough to read by (as if the character had spent 8-10 points of Essence, 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 the Exalted spends points of Peripheral Essence, the anima intensifies to form a so-called anima banner.

**STUNTS**

**Exalted** is a game of exciting, cinematic action. The point is for every player to enjoy himself as much as possible while playing. Part of what makes the game fun for everyone is when you give a cool description of what your character’s doing, rather than droning out “I hit him with my mace” or something equally uninspired.

To encourage such artistic flair, **Exalted** uses stunts. A stunt occurs whenever a player describes an action her character is undertaking in a really cool fashion. Whenever a player describes what her character is doing in an interesting way, the Storyteller should award her an extra die to roll to determine if the character succeeds in the action she used the stunt to attempt. If the character succeeds, she recovers one point of Essence as well, if the character’s Personal or Peripheral Essence is below its starting value.

If the stunt is particularly cool and takes advantage of the environment, the Storyteller may award two extra dice to the roll. Should such an action succeed, the character may choose to regain two points of Essence or one point of Willpower.

Stunts that make everyone at the table go “Damn, that’s cool” should be rewarded with the incredible bonus of three extra dice to the roll. Such heroic deeds, if successful, will let the character regain three points of Essence or one point of Willpower.

**INITIATIVE**

Sometimes, it’s important to know who acts first. A character who gets the jump on his opponent is said to have the initiative. Each character involved in a scene rolls a single die and adds the Speed listed next to his weapon on his sheet (usually abbreviated “Spd”). For example, if the character rolls

**Peripheral****Essence Spent**

1-3

**Effect**

The character’s Caste Mark glitters for an hour after the Exalted has ceased to burn Essence.

4-7

The character’s Caste Mark burns and will shine through anything placed over it. Stealth Charms fail, and all Stealth rolls require two extra successes. Fifteen minutes without spending Essence will fade this level to the 1-3 level.

8-10

The character is surrounded by a shining aura bright enough to read by, and his Caste Mark is a burning golden brand on his forehead. Stealth is impossible. Fifteen minutes without spending Essence will fade this level to the 4-7 level.

11-15

The character is engulfed in a brilliant bonfire of Essence, which burns from his feet to above his head. The character is visible for miles. Fifteen minutes without spending Essence will fade this level to the 8-10 level.

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 incredibly elaborate mandala, and so on. This level fades during any turn the character doesn’t spend Essence points but leaps back into existence if the character again burns Peripheral Essence.



a 6 and has Speed of 7 with his sword, his initiative total is 13. This is an exception to the normal dice rolling. For actions other than combat or for weapons with no Speed listed, a character’s Speed is his Wits + Dexterity.

Characters act in the following order:

Highest initiative total.

If there are ties, the character with the highest Wits + Dexterity wins the tie.

If there are still ties, roll one die for each tied character. The highest roll wins. Keep rolling until the tie is resolved.

**MOVEMENT**

A character may move up to her Dexterity + 12 yards in a single turn if that is her only action. A turn is approximately three seconds and is usually only of importance during combat. During combat, if a character wishes to take actions in addition to movement, then she may only move up to half of her normal distance. If she moves more than half of her normal movement speed during a turn, then she may neither attack nor defend herself that turn.

**SURVIVING: THE LIFE OF HERO**

One of the most exciting parts of **Exalted** is when your character is locked in heroic battle, struggling to defeat his enemies and survive the day. What follows is a quick primer that explains how the Storyteller system handles small-scale combat scenes. The complete combat system covered in **Exalted** introduces a host of tricks and complications that add more elements of realism to a combat scene, but we’re just using the basics for the purposes of this demo.





## COMBAT

Combat itself is fairly straightforward. The combat is broken down into turns, during which each participant may take one action. Each turn repeats the same process until none of those involved in the conflict remain able to fight or all the antagonists surrender or flee.

First, have everyone roll initiative as described previously. The Storyteller should roll initiative for each of the villains she plays during the combat.

Now, as each character's initiative turn comes up, he has a few options.

If a character wants to attack an enemy, he may choose to do so during his place in the initiative order, provided he didn't parry or dodge. To resolve the attack, have the player roll a number of dice equal to the Accuracy of the weapon (or punch or kick) she is using. This is marked on the character's sheet, usually abbreviated "Acc." Should an opponent attempt to dodge or parry, as detailed below, subtract the opponent's successes, if any, from those gained by the attack roll. Even a single success remaining results in a hit upon that enemy. The more successes remaining, the more dangerous the attack may be.

If the attack hits, count up the number of successes, and add these to the Damage listed on the character sheet next to that weapon or attack (abbreviated "Dmg"). This represents the potential damage, before *soak*, that an enemy might suffer. The next section explains how to resolve damage and soaking.

Instead of attacking, a character can anticipate his enemies' attacks and then try to *dodge* out of the way. Even if his initiative total is higher than that of an attacking enemy, a character can wait to dodge until the enemy's initiative comes up. If the character's initiative number comes *after* the enemy's, he can still attempt to dodge the enemy's attack during the enemy's turn. If he does so, however, he gives up his later place in the initiative order until the next turn, when initiative is determined anew.

To dodge, a player rolls his character's Dexterity + Dodge. The player who's dodging then compares his number of successes against the number of successes his opponent achieved on his *attack roll*. If the defender has more successes dodging, he gets safely out of harm's way. If the attacker has more successes, the dodger is struck, though the total number of dodge roll successes subtract from the number of successes gained on the attack roll. Even if a character doesn't completely escape a blow, he may reduce its impact.

Alternatively, a character can use his own weapon to *parry* an opponent's attack. This works exactly like dodging except that, to parry, a player rolls a number of dice equal to the Parry value listed on his character sheet for the weapon in question (abbreviated "Pry"). Unless empowered to do so by a Charm, one cannot parry without a weapon — blocking with one's fist means one's arm gets cut instead. The player who's parrying then compares his successes against those of his opponent's attack roll, as described above for dodging.

Instead of attacking or defending, a character may choose to use a Charm. The rules for individual Charms are listed on the back of the character sheet. Some Charms do not use a character's action for the turn, as they supplement other actions (for example: improving an attack roll). A character can only use one Charm per turn, even if it is part of another action, although some Charms can be used more than once per turn. See the specific Charm's rules.

## DAMAGE AND SOAKING

An Exalted is a powerful, epic hero, but even he can be killed by puissant enough enemies. Falling from a great height, being pummeled, suffering mighty sword blows or being struck by potent sorcery, all of these and more are painful and damaging to the body of an Exalted. An Exalted may withstand far greater damage than a mere mortal, but even Exalted heroes may die.

There are three types of damage your character can suffer: bashing, lethal and aggravated. Each attack causes a certain type of damage, which is listed with the weapon, Charm or sorcery's entry on your sheet. Sometimes this damage is abbreviated, as in 9B, 7L or 2A, with "B" representing bashing, "L" for lethal and "A" for aggravated.

**Bashing:** An Exalted who has taken punches or blunt trauma has suffered bashing damage. Bashing damage is the easiest to soak and the least likely to kill a victim quickly.

**Lethal:** Lethal damage is suffered from attacks meant to cause immediate and fatal injury. It is more difficult to soak and often results in painful and visible injury, such as broken bones or open wounds.

**Aggravated:** Some damage supercedes even most Exalted resistances. Such attacks are usually supernatural in origin, and usually, only armor or certain powerful Charms can protect one from their effects.

**Soak** represents the inherent toughness and protections an Exalted possess that allow him to resist attacks. When an attack hits an Exalted or an enemy, compare the total potential damage (the net successes on the attack roll plus the Damage value of the weapon) to the soak value listed on the character sheet for the same type of damage: bashing soak for bashing damage, lethal soak for lethal damage and aggravated soak for aggravated damage. If the total potential damage exceeds the soak of the character, then subtract the soak value and roll a number of dice equal to the remainder. If the potential damage is equal to or less than the soak value, then still roll one single die. Each success on this *damage roll* causes one point of health damage marked as noted in the "Tracking Health" section.

## 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 box after the first has an associated dice-pool penalty that increases with the severity of the wounds. Anytime a character has boxes of damage marked on his health chart, he must subtract a number of dice equal to the greatest penalty listed next to a marked box from any dice pool rolled for future actions. This wound penalty may never reduce the number of dice rolled to less than one.

-0 Character may act as though unwounded.

-1 Character loses one die from any action.

-2 Character loses two dice from any action.

-4 Character loses four dice from any action.

**Incapacitated** Character is stunned, unable to move or act. If all of her damage boxes are lethal or aggravated and she takes one more point of damage, she begins dying.

**Dying** Without powerful magical aid, the character will die within a number of turns equal to her Stamina. She cannot take any actions, although the Storyteller may allow the character to croak some final words.

## TRACKING HEALTH

One level of bashing or lethal or aggravated damage is equal to one box on the health chart, but each type of damage is recorded differently. Damage is recorded this way because bashing damage will heal first, followed by lethal, then aggravated. It takes time to heal, however, and in a short adventure such as that presented here, characters may not have the opportunity to recover. In case the Storyteller has time to allow it, however, the rules are described here. Bashing damage requires three hours of rest per point the Exalted heals. Lethal and aggravated damage require about one week per point per damage penalty, i.e., a -4 health point requires about four weeks to recover. -0 lethal boxes require only one day to recover. Powerful magical Charms can speed this healing considerably, although magic cannot heal aggravated damage.

Bashing damage is marked with a /, as in the example below:

-0 [/]

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

-0 [X\*]

-1 [X] [/]

## HOW TO DO EVERYTHING ELSE

The **Exalted** rulebook has rules for everything from fighting glorious battles to summoning wicked demons to forging magical swords. We have just presented you with the basic rules here, and you will find a few more basic rules on the back of the character sheets and within the adventure that follows. Once you are ready to expand your game beyond this introductory adventure, you will be ready to purchase **Exalted**, to create your own characters and to design your own epic adventures.

### COMBAT SUMMARY

- Determine initiative: Roll 1d10 and add the Speed of your weapon.
- Highest initiative acts first, then in descending order.
- One action per turn. Characters have the option of dodging, parrying, moving or attacking.
  - Attack: Accuracy value of weapon
  - Dodge: Dexterity + Dodge
  - Parry: Parry value of weapon
  - Movement: Dexterity + 12 yards
- Resolve attacks.
  1. Roll for attack. Note attack roll successes.
  2. Roll defender's parry or dodge, if any. Subtract these successes from the attack roll's successes.
  3. If any attack roll successes remain, roll for damage. Roll a number of dice equal to the remaining successes on the attack roll plus the Damage value of the weapon minus the Soak value of the defender.
  4. Record damage on the health chart.





# THE TOMB OF FIVE CORNERS

A band of mighty heroes is brought together by hazy visions of its members past lives and of the tomb wherein their forsaken bodies lie, defended by deadly traps and surrounded by untold riches. Four of these stalwart souls find their way to a valley north and east of the city of Nexus, rediscover the bonds of their ancient brotherhood and determine to join together to recover their forgotten artifacts of power. Soon, they find that even the most Exalted of fellowships can be broken — one of their Circle has been corrupted by the foul Deathlords and plots to restore her brotherhood beneath a banner of allegiance to the Underworld. Amid the hallowed stones of their own graves, the heroes overcome the blasphemies of necromancy and face their fallen ally in a battle that leaves little doubt that the lords of the Abyss must be turned back before they destroy Creation and descend upon its corpse like vultures.

Sound like an interesting story? Good, because it is the tale you and your players are about to tell.

## PREPARING FOR PLAY

Before you decide to be the Storyteller for this adventure, you should read through it. Don't worry. We've kept it short in order to introduce you to **Exalted** as easily as possible. When you are ready to direct the game, take out the four character sheets in the center of this booklet, separate them, and give one to each of the players. Encourage each player to read over his sheet. You might also explain the basic rules from the first four pages, or you might decide to explain them when necessary during the game. You should also try to answer as many of your players' questions as possible without giving away the plot of the story in which they are about to take part, especially take note of the City of Nexus description that follows.

## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

As described before, the Exalted were given their power and station by the gods in return for slaying the enemies of the gods. The spirits of the Solar Exalted burned with such potency that they could not be passed by onward through bloodlines. Whenever a Solar Exalted perished, after millennia of time or in battle against the enemies of the gods, his Essence escaped into the heavens and returned to the earth within the being of a fitting

mortal. Inevitably choosing a peerless hero, as the spark of a flint is drawn to the finest tinder, this Solar Essence elevated the mortal above all others, and he was Exalted.

In a terrible act that ended the First Age, the Dragon-Blooded murdered the Solars and locked their Essences away at the bottom of the sea. The corpses of the slain Solar Exalted were buried in tributes born of terror, as the Dragon-Blooded feared the Solars' vengeful spirits even in death. When one of the Chosen was slain, his body was buried with great care, so his soul would not haunt the world. Impenetrable defenses were built to surround the tombs of the fallen Solars, wherein lay the treasures most beloved by the great heroes. After centuries, the forbidden mausoleums of the fallen Solar Exalted passed into legend.

Then, five years ago, things changed. The Scarlet Empress disappeared, and her Realm was thrown into disarray. Somehow released from imprisonment, the Solar Exalted returned to Creation in numbers not seen since the First Age. The Wyld Hunt struggles to keep abreast of the rising Solar tide, while the Realm stumbles upon its own decadence. No allies remain to greet the Solars with coronation, and their greatest legacies lie locked within forgotten tombs whose secret defenses even they no longer remember. And yet, it is the Second Age. The sorcery of the First Age is ancient, its potency diminished by the weight of years, and those Solars who find their ancient corpses sometimes crack open the vaults wherein rest the artifacts of their divine kingship of old.

## A BROKEN ALLIANCE

This adventure is predicated upon the idea that the four players each shall have control of one of the newly returned Solar Exalted. Once, each of these Solars belonged to a Perfect Circle, a band of heroes whose membership was composed of one of each of the castes of the Chosen of the Unconquered Sun: Dawn, Zenith, Twilight, Night and Eclipse. After the Dragon-Blooded destroyed the First Age incarnations of the Chosen, they sealed the Solar corpses beneath the earth. In the lands north and east of the city of present day Nexus, they built a magnificent tomb with five chambers, each one holding the mortal coil of one of the Solars of the Circle of Five Corners.

Four Circlemates have returned to pillage their own tomb. Now, if only they could find their fifth member.

### THE CITY OF NEXUS

With three quarters of a million inhabitants, Nexus is one of the largest cities outside the Realm. It lies at the center of the River Province, the eastern heart of the ancient Solar kingdom. Ruined by the Dragon-Blooded uprising and a terrible plague known as the Contagion, the region has never recovered all of its lost glory. For centuries, the people have combed the wreckage of the First Age for artifacts of power, and for this reason, the region is now called the Scavenger Lands. Nexus was built upon the ruins of a city of the old Exalted kingdom, and it was the first Scavenger Land city to grow anew to a significant size. Today, the city is a crawling hive of corruption and commerce, whose only law is a mysterious governing body known as the Council of Entities. As the largest river port in the Scavenger Lands, Nexus is the crossroads for much of the travel anyone might take in the East. Villages and brigands for miles in every direction feed upon the lifeblood of trade passing to and from Nexus.

### AN INVITATION

#### Read this part aloud:

It has been a year or two since the four of you found one another again. Though it has been more than 1,000 years since you were murdered by the Dragon-Blooded, there was no doubt in your mind that you knew one another in a former existence. Guided by occasional flashes of times long past, you searched the Scavenger Lands together, hoping to discover your legacy and to find the missing member of your Circle. Stories of your deeds have followed in your wake, and so have the dogged killers of the Realm. Flush with victory in a recent campaign against the bandit king Barrow Black in the hills near the city of Nexus, the four of you are resting in a tavern when an intriguing message reaches you.

A weatherworn man in an reinforced buff jacket approaches you to deliver a dispatch. The letter is unsigned, but its crisp folds are sealed with the unmistakable sign of the Eclipse Caste, pressed into the crimson wax. You know in your hearts that these are the words of your missing Circlemate.

“Greetings most honored Circlemates. I hope my words come to you in haste and find you in peace. I have returned to the world, and the tales of your deeds reached my ears just recently. I would have hastened to your side, but I think that I have found something of great importance to us all, and I wanted to pursue it immediately. I believe that I have discovered the site of our fallen bodies from millennia ago. I know not whether our tomb has been broken into, nor whether the artifacts of power we once called our own await us in their rightful place. The world has grown dark in our absence, and the old ways are forgotten. If you would meet me, please accompany Little Shoe, the fellow who delivered this message. I know his ways are coarse, but his guidance is sure. It is time for the Chosen of the Unconquered Sun to show their true mettle, and I hope that you will join me, perhaps in time that we might reclaim our heritage together.”

#### Stop reading aloud.

Give the other players a few moments to get their bearings, to discuss the matter among themselves and to ask you any questions you can answer without giving away the end of the story. If they ask the guide for help or if they seem hesitant, then

you should have the guide speak. If the characters try to beat more information out of Little Shoe, he will attempt to flee. He has not previously been to the tomb he is about to mention, though its general location is common knowledge in his village. If pressed by force or magic, Little Shoe describes his patron as a beautiful woman with pale skin and dark hair wearing a white robe.

#### Read this part aloud:

The ill-shaven man shuffles backward a bit after handing you the message. While you scanned the letter, he waited quietly, absent-mindedly patting his palm against the leather of his buff jacket. Now, he clears his throat to speak.

“The mistress asked me to deliver her words to you. She also asked me to guide you to her should you desire. I know the way. It is three days from here, near the village of Northeast Spoke. I didn’t follow her there, but I know she meant to reach the tomb of the valley there, and every villager knows where to find the tomb, even if none of them dare disturb it. I am not sure why the mistress would wish to enter such a place, but she sent for you to meet her. Will you come?”

#### Stop reading aloud.

### SETTING FORTH

Presumably, the characters are willing to accompany the guide to Northeast Spoke and the tomb beyond. If you were creating your own **Exalted** adventures, it might not matter if they ignored the story hooks being dangled before them, but if your group ignores the letter and the guide, then explain that their characters have a strong urge to rejoin their missing Circlemate. If that doesn’t work, perhaps you should get out some cards and play poker. Provided the characters agree to accompany Little Shoe, you should read the following.

#### Read this part aloud:

Excited that you may finally reunite with your Circlemate, you swiftly finish your drinks and meals and pay the tavern keeper with the coins of the bandits you felled. Your Circle sets forth on a road heading north and east from the city of Nexus. Little Shoe is a sure guide, if a bit ugly and eerily quiet sometimes. Each night you stay at one of the small villages that dot the countryside. On the last night, you stay in the pleasant village of Northeast Spoke. A withered old man approaches you the next morning as Little Shoe prepares to lead you to the tomb he mentioned.

“Traveling merchants tell of your battles against the bandit king Barrow Black. I know not if you heard the screech of the night bird last eve or felt the odd chill in the air, but I fear for the life of the woman Little Shoe says you have come to find. The dead do not rest easy in these times, and your friend has not returned from the tomb where the shepherds say she went. I fear that your friend may be in great peril. Please. The shadows grow longer than they have a right to be and haunt the dreams of young children and old men like me. If the stories are true, perhaps you can save us all.”

The old man pauses and will not speak again. Tears run down his cheeks, and Little Shoe clears his throat to say that you are ready to depart for the valley of the tomb.

#### Stop reading aloud.

If the characters think to ask other villagers questions the night before or the morning when the old man speaks to them, they may receive limited new information. It is a smart move for





them to canvass the locals, so try not to discourage them from doing so, but don't allow the effort to bring the whole story to a dead stop. If you feel that your players are confused to the point of needing additional help, this is your opportunity to have people approach their characters with advice.

Things the characters might hear if they ask around include:

- Bandits fleeing northward continue to raid occasionally, but they range farther from Nexus, and the raids are less prevalent.
- The village headwoman received threats from someone called "the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood" warning of the return of Barrow Black from death if his men did not continue to receive the blood money to which he was accustomed.
- Half a dozen citizens of Northeast Spoke have disappeared in recent weeks. Shepherds claim to have seen them wandering in the night like the dead, and neighboring villages share similar stories.
- Anything else you feel will help move the story along or add a heroic or creepy feel to it.

## WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING

Unbeknownst to the four characters, something is no longer right with the world. The Perfect Circle of Five Corners is broken, as their Eclipse Caste member is forever lost. When the Solar Exalted escaped from their imprisonment and returned to Creation, one of the Circle was seized by the Deathlords and corrupted. No longer one of the Chosen of the Unconquered Sun, her name has been seized by the Abyss, and she is now the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood. Her Essence is that of the twisted Moonshadow Caste now, and she serves the Deathlord known as the Mask of Winters. Her clever master knows that, someday, her Circle will seek its lost member and, thus, reveal to her the location of the Circle's tomb. The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood has recently breached the defenses of her Circle's tomb and moved to create a trap for her lost compatriots. Sending word of her "find" to them, she prepares to capture them once they arrive. Meanwhile, she forges the remnants of Barrow Black's brigands into a new bandit kingdom led by the dead shade of their fallen king. The Mistress plots to wreak such havoc north of Nexus and Lookshy that her master's newest conquest, the broken city of Thorns, can overcome the weakened states. She also hopes to corrupt her Circle so that its members will join her in dark service to her Deathlord master.

Turned to the Underworld by her fallen Essence, the Moonshadow has learned foul necromantic spells that can raise dead corpses as servants. The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood weaves a web of treachery, blood and terror into which the characters plunge headlong. As the Storyteller, you should try to keep her plot secret, yet present it fairly as a deadly challenge for the player's characters. The Mistress is not above slaying her compatriots, if necessary, and many of her servants might do so out of fear of the Solars' might even if they were not so thoroughly depraved creatures.

## THE TOMB

The First Age tomb of the Circle of Five Corners is a marvel of engineering. Certainly, it cannot compare to the elaborate mausoleums of nearby Nexus, but it is still a formidable defense for the bodies of those Exalted by the Solars. Perhaps due to the passing of the age, perhaps because time has worn away some of its enchantments, the tomb is no longer

impenetrable. Indeed, the Moonshadow Abyssal called the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood has breached the structure and lairs there while dividing her time between setting traps for her Circlemates and planning the domination of the northern Scavenger Lands.

## INTO THE VALLEY OF DEATH

### Read this part aloud:

Local villagers, especially those in neighboring Northeast Spoke, told you tales of this valley. Old men croaked that it was long abandoned, save for the occasional lover's tryst or lost shepherd's footfall. Recently, however, the dead have been disturbed somehow, and surely, someone must suffer their wrath. With Little Shoe's guidance, you entered the valley and worked your way through thin forests bending beneath a new growth of black lichen. Ahead, you see the sun mound of your own ancient graves. It would seem that perhaps your Circlemate awaits you here, for a lone wagon sits at the foot of the unnatural hill.

### Stop reading aloud.

## THE DARK WAGON

A wagon slowly settles its wheels into the soft loam of the slope, and behind the wagon lies the entrance to the tomb. Ask your players if they are approaching the wagon, climbing the hill or performing some other action.

### If the characters climb the hill, then read this part aloud:

The hillside is heavily trampled, with the underbrush crushed by many passing feet.

### Have each player roll Perception + Survival.

### Read this part to the player with the most successes:

You notice that there are a few flat areas that clearly must be ground that recently held tents. In a couple of spots, you find evidence of open fires covered with relatively fresh earth, perhaps a few days ago.

### Stop reading aloud.

### If the characters approach the wagon, then read this part aloud:

The wagon appears to have been here for some time, perhaps even weeks. Its wheels settle into the soft loam of the slope. The harness, which once let one or two horses pull the wagon, lies baking in the noon sun. The tattered covering over the wagon flaps in the gentle breeze. As you near, a hideous sight greets your eyes. Two rotting corpses lie in the front of the wagon, with flies angrily buzzing about them.

### Have each player roll Perception + Awareness.

### Read this part to the player with the most successes:

You notice a rough-hewn hole leading into the side of the hill. Given where the wagon rests, it seems likely someone purposefully parked it in front of this entryway. There are no signs of your Circlemate or of anyone else nearby.

Suddenly, with a lurch, the two bodies in the wagon sit up, and each of them springs into action, seemingly set upon having you join the dead.

### Stop reading aloud.

Hidden within the wagon, the unfortunate drivers who brought the Mistress to the tomb rest uneasily. Each of the two men is but a walking corpse waiting to attack anyone who is not the Mistress or is not wearing the symbol of Barrow Black.



NAME: MORNING BREEZE CONCEPT: MONK  
 PLAYER: NATURE: JUDGE  
 CASTE: ZENITH ANIMA: SHIMMERING GOLDEN PREDATOR BIRD

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH ●●●●● PERCEPTION ●●●●●  
 DEXTERITY ●●●●● MANIPULATION ●●●●● INTELLIGENCE ●●●●●  
 STAMINA ●●●●● APPEARANCE ●●●●● WITS ●●●●●

ABILITIES

**DAWN** Zenith  
 Agility ●●●●●  Endurance ●●●●●  Craft ●●●●●  
 Brawl ●●●●●  Performance ●●●●●  Investigation ●●●●●  
 Martial Arts ●●●●●  Presence ●●●●●  Lore ●●●●●  
 Miler ●●●●●  Resistance ●●●●●  Medicine ●●●●●  
 Thrown ●●●●●  Survival ●●●●●  Occult ●●●●●

**NIGHT** Eclipse  
 Athletics ●●●●●  Bureaucracy ●●●●●  
 Awareness ●●●●●  Languages ●●●●●  
 Dodge ●●●●●  Role ●●●●●  
 Larceny ●●●●●  Sigs ●●●●●  
 Stealth ●●●●●  Socialize ●●●●●

**SPECIALTIES**  
 Barter ●●●●●  
 Lore ●●●●●  
 Role ●●●●●  
 Sigs ●●●●●  
 Socialize ●●●●●

ADVANTAGES

MENTOR ●●●●●  
 ALLIES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 CONTACTS ●●●●●  
 FOLLOWS ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●

WEAPONS

SLASHING SWORD  
 SPD 9 ACC 8 DMG 6L PRY 8  
 FIST  
 SPD 7 ACC 7 DMG 4B PRY 7

ANIMA

B 3 L 1 A 0

SOAK  
 -0  
 -1  
 -2  
 -4  
 INCAPACITATED

LIMIT BREAK

○○○○○○○○○○

VIRTUE FLAW

COMPASSIONATE  
 MARTYRDOM

EXPERIENCE

PERSONAL 15.1  
 PHYSICAL 37.1  
 COMBAT



NAME: KAGE CONCEPT: MERCENARY  
 PLAYER: NATURE: LEADER  
 CASTE: DAWN ANIMA: BONFIRE OF THE Fyre

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH ●●●●● CHARM ●●●●● PERCEPTION ●●●●●  
 DEXTERITY ●●●●● MANIPULATION ●●●●● INTELLIGENCE ●●●●●  
 STAMINA ●●●●● APPEARANCE ●●●●● WITS ●●●●●

ABILITIES

**DAWN** Zenith  
 Agility ●●●●●  Endurance ●●●●●  Craft ●●●●●  
 Brawl ●●●●●  Performance ●●●●●  Investigation ●●●●●  
 Martial Arts ●●●●●  Presence ●●●●●  Lore ●●●●●  
 Miler ●●●●●  Resistance ●●●●●  Medicine ●●●●●  
 Thrown ●●●●●  Survival ●●●●●  Occult ●●●●●

**NIGHT** Eclipse  
 Athletics ●●●●●  Bureaucracy ●●●●●  
 Awareness ●●●●●  Languages ●●●●●  
 Dodge ●●●●●  Role ●●●●●  
 Larceny ●●●●●  Sigs ●●●●●  
 Stealth ●●●●●  Socialize ●●●●●

**SPECIALTIES**  
 Barter ●●●●●  
 Lore ●●●●●  
 Role ●●●●●  
 Sigs ●●●●●  
 Socialize ●●●●●

ADVANTAGES

ALLIES ●●●●●  
 BACKING ●●●●●  
 CONTACTS ●●●●●  
 FOLLOWERS ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●  
 RESOURCES ●●●●●

WEAPONS

GREAT SWORD  
 SPD 6 ACC 9 DMG 10L PRY 6

ANIMA

B 12 L 8 A 6

SOAK  
 -0  
 -1  
 -2  
 -4  
 INCAPACITATED

LIMIT BREAK

○○○○○○○○○○

VIRTUE FLAW

FOOLHARDY  
 CONTEMPT

EXPERIENCE

PERSONAL JL 1  
 PHYSICAL JL 1  
 COMBAT

CHARMS

EXCELLENT STRIKE 1/DIE  
 HUNGRY TIGER TECHNIQUE 1  
 FIRE & STONES STRIKE 1/10th  
 GOLDEN ESSENCE BLOCK 1/2 DICE  
 DEEPING SWALLOW DEFENSE 2  
 RESPECT-COMMANDING ATTITUDE 5

WILLPOWER

○○○○○○○○○○

HEALTH

B 12 L 8 A 6

SOAK  
 -0  
 -1  
 -2  
 -4  
 INCAPACITATED

VIRTUES

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

ESSENCE

●●○○○○○

PERSONAL

JL 1

PHYSICAL

JL 1

COMBAT

●●○○○○○



## 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 wishes. The rigid rules of the military state grew tiresome to you, 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

**DIPPING SWALLOW DEFENSE**  
For 2 points of Essence, Kade's player can roll the character's normal Parry dice against any one attack without using his action for the turn. Kade can use this Charm more than once in a turn, though he cannot use any other Charms in the same turn, as usual.

**EXCELLENT STRIKE**  
At a cost of 1 point of Essence per die, Kade may add up to seven dice to a single attack made using a melee weapon during an attack roll. The use of the Charm and the attack are one action in conjunction.

**FIRE AND STONES STRIKE**  
Should Kade successfully strike with a melee weapon, he can spend up to 4 points of Essence to convert one die of damage on the damage roll to an automatic success per point of Essence expended. The Essence must be spent before the attack roll is made.

**GOLDEN ESSENCE BLOCK**  
Kade may spend points of Essence to guide his weapon defensively, allowing him to parry without using his action for the turn, but he does not get his normal Parry value. Instead, each point of Essence spent gives two dice to parry a melee attack, though spending his maximum 4 points of Essence only gives him a total of seven dice with which to parry. Kade may use this Charm more than once in a turn, allowing him to parry multiple opponents' attacks.

Thorns, you lost many of your men in battle against the dead. 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 golden 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 and a fortune for yourself. During the campaign against the brigand lord, you also rediscovered 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 late 30s. His wear his hair and moustache long in the style of Northern barbarians, a habit that annoyed 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.

## CHARMS

### DAWN CASTE ANIMA POWER

Kade can choose to spend 10 points of Essence to cause the players of all mortal (non-Exalted, non-magical) enemies to roll Valor. If an opponent gamers no successes, she flees from Kade. Even if she gains one or more successes, she loses two dice on all actions taken against Kade.

### BODY-MENDING MEDITATION

With the expense of 10 points of Essence, Kade may speed his healing up to 10 times as fast. For example, a point of bashing damage, which normally would take three hours to recover, would be recovered in 18 minutes.

### EXCELLENT STRIKE

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### HUNGRY TIGER TECHNIQUE

While using a melee weapon, Kade can spend 1 point of Essence to increase the damage of a successful attack. This Charm must be used before the attack roll is made but does not count as a separate action. If the attack is successful, each extra success left after any dodge or parry counts twice toward the damage roll.

### MASTER HORSEMAN'S EYE

For 1 point of Essence, Kade can instantly recognize the details of a riding beast. He knows its age, health and temperament. This works on horses and any other sort of riding steed.

### OX-BODY TECHNIQUE

This Charm gives Kade extra health levels. They are already shown on the character sheet.

### RESPECT-COMMANDING ATTITUDE

For 2 points of Essence, Kade may command the respect of an audience. They may not until he finishes speaking, but they will listen and not harass him until he finishes speaking.

### SPIRIT-STEADYING ASSURANCE

By spending 3 points of Essence, Kade can render a riding beast, such as a horse, completely immune to terror for an entire battle. Nothing will cause the steed to flee, and Kade will have no trouble controlling it during battle.

## 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 dead 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 the ruling Council of Nexus 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. Morning Breeze does not wear any armor as he is trained in martial arts styles that prohibit its use.

## CHARMS

### ZENITH CASTE ANIMA POWER

For 5 points of Essence, Morning Breeze may activate his anima to cause three levels of aggravated damage against a demon or undead creature within 10 yards. The target cannot use any soak against this damage, whatsoever.

Alternatively, he may spend 1 point of Essence to burn a dead body which is not somehow enchanted or animated to ashes, sending the soul to Heaven and preventing it from being manipulated by necromancy thereafter.

Lastly, he can choose to spend 10 points of Essence to cause a demon or ghost to roll Valor. If the demon or ghost rolls no successes, it flees from Morning Breeze. Even if the creature gains one or more successes, it loses 2 dice on all actions taken against Morning Breeze.

### ARMOR OF VIRTUE TECHNIQUE

For 3 points of Essence, Morning Breeze may tap into a Virtue of his choice to protect himself. For the rest of the battle, his bashing soak is raised by the value of the Virtue chosen, but he must act completely in accordance with that Virtue or lose the bonus immediately. The Charm may be used more than once in a scene, but the total bonus cannot exceed 6. While using the Charm, Morning Breeze's Caste Mark glows brightly,

as though he had spent 4 to 7 points of Peripheral Essence. Using the Charm automatically adds one point to his Limit.

### DURABILITY OF OAK MEDITATION

For one point of Essence per two dice, Morning Breeze may roll up to six dice to enhance his ability to withstand damage. Each success on this roll adds 1 to his bashing soak for the remainder of the battle. The Charm can be used again during the same battle, but the total bonus soak cannot exceed 6.

### EXCELLENT STRIKE

At a cost of 1 point of Essence per die, Morning Breeze may add up to 7 dice to a single attack made using a melee weapon during an attack roll. The use of the Charm and the attack are one action in conjunction.

### FIVEFOLD ARMOR OF VIRTUE TECHNIQUE

This Charm functions like Armor of Virtue Technique, except it costs 5 points of Essence and increases lethal soak instead of bashing. Whenever he uses this Charm, Morning Breeze's anima glows brightly, as if he had spent 8 to 10 points of Peripheral Essence.

### HUNGRY TIGER TECHNIQUE

While using a melee weapon, Morning Breeze can spend 1 point of Essence to increase the damage of a successful attack. This Charm must be used before the attack roll is made but does not count as a separate action. If the attack is successful, each extra success left after any dodge or parry counts twice toward the damage roll.

### IRON SKIN CONCENTRATION

For a cost of 3 points of Essence and 1 point of Willpower, Morning Breeze can roll six dice to protect himself against lethal damage. For a single battle, Morning Breeze may soak lethal damage using his bashing soak. This Charm will not work if he wears armor. He may use this Charm at any point, without using his action for the turn and even if he loses initiative, but if he does so, then he cannot use any other Charm in the same turn.

### ONE WEAPON, TWO BLOWS

For 3 points of Essence, Morning Breeze's attacks with a melee weapon become lightning fast. He may attack the same opponent twice in the same turn. Each attack is rolled separately, but any attempt to dodge or parry applies to both attack rolls.

### OX-BODY TECHNIQUE

This Charm gives Morning Breeze extra health levels. They are already shown on the character sheet.

### SERPENTINE EVASION

For 3 points of Essence, Morning Breeze may add three dice to his dodge roll for the turn. He may not use any other Charm in the same turn he uses this one, but he may activate this Charm any time he chooses to dodge.

### STRIKING COBRA TECHNIQUE

For 3 points of Essence, Morning Breeze may add 3 to his initiative total once per turn, provided he limits himself to attacks with his fists or other body parts (those made with Martial Arts). He must choose to use this Charm when rolling initiative, and it may only be used once per turn. (He uses this Charm, he cannot use any other Charm in the same turn.



Name: RINAN Concept: WITCH  
 Player: CAREGIVER Nature: SURVIVOR  
 Caste: TWILIGHT Anima: GOLDEN RINGSPEAR

ATTRIBUTES

Strength 0000 Charisma 0000 Perception 0000  
 Dexterity 0000 Manipulation 0000 Intelligence 0000  
 Stamina 0000 Appearance 0000 Wits 0000

ABILITIES

**DAWN**  
 Archery 00000  Endurance 00000  Crafts 00000  
 Brawl 00000  Performance 00000  Investigation 00000  
 Martial Arts 00000  Presence 00000  Lore 00000  
 Melee 00000  Resistance 00000  Medicine 00000  
 Throw 00000  Survival 00000  Occult 00000

**NIGHT**  
 Athletics 00000  Burglary 00000  Specialties 00000  
 Awareness 00000  Linguistics 00000  00000  
 Dodge 00000  Risk 00000  00000  
 Larceny 00000  Slay 00000  00000  
 Stealth 00000  Socialize 00000  00000

ADVANTAGES

**BACKGROUNDS**  
 Allies 00000 Name FLAWLESS DIAGNOSIS Cost 20, TW  
 Influence 00000 Name IRREMEMBERABLE SIGN OF Cost 20, TW  
 Mangle 00000 Name BRONZE Cost 5  
 Resources 00000 Name BEED IN THE WIND Cost 5  
00000 Name HARDSHIP SURVIVING Cost 5  
00000 Name MENINGICANT SPRINT Cost 5  
00000 Name FLAWLESS HANDWORK Cost 10  
00000 Name TECHNIQUE Cost 10  
00000 Name EMERALD COUNTERMAGIC Cost 5  
00000 Name DEATH OF ONSDIAN Cost 15  
00000 Name TERRESTRIAL CIRCLE Cost 15

WEAPONS

GAFF SEAR  
 SPD 7 ACC 4 DMG 5L PRV 3

WILLPOWER

●●●●●○○○○○  
 ○○○○○○○○○○

HEALTH

SOAK  
 B 7 L 4 A 3  
 -1 MOBILITY PENALTY

-0	■■■■■■■■■■
-1	■■■■■■■■■■
-2	■■■■■■■■■■
-4	■■■■■■■■■■
INCAPACITATED	<input type="checkbox"/>

LIMIT BREAK

○○○○○○○○○○

VIRTUE FLAW

ASSETIC DRIVE

EXPERIENCE

Committed         



Name: NARCIA Concept: GUILD OPERATIVE  
 Player: SURVIVOR Nature: SURVIVOR  
 Caste: NIGHT Anima: FLICKERING DOPPLED SUNSPOTS

ATTRIBUTES

Strength 0000 Charisma 0000 Perception 0000  
 Dexterity 0000 Manipulation 0000 Intelligence 0000  
 Stamina 0000 Appearance 0000 Wits 0000

ABILITIES

**DAWN**  
 Archery 00000  Endurance 00000  Craft 00000  
 Brawl 00000  Performance 00000  Investigation 00000  
 Martial Arts 00000  Presence 00000  Lore 00000  
 Melee 00000  Resistance 00000  Medicine 00000  
 Throw 00000  Survival 00000  Occult 00000

**NIGHT**  
 Athletics 00000  Burglary 00000  Specialties 00000  
 Awareness 00000  Linguistics 00000  00000  
 Dodge 00000  Risk 00000  00000  
 Larceny 00000  Slay 00000  00000  
 Stealth 00000  Socialize 00000  00000

ADVANTAGES

**BACKGROUNDS**  
 Backing (Guild) 00000 Name FLAZY ARROW ATTACK Cost 2  
 Contacts 00000 Name DOZZLING FLARE ATTACK Cost 1/2L  
 Resources 00000 Name SENSEY ACUITY PRISM Cost 5  
00000 Name REED IN THE WIND Cost 1/2 BICE  
00000 Name SHADOW OVER WATER Cost 2  
00000 Name REFLEX SIDESTEP Cost 2  
00000 Name TECHNIQUE Cost 2

WEAPONS

SELF BOW  
 ACC 10 DMG 5L RATE 2 RANGE 150  
EXCEPTIONAL KNIFE  
 SPD 11 ACC 9 DMG 5L PRV 6

WILLPOWER

●●●●●○○○○○  
 ○○○○○○○○○○

HEALTH

SOAK  
 B 5 L 5 A 4

-0	■■■■■■■■■■
-1	■■■■■■■■■■
-2	■■■■■■■■■■
-4	■■■■■■■■■■
INCAPACITATED	<input type="checkbox"/>

LIMIT BREAK

○○○○○○○○○○

VIRTUE FLAW

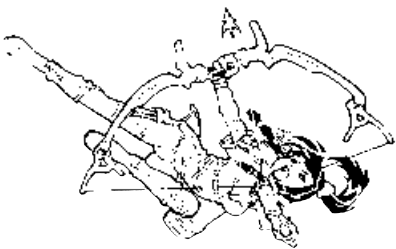
Heart of Flint

EXPERIENCE

Committed



## NARIA



**History:** The streets of the city of Great Forks are as 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 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 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 tightly 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, an exceptional knife, a breastplate. Naria also carries a Guild merchant's moon, which identifies her as part of his house and grants her access to certain restricted buildings in Nexus.

### CHARMS

#### NIGHT CASTE ANIMA POWER

For 10 points of Essence, Naria can mute all perceptions of herself, subtracting one success from all efforts by other people to detect or sense her presence or passing.

#### BLURRED FORM STYLE

Naria can conceal herself even when she moves. This Charm costs 8 points of Essence and 1 Willpower point for her to use. For the remainder of the scene, she remains unseen by anyone whose player does not get at least three successes on a Perception + Alertness roll made for his character to spot her. Once an opponent spots her, she can keep track of her automatically. If she moves out of view (for example, behind a wall), then the player must roll for his character to spot her anew. Enemies who spot her still find her harder to hit in combat.

Ranged attacks, such as arrows, lose three successes from the attack roll's results, while melee attacks lose one success from the attack roll.

#### DAZZLING FLARE ATTACK

This Charm allows Naria to fill an arrow with Essence, causing it to fly straighter and strike with more deadly force. Using the Charm adds one die to the attack roll. Each point of Essence she spends, from 1 to 3 points maximum, adds 2L to the damage of the arrow, if the arrow successfully hits.

#### EASILY OVERLOOKED PRESENCE METHOD

This Charm allows Naria to blend into the surroundings as though she belonged there. Spending 3 points of Essence lets her cause people to ignore her, provided she doesn't do anything to attract their attention. Disappearing into a crowd is easy. Trying to sneak past a bandit guard simply by walking past him is not going to work.

#### FIERY ARROW ATTACK

For 2 points of Essence, Naria can cause an arrow she fires to burst into flames as it flies through the air. The arrow causes three extra dice of damage.

#### INVISIBLE STATUE SPIRIT

Provided she remains completely still, Naria can disappear from view. She spends 5 points of Essence and automatically hides, even in plain view. If she moves, the Charm immediately ceases to work.

#### REED IN THE WIND

Each point of Essence Naria spends to activate this Charm adds two extra dice to her attempt to dodge. She cannot add more than nine dice to her dodge roll, so 4 points of Essence adds 9 dice.

#### REFLEX SIDESTEP TECHNIQUE

This Charm allows Naria to try to dodge attacks she didn't even know were coming. Thus, even if somebody were to sneak up behind her and strike her by complete surprise, she could still try to dodge. She spends 2 points of Essence, and may use six dice, only, to attempt to dodge the attack. The dodge attempt does not use her action for the turn.

#### SENSORY ACUITY PRANA

Spending 5 points of Essence boosts all five of Naria's senses. She gains three extra dice to use for any Awareness roll for the rest of the scene.

#### SHADOW OVER WATER

For 2 points of Essence, Naria can use her normal Dexterity + Dodge dice to dodge an attack without using her action for the turn.

#### SOUND AND SCENT BANISHING ATTITUDE

For 6 points of Essence, Naria can hide herself from senses other than sight for the rest of the encounter. While the Charm is active, Naria makes no noise of any sort, nor does she have any scent. This Charm is limited to Naria herself and to any equipment she's touching — so an arrow she fires, for instance, will make noise as it slams into an enemy's armor.

## 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 and protector of 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 you foresaw the destruction of your village. For years, you studied and 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, seeking whatever pathway the storm meant to set you upon.

As they departed Nexus, you encountered Kade and Morning Breeze, whose spirits resonated with the marks of fate. Recognizing them from your past life, you joined them to fight against the bandit king Barrow Black. The three of you discovered another of your ancient Circle when you encountered Naria. Now, you find yourself torn between your First Age companions and the place of power that awaits you upon the Northern cliffs of your home.

**Image:** Rinan is a tall, thin, attractive man, with long, straight black hair. He wears oiled skin and tall whalehide boots. His clothes are utilitarian. He uses a harpoon for fishing and defense, and it rarely leaves his hand in these troubled days.

**Equipment:** Harpoon (gaff spear), clothing, herbs and the Heartstone of his mother's. A sense of power. Rinan's high soak values are due to his leather clothes acting as light armor.

### CHARMS

#### TWILIGHT CASTE ANIMA POWER

For 5 points of Essence, Rinan may attempt to use his animus to weaken an attack that has struck him and will cause damage. Roll three dice, and reduce the enemy's damage by one health level of damage per success gained.

#### BODY-MENDING MEDITATION

With the expense of 10 points of Essence, Rinan may speed his healing up to 10 times as fast. For example, a point of hashing damage, which normally would take three hours to recover, would be recovered in 18 minutes.

#### FLAWLESS DIAGNOSIS

This Charm allows Rinan to examine a patient closely and flawlessly determine what illness ails her. The Charm costs 1 point of Essence. It does not grant the ability to heal a patient, but it does ensure that Rinan knows exactly what is wrong with her.

#### FLAWLESS HANDIWORK METHOD

This Charm allows Rinan to craft items with incredible skill. Each 3 points of Essence he spends during the crafting of an item adds one success to the Craft roll necessary to make it. He cannot buy more bonus successes than (the number of

successes rolled on the Craft roll + 3). It is easy for Rinan to craft exceptional items with various minor bonuses to their use.

#### HARDSHIP-SURVIVING MENDICANT SPIRIT

For an entire day, Rinan can make himself immune to the hazards of environments such as the desert or the cold depths of the North or a swamp. He becomes immune to hypothermia, dangerous insect bites, desert heat and other hostile conditions of natural origin. This Charm costs him 5 points of Essence to activate.

#### REED IN THE WIND

Each point of Essence Rinan spends to activate this Charm adds two extra dice to his attempt to dodge. He cannot add more than four dice to his dodge roll.

#### TOUCH OF BLISSFUL RELEASE

For 5 points of Essence, Rinan can relieve the pain of a patient for six hours. This allows the patient to ignore up to two of the negative dice lost due to taking damage in combat. The Charm slows mental processes, however, causing a loss of three dice to actions requiring thought, memory or excellent coordination.

## TERRESTRIAL CIRCLE SORcery

This Charm is a special one known only to sorcerers. The Charm is required in order to learn certain spells. Rinan's spells are listed below. Some spells take more than one turn to activate. In this case, if Rinan is attacked, his player must gain at least one success on a Wits + Occult roll (6 dice) for each health level of damage Rinan suffers. If the roll fails to gain enough successes, then the spell fails to activate, but Rinan still loses the points of Essence invested.

#### DEATH OF OBSIDIAN BUTTERFLIES

This Charm is a spell that calls forth a cascade of razor-sharp obsidian butterflies, which slash through the air in a pattern about 30 yards wide, 100 yards long and 10 yards high. This spell takes two turns to activate. When it activates, Rinan's player rolls seven dice with a bonus of three successes as an attack roll against everybody in the area of the spell. Opponents may parry or dodge as normal. Anyone who is struck by the spell takes 8L damage plus the remaining successes from the spell's attack roll. The spell requires 15 points of Essence to activate.

#### EMERALD COUNTERMAGIC

Wise sorcerers learn to dispel the magics of other sorcerers, and Rinan is no exception. This Charm is a spell that can be used two ways. First, Rinan may spend 1 Willpower point and 10 Essence points to protect himself against all sorcery spells of the Terrestrial Circle for one turn. Alternatively, he may spend 20 points of Essence and 1 Willpower point to destroy the effects of a sorcery spell within 150 feet.

#### THE EYE AND THE MOUTH

This Charm is a spell that requires two turns to activate. It summons a magical eye and mouth, which remain for 10 minutes to serve Rinan. The eye can read any text, and the mouth can translate it. The spell costs 15 points of Essence.

#### INVULNERABLE SKIN OF BRONZE

This Charm is a spell that requires two turns to activate. This means Rinan must take each of his actions for two turns to work the spell. He spends 20 points of Essence and 1 point of Willpower to harden his skin. Doing so grants him a bonus of +6 soak against lethal damage and +12 soak against hashing damage.

This is a short encounter meant to give the group its first taste of a quick, simple combat. The two have little to offer a victor but a few coins of the Guild and the long knives that nearly every sensible citizen of the Scavenger Lands carries. Normally, the bandits would have taken these, but they feared to anger the spirits of the dead, especially those already walking.

### ZOMBIE

**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, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Endurance 1, Melee 1, Presence 1, Resistance 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1

**Weapons:**

Fist: Speed 5 Accuracy 4 Damage 4L

Bite: Speed 3 Accuracy 5 Damage 5L

**Soak:** 1L/3B

**Willpower:** 10

**Health Levels:** -1 [ ]

-3 [ ]

Incapacitated [ ]

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Each turn, players of characters fighting zombies must roll Stamina + Resistance and achieve at least two successes, or their characters suffer -2 dice to all actions attempted during that turn due to the nauseating stench of the zombies.

As the Storyteller, you should run a combat with the characters and these two zombies. It is likely to be over soon, but think of it as an introduction to the system. The two zombies have the same Attributes and Abilities:

Kade's horse will rear and throw him off (assuming he is still riding it) if Kade's player does not succeed at a Strength + Athletics roll. If he falls from the horse, he takes one bashing level of damage. His horse will also flee from the zombies at full speed, with or without Kade. He can prevent this simply by using his Spirit-Steadying Assurance Charm, if the player thinks of this. After the combat ends, you are probably going to have to address what Kade does with his horse. Does he take it with them into the tunnel? Does he leave it behind?

Whatever happens with Kade's horse, the Circle's guide Little Shoe flees at the sight of the dead seeking vengeance. He took money from a beautiful woman to guide some heroes to the tomb; he didn't sign on to fight against the creatures of the Underworld. If the players insist upon stopping him, he fights to escape in utter fear. Use the statistics for the bandits included in the following if it becomes necessary to put represent Little Shoe in combat.

### THE GATE OF THE DEAD

After the combat ends, the characters will presumably want to investigate the entrance tunnel. When they are ready to do so, read this part to them.

#### Read this part aloud:

The earth here seems to have been excavated recently enough that none of the undergrowth has yet recovered. As you approach the tunnel running into the side of the hill, you readily see the remnants of a thick stone door, bolstered by finely carved



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granite pillars. The door is shattered into pieces, with strange black scars marring its once smooth surface. The rubble has been moved to either side of the tomb's entrance. As if it weren't obvious enough that someone had come here, you can hear muffled voices coming from within the tomb. The noonday sun reveals that the rubble continues for some distance into the dim tunnel ahead.

**Stop reading aloud.**

The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood was ultimately forced to blast the door open because she could not defeat the mechanism holding it shut. Players of characters examining the stones may make Perception + Lore rolls, and provided the players gain at least one success, their characters can be sure that a Charm was used to force the door (although they may have guessed this already). Three or more successes remind a character that he has heard stories of the Deathlord of Thorns using Charms of a similar nature.

**If the characters enter the tunnel, read this part aloud:**

The length of the tunnel is strewn with bits of broken statuary. It looks like somebody defaced the figurines lining the walls of the passageway and left the remains along both sides of the path. The figures were clearly dressed in armor, bearing swords and shields. Their appearance suggests that maybe they were symbolic guardians of the entrance. The tunnel grows dim as you move away from the entrance, but you can clearly see that there is light in whatever chamber lies ahead. The rough voices grow louder, apparently a band of men talking rudely in Riverspeak.

**Stop reading aloud.**

The tunnel runs for about 50 yards before reaching the central chamber. The broken statues were once magical guardians meant to deter tomb robbers. The rubble of the figurines is scared by the same Crypt Bolt energies the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood used to force the tomb entrance. The characters can hear voices from the chamber beyond, filtering down the tunnel. The voices are those of the bandits who stay in the central chamber of the tomb, at the Mistress' behest, and they are currently devouring lunch. Most of the commentary is complaints about the food or crude jokes. If the characters made incredible amounts of noise outside, then the bandits are readying for battle instead. If all of the characters proceed to the following chamber, then the bandits will surely attack whether they have to scramble for their weapons or they are waiting with anticipation. If Naria, or someone else, manages to sneak up the tunnel, you should describe what she sees, allowing the players to prepare.

### THE SUN CHAMBER

The center chamber is currently home to 12 brigands, whose makeshift bedrolls are littered all around. They are the remnants of Barrow Black's band, and some of them may even recognize the characters. They will react with fear, anger and hatred.

This central chamber allows a shaft of sunlight to come through the ceiling through some twisting, narrow tunnel that cunningly casts the light onto a stone table carved with symbols of the Unconquered Sun. Most of the room is lit by the beam. The white marble table is appropriately sized for a coffin or for the proper preparation of an honored cadaver (four feet wide by seven feet long). Currently, it is covered in dried bloodstains, of varying ages, though none more than a month old.

A lone, wide staircase extends from the floor of the chamber to a grand archway about five yards in the air. The characters do

not yet remember it, but this stairway and arch slide from one pair of pillars to another as the stonework rotates in order to allow entrance to a single chamber at a time. During the First Age, it was deemed important to be able to inter a new Solar Exalted without disturbing the resting places of the other members of the Circle. Currently, the stair extends to the Eclipse Chamber, wherein the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood rests, studying pillaged scripts and performing bloody necromantic rituals. When the characters enter battle with the bandits within the Sun Chamber, however, some accident will set off the rotation of the room's stairway, closing the alerted Mistress off from the central chamber and revealing the entryway to the Dawn Chamber instead. Fear not, the players are certain to search each of the chambers, as they do not yet know of the Mistress' presence. It is not necessary that the characters enter each of the chambers in order, but the device that moves the stair and arch will only reveal the entrance to one chamber at a time, and it does so in order.

**Read this part aloud if Naria sneaked ahead or if the characters enter the room:**

The chamber is a stunning room, easily 60 yards across with a domed ceiling. Sunlight comes through the pinnacle of the dome, illuminating the entire room, in no small part due to the fact that most of it is carved from glistening white marble. The beam of sunlight shoots straight down to a stone table in the center of the room, about four feet by seven feet in size, carved with symbols of the Unconquered Sun. The ceiling is blackened from smoke around the spot where the sunlight enters.

A stone staircase, perhaps 5 yards wide and 15 yards long begins with a pair of pillars to the right of the archway where the tunnel enters the central chamber and extends five yards into the air to meet an archway that is set into a band of granite that circles the room at that height. Five pairs of pillars encircle the table at the center of the room, each seemingly corresponding to an archway in the band of stone high on the curved wall of the chamber. The other four archways are closed and have no staircase leading to them.

Once, this chamber was a beautiful work of First Age glory. Now, it is the filthy den of a pack of bandits — indeed, the black hill and eye symbol stitched into their clothes identifies them as members of Barrow Black's bands. These are some of the same scum who escaped your Circle near Nexus, and their dirty bedrolls and greasy scraps of food lie everywhere.

**Stop reading aloud.**

**Read this part if the characters made a lot of noise earlier:**

There are about a dozen bandits. They have bows trained on the tunnel, and things are about to get ugly.

**Stop reading aloud.**

**Read this part if the characters were fairly quiet:**

There are about a dozen bandits lounging about eating game freshly cooked over the small fire they've started near the central table.

**Stop reading aloud.**

If the bandits are alerted by lots of noise, they are waiting with bows drawn. They can still lose initiative, however, and the players' characters are powerful heroes, so things are not as grim as they appear. The bandits will loose a volley of arrows the first turn (three for each of the players) and switch to their swords for the remainder of the battle.

If the bandits are only now aware of the characters' approach, they scramble to grab their swords as they leap into battle with the characters. Some players may try to speak to the bandits, in which case, they will carefully take that time to gather up their bows and loose a volley before joining battle. The brigands are aware of who they face and feel cornered in the chamber.

If Naria or any of the other characters sneak up the tunnel, they can launch an attack by surprise, and the bandits will be unable to attack during the first turn while the characters cut down part of their number.

If Kade activates his Dawn Caste anima power, you may choose to assume that six bandits attempt to flee if you don't feel like rolling out 12 Valor rolls. This assumes that some fail the roll and others simply choose to flee. The walking dead throughout the rest of the tomb are immune to Kade's Dawn Caste anima power, so this is his best chance to use it.

If more than half of the bandits fall in battle, the remainder will offer to surrender on the next turn. How the players choose to handle this is up to them.

Whatever the case, once battle is joined, read the following:

### Read this part aloud:

The bandits leap into action, surely seeking to kill you. One of them stumbles over the pot hanging above the fire, and it crashes into the top of a low altar at the head of the stone table. There is a grinding noise, and the stone staircase begins sliding to the left. There is a cry of surprise from the archway at the top of the stairway as it is closed off, and the stairway moves around the room until it settles between the pair of pillars beneath the archway clockwise from its previous position. The sounds of battle drown out the grinding even before it ceases.

### Stop reading aloud.

#### BANDIT

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

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

**Abilities:** Archery 1, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Bureaucracy 1, Larceny 1, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Performance 2, Presence 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2

#### Weapons:

Fist: Speed 6 Accuracy 4 Damage 2B

Kick: Speed 3 Accuracy 3 Damage 4B

Short Sword: Speed 6 Accuracy 6 Damage 4L Parry 6

Self Bow: Accuracy 4 Damage 4L Range 150

**Soak:** 3L/6B (Buff jacket)

**Willpower:** 5

**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.

The 12 bandits really are remnants of the bandit king Barrow Black's following. The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood conjured up their dead brigand lord and has been rebuilding his vagabond army. Other bands are off causing mischief along

various merchant roads or capturing more victims for the Mistress' experiments. Many of these men bear fresh scars from the Circle's war against them, and they crave vengeance. Nevertheless, they are not fearless automatons. The majority of the bandits are male, but their number includes a number of proud, tough women as well. Their Attributes and Abilities follow:

Assuming the characters defeat the bandits, the surviving ones will plead for mercy and the chance to depart alive. They will willingly leave behind any weapons, armor or other goods if necessary, although their greedy nature certainly suggests they will attempt to keep whatever they aren't explicitly forced to leave behind. Having been defeated, they are not likely to wait for the characters outside, though Storytellers wishing to add more encounters at the end of this adventure might have them do so.

If asked, a defeated bandit may explain to the Circle that the altar has a mechanism within it that causes the stairway to move from one of the chambers above to the next. None of them will reveal details of the Mistress, however, as they fear her beyond even death.

Characters who examine the altar may roll Intelligence + Lore to attempt to discern how the mechanism works. One success indicates that it takes 15 minutes to figure out the workings, three makes it one minute, and five successes indicates virtually immediate realization of how it works. The altar has a golden five-pointed star set into its top. A sundial arm extends upward from the altar, and causing the shadow of the arm to fall upon one of the caste symbols that surround the star causes the staircase to move to the appropriate chamber. The sundial arm turns clockwise only and clicks to a stop at each setting, while the granite band of the wall begins turning with the stairway to the next archway. After the battle, however, the characters are faced with the stairway leading to the Dawn Chamber.

### BEING ABLE TO SEE

The Sun Chamber is well lit, at least during the day, because the shaft of sunlight spills into it and reflect off the bright table below. Other chambers, however, are not so well lit. Unless they provide some sort of light source, characters suffer -1 die penalties to all actions requiring sight, including combat, while within any dim area. Shining one's anima on purpose by spending Essence will rid an area of any darkness, as might making a torch from the robbers' campfire.

### THE DAWN CHAMBER

The resting place of the past incarnation of the Dawn Caste, Kade, this tomb chamber is set up as a shrine to the fallen warrior of old. The Dragon-Blooded who slew his predecessor hoped to appease his spirit by honoring it thus. Included in his tomb were the bodies of his personal guard, also slain during the Usurpation. Though the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood never touched the Dawn Caste's corpse, she animated all of the other bodies using the arts of necromancy. The characters will face eight zombies of the ilk they met at the entrance and one tougher zombie bearing the weapons of the ancient Dawn Caste Exalted.

### Read this part aloud:

Seven alcoves are spread evenly around the room, in counterpoint to the corridor that led you here. Standing before you, in the entryway corridor, is an armored figure bearing a blade.

### Stop reading aloud.





If the characters examine the figure, they discover it is a standing corpse. If they attack it, then all of the zombies in the room spring into action, including the one laid upon the table. If they simply pass it by, then it will wait until they reach the sunken center part of the room to become active.

**Read this part aloud if the characters enter the chamber:**

This chamber is approximately 25 yards across with a sunken round section of floor set 12 inches or so lower and perhaps 15 yards across. At the center of this inner circle is a stone table similar to that found in the central chamber below. Upon the table rests a stone sarcophagus, ornately carved with gilded symbols of the Unconquered Sun and the Dawn Caste. Scenery of heroic battles covers the sarcophagus from head to toe.

**Stop reading aloud.**

**Read this part aloud if combat ensues:**

The eight figures spread around the room move suddenly toward you, dropping their weapons in their haste. The coffin in the center of the chamber opens, the lid smashing to the floor with a loud boom, while a man clad in golden armor, wielding a massive golden sword leaps from it to join the fray. **[TO THE PLAYER OF KADE]** Kade recognizes this man as his incarnation from his past life. He remembers flashes of himself wearing that armor and wielding that sword as though it were yesterday. Worse yet, these soldiers used to be his honor guard.

**Stop reading aloud.**

The eight zombies standing in the seven alcoves and the entryway are each identical in statistics to the two found with the wagon outside, except that you should increase their soak to 5 lethal and 5 bashing because they are wearing rusty breastplates. Even though they bear swords, they will drop these when they enter combat with the characters.

The final corpse is the one found within the coffin in the center of the room, and it springs from its coffin, the lid clattering to the floor, dressed in gold-plated armor and wielding a massive golden sword. The Mistress enchanted the other corpses in the room, but this one walks due to its own ghostly desire to protect its sanctity. She planned to use the walking corpses to raid the coffin but was disappointed to find that the eight zombies joined their Dawn Caste leader in defending the chamber, thwarting her command of them. As they seemed content to remain at rest unless harassed, she left them for later with the hopes she might use her Circle against them.

Remind Kade that the golden sword and armor are things that he remembers being his in his past life. Assuming the characters defeat the guardians of the room, Kade may wish to replace his current sword and armor with these artifacts. The sword is an artifact crafted of the magical golden material 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 millennia due to the chamber's funereal craft.

If Kade puts on the articulated plate armor, ask the player to increase his soak to 11 lethal, 13 bashing and 9 aggravated.

If Kade uses the sword, known as a reaver daiklave, ask the player to write its abilities on his sheet as follows — Reaver Daiklave: Speed 7 Accuracy 10 Damage 12L Parry 8. It costs him 5 points of Essence to wield the sword, which he cannot recover so long as he uses it.

### DAWN CASTE WALKING DEAD

**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, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Endurance 1, Melee 3, Presence 1, Resistance 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1

**Weapons:**

Fist: Speed 5 Accuracy 4 Damage 4L

Bite: Speed 3 Accuracy 5 Damage 5L

Reaver Daiklave: Speed 5 Accuracy 7 Damage 13L Parry 5

**Soak:** 10L/12B (Articulated plate)

**Willpower:** 10

**Health Levels:** -0 [ ] [ ]

-1 [ ] [ ] [ ]

-2 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

-4 [ ]

Incapacitated [ ]

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Each turn, players of characters fighting the dead Dawn Caste must roll Stamina + Resistance and achieve at least two successes, or their characters suffer -2 dice to all actions attempted during that turn due to the nauseating stench.

If the players have forgotten, you should probably remind them of the altar.

### THE ZENITH CHAMBER

Part chapel to the Unconquered Sun, part grave for the ancient Zenith member of the Circle, this room holds no threats to the Solars. Indeed, it makes the Mistress uncomfortable to even come here, and she plans to corrupt it if possible. Hopefully, the players will activate the altar in the central room and move the archway to open this chamber.

**Read this part aloud:**

This perfectly round chamber is approximately 25 yards across, and at its center stands a 15-foot-tall bronze statue of the Unconquered Sun. His four arms hold a lance, a gold-plated shield, a laurel branch and a horn. The statue stands over a white marble table containing a number of golden objects. The bronze laurel branch bears a dark scar similar to those you saw upon the tomb entrance stones.

**Stop reading aloud.**

Should any Exalted character place a corpse upon the table, she will be drained of 1 point of Essence, and the corpse will burn away as though she had used the Zenith Caste anima power listed on Morning Breeze's sheet.

None of the walking dead currently found within the tomb can enter this chamber. The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood hopes to create or find one potent enough to do so, but so far, she has had no success. She has even considered somehow trying to trick the Dawn Caste walking dead into entering the Zenith Chamber.

Should anyone try to harm the statue, she will take damage equal to that she causes to the statue. That was enough to dissuade the Mistress from continuing her attempts to destroy it for the time being.

If a Solar Exalted bows before the statue and prays, she will find 20 points of her Essence restored. Each character may only do this once per day. If the players don't think of having their characters pray to their patron, you might allow an Intelligence + Lore roll requiring at least three successes. This effect is a potent one, but it's one that would potentially anger the Unconquered Sun were it sought in the future — the chapel is inside of a tomb, after all.

**Read aloud when the characters come close enough to see what is on the table:**

Morning Breeze recognizes the items on the stone table. The first item is a finely crafted slashing sword, gilded with gold. The other two items are a pair of golden orichalcum bracers he remembers being as effective protection as a mighty tower shield. They rest upon a white silk robe covered in a thick pile of fine ash. **Stop reading aloud.**

The ash is the remains of Morning Breeze's ancient Zenith counterpart, cremated by the Zenith Caste anima power as he would have wished. Characters might recognize the remains as human ash with an Intelligence + Medicine roll scoring at least three successes.

The gold-filigreed slashing sword is not an artifact, but it is an exceptional weapon that's still in excellent condition. If Morning Breeze takes up his ancient sword, have the player add +1 Speed, +1 Accuracy and +1 Parry to the slashing sword entry on his sheet.

The bracers are artifacts made of the golden metal orichalcum. Worn as a pair, they protect Morning Breeze as if he were using a shield that protects him of its own accord, subtracting one success automatically from any melee attack made upon him and subtracting two successes automatically from any ranged attack (arrows, thrown knives) made against him. Wearing the bracers costs Morning Breeze 3 points of Essence that he cannot recover as long as he wears them.

There is also a simple wooden bowl, unmarked by the passage of ages. It is an ordinary alms bowl, preserved only by the tomb.

### THE TWILIGHT CHAMBER

This is the burial room for the First Age counterpart to Rinan, but that corpse is not here. Indeed, the coffin remains sealed, and Old Realm pictograms mark it as a symbolic one for a Twilight body lost to demons. A decorative bookshelf lies overturned, its meager library stolen by the Mistress.

**Read this part aloud:**

This round chamber is about 25 yards across. A half circle of the floor, 15 yards by about half that is sunken a foot or so into the floor. Resting at the heart of that half circle is a stone table bearing a gilded coffin deeply engraved with Old Realm symbols.

The half of the room closer to you is far more disturbing. An overturned bronze bookshelf sits to one side of the door, while the body of a massive bloody horse lies in the middle of the floor, surrounded by symbols written on the floor in blood. A gory bronze sacrificial blade lies nearby, while what appear to be straps of a bridle and harness seemingly bind numerous blood-stained blades to the horse's defiled corpse.

**Stop reading aloud.**

Provided the characters enter the room, the horse corpse struggles to its feet. The characters are probably not surprised by the corpse's action, by this time. The horse moves toward them, its heaving ribs moving the bristling blades to and fro as it moves to attack.



Exalted



### WALKING WAR MACHINE

**Attributes:** Strength 4, 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, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Endurance 1, Melee 2, Presence 1, Resistance 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1

**Weapons:**

Harness Sideswipe: Speed 7 Accuracy 5 Damage 7L Parry 5

**Soak:** 1L/2B (Hide skin)

**Willpower:** 10

**Health Levels:** -0 [ ][ ][ ][ ]

-1 [ ][ ][ ][ ]

-2 [ ][ ][ ][ ]

Incapacitated [ ]

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** The war machine can sense the invisible barrier described below and takes it into account. If Kade uses his Master Horseman's Eye Charm, he sees a weakness in the beast's construction, and every blow he strikes he rolls twice as many damage dice against this beast alone.

An invisible barrier of Essence, which provides a nearly impenetrable defense for the Twilight's coffin, surrounds the lower half of the room. The only thing the characters have which can pierce it is Rinan's Emerald Countermagic spell. Emerald Countermagic instantly destroys the barrier permanently. If Rinan has no Essence left, you might be kind and let him recover more Essence from the statue in the Zenith Chamber. Alternatively, you might make the sacrificial dagger capable of piercing the barrier so that a character might throw it at the coffin, breaking the seals that keep the barrier intact.

The bronze bookshelf is empty and appears dented. The Mistress tried to throw it through the barrier without success. She didn't try the dagger, as she planned to use it in the creation of the war machine.

If the characters get past the invisible barrier, they may approach the coffin. Its symbols may be easily read with Rinan's the Eye and the Mouth spell, or Rinan's player can roll Intelligence + Linguistics for the Twilight to interpret the arcane dialect of the Old Realm language.

The coffin reads as follows:

"No hero lies within this vessel, for she was taken to Hell by the demons of the Yozi. Know that the creature within is a liar. Do not release that which you can not put down."

If the characters used the sacrificial dagger to enter the barrier, then the coffin's seal is already broken. If the characters open the coffin, read this:

#### Read this part aloud:

Lifting the heavy lid and moving it aside, you are greeted by the sight of a stunningly beautiful woman with shimmering blond hair wearing a silk robe embroidered with Old Realm symbols and a golden tiara set upon her brow.

Her image flickers for a moment, turning utterly black in shade, and then vanishes. The robe settles empty to the bottom of the coffin, and the tiara clinks as it tips over as well. Your nostrils are greeted with the odor of copper and blood.

#### Stop reading aloud.

Rinan's Twilight predecessor fell prey to a demon, who killed her and took her place. When the Dragon-Blooded came to slay the vile Anathema, they were unwittingly more right

than they knew in this case. They wounded the demon until it sank into a deathsleep, and then, they entombed it, never knowing it wasn't one of the Solars. Now, it has escaped, either returning to Hell or waiting for you to use it in future stories.

The robe is not an artifact, being of simple silk kept unspoiled by the tomb. Nonetheless, the symbols woven into it might someday yield the secrets of a new spell should your players continue to play the same characters.

The tiara is an artifact crafted of the magical golden metal called orichalcum. Rinan recalls that it once belonged to him in his prior incarnation. It has an empty setting in the front that is perfectly sized for the Hearthstone he carries. Wearing the dragon tear tiara costs Rinan 2 points of Essence. The circlet gives Rinan's player +1 die to any Perception rolls he has to make or +3 dice to Perception rolls related to spirits or the occult.

If Rinan puts his Hearthstone into the setting, it will shine forth with power and act as a windhands gemstone. This jewel lets Rinan to parry or dodge arrows or thrown weapons without taking an action to do so. Rinan gets 4 dice to dodge, so this is usually his better option.

### THE NIGHT CHAMBER

This room serves as the tomb of the fallen Night Caste. The corpse here has not been animated because the Mistress hasn't yet disabled all of the traps.

#### Read this part aloud:

This chamber is about 25 yards across and circular. The center 15 yards of the room are set about one foot deeper than the floor upon which you stand. There is a stone table in the center of the room upon which rests a gilt stone coffin.

An ominous bloodstain covers the floor just inside of the nearest edge of the sunken area. One edge of the dried pool is oddly squared off.

#### Stop reading aloud.

Get the players to roll Perception + Larceny for their characters. Whoever gets the most successes, likely Naria, can deduce that there is some sort of trap set into the floor, even if the players didn't think of this.

With a successful Strength + Athletics roll, Naria could leap to the table at the center, without touching the sunken floor.

Anyone stepping on the floor is automatically attacked by shining yellow darts made of Essence that spring from the edges of the raised floor to strike at his feet and legs. This attack is made with three dice, and a character may choose to dodge as normal. A bolt will do 3L damage and then fade away — or strike a wall and fade away should it miss. Unfortunately for the target, if her dodge doesn't involve her getting off the floor she will simply be targeted again with each step she takes that touches the floor. Running across the floor should count as about seven steps, each of which invokes an attack that may be dodged. Standing still results in being attacked once per turn without mercy.

Within the coffin lies the body of the Naria's predecessor. His once-lithe form is desiccated and mummified, cradling a golden bow and a handful of arrows to his chest.

The bow is made of the magical golden metal known as orichalcum, and Naria recognizes it as hers from a prior life. If she arms herself with it, have her replace the bow on her sheet with the following — Short Powerbow: Accuracy 13 Damage



8L Range 300. The arrows are 12 normal broadhead arrows, albeit filigreed with gold and preserved by the tomb.

### THE ECLIPSE CHAMBER

The potential final conflict of the story. Herein, the characters have unwittingly trapped the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood. When the moving stair finally settles upon this chamber, she is quick to emerge from the archway to engage the Circle from the top of the stair for fear of being trapped there. She is bloated upon the blood Essence of locals gone missing and will be a dangerous foe.

#### Read this part aloud:

As the grinding movement of the stairway comes to a stop, two figures rush from the archway to stand at the top of the stair as though they had been waiting for release. Each brings you joy and sorrow in its own fashion.

On the left hand side stands the rippling ghostly form of the bandit king Barrow Black, whom your Circle so recently defeated. He bears a great black bow with tendrils of smoke swirling about its length. You are not glad to see his return but surely thirst to put him finally to rest.

On the right hand side stands a beautiful woman with dark hair and a white robe hanging loosely over her cunningly curved armor. Your spirits soar for a moment as you recognize the final member of your Circle, but your hearts immediately sink as the Underworld artistry of her armor suggest that all of this bloodshed and foul play must surely be her doing. A Deathlord must have somehow corrupted her.

#### Stop reading aloud.

How this plays out depends largely upon the players and on your desires. If the players seem willing to talk to her, she will likely seek to escape. The Mistress is powerful, but she is no fool. She knows very well that four heavily armed Solars are likely to exceed her own might, and the wreckage below stands as mute testimony to the Circle's violence. If the characters speak to her, have her try to convince them to let her leave. She will even offer to trade her name (or rather title, since she gave her name to the Abyss) and her weapons for their oath that they will not harm her. Characters should be careful how they word this agreement because she has the power to enforce this oath (see her Moonshadow Caste anima power below).

If the characters act as though combat is inevitable, she will angrily raise her left hand into the air, as Barrow Black begins firing arrows at the characters. Barrow Black will stick to archery unless forced into melee combat with his axe. If he is Incapacitated, he will fade away into the Underworld.

What the characters don't know is that she is trying to summon her magical soulsteel blade from the Void, but something about the tomb keeps her from reaching it. Instead, she tries to steal one of the character's weapons using the Thieving Raiton Claws Charm (see below). Then, she rains Crypt Bolts (also see below) upon the characters until such time as she is forced into melee combat. If the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood is pushed into combat, she is too arrogant to surrender. She will fight to the death, believing that her spirit will simply reform in the Underworld.

If the characters defeat the Mistress and Barrow Black, the ghost fades away, while the corrupted former Eclipse







falls in battle. She croaks a threat to return through her blood-specked lips and looks beautiful even in death.

Her armor is articulated plate, fitted to her specific dimensions. It might fit Naria, loosely, with modifications, but the Night Caste isn't likely to want to wear such heavy gear. No further hindrances lie between the characters and the final chamber.

#### Read this part aloud:

This chamber of the tomb is about 25 yards across, with a band of the floor that runs from five yards to ten yards from the wall set one foot lower. The center of the room is a five-yard-across "island" of floor at the same height as that on which you stand, thus forming the symbol of the Eclipse Caste. Scattered the edges of the room are various carved bones and bloodstains. On the center platform is a bed made of furs with open tomes resting upon it. The sunken area of the floor is clean of any carnage, but a number of wooden chests sit upon it.

#### Stop reading aloud.

Within the chamber, the tomes of the Twilight are to be found, albeit they are primarily ceremonial texts meant to accompany the dead to the Far Shore. Two of them are known as *The Black Treatise* and *The White Treatise*. Ironically, they were of greater use to the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood this lifetime than they were to the Twilight in First Age. There is also an unfinished letter the Mistress was busy writing to her Deathlord master, the Mask of Winters, which sort of proves she is a corrupted Eclipse because she mentions that her plan to capture and corrupt the Circle seems to be progressing well.

#### BARROW BLACK, GHOSTLY BANDIT KING

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

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

**Abilities:** Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Endurance 1, Larceny 1, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Presence 3, Resistance 1, Socialize 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

#### Weapons:

Axe: Speed 5 Accuracy 5 Damage 8L Parry 5

Self Bow: Accuracy 5 Damage 5L Range 150

**Soak:** 7L/10B (Chain hauberk)

**Willpower:** 6

**Health Levels:** -0 [ ]

-1 [ ] [ ]

-2 [ ] [ ] [ ]

-4 [ ]

Incapacitated [ ]

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Barrow Black will dematerialize should the combat go poorly. He can't use this as a combat maneuver because it costs him enough Essence that he won't be back anytime soon should he choose to do so. All of Barrow Black's weapons and armor either disappear with him or slowly burn away in the sunlight.

## MISTRESS OF PACTS SEALED IN BLOOD, CORRUPTED FORMER ECLIPSE

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 2, Awareness 1, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 3, Endurance 1, Linguistics 2, Lore 2, Martial Arts 1, Melee 3, Occult 3, Performance 2, Ride 2, Socialize 3, Survival 2

#### Weapons:

Slashing Sword (Morning Breeze's exceptional sword or that of a bandit if necessary): Speed 10 Accuracy 8 Damage 5L Parry 8

Fist: Speed 6 Accuracy 4 Damage 3B

**Soak:** 10L/12B (Articulated plate)

**Willpower:** 6

**Health Levels:** -0 [ ]

-1 [ ] [ ] [ ]

-2 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

-4 [ ]

Incapacitated [ ]

**Essence:** 3

**Essence Points:** 71

**Other Notes:** As the Mistress uses her Charms, she is surrounded by strange black energies, and the circular Caste Mark on her forehead bleeds. Describe this to the players because it is a cool visual of her power in action and because it emphasizes that she has become an opposite to the Solars.

## CHARMS

The Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood has a number of Charms that make her a formidable enemy. Some of them the players have likely already encountered and didn't know it.

### MOONSHADOW CASTE ANIMA POWER

By touching the hand of someone who is making a promise, the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood can spend 10 points of Essence and cause that promise to be enforced by the masters of the Underworld. Whatever the exact words of the promise, if one of those who made the promise breaks his word, then a curse befalls the oathbreaker, and the next three actions he attempts, including attack rolls, automatically botch (see the rules earlier on botching) causing terrible accidents for the dishonorable one.

### CRYPT BOLT

This Charm sends a bolt of crackling darkness up to 30 yards from the Mistress to strike a single foe. She spends 5 points of Essence, and the Storyteller rolls eight dice to hit with the ranged attack. Characters may dodge the bolt as normal but cannot parry it. If the bolt hits, it does 10 lethal dice of damage plus the remaining successes from the attack. This is a very dangerous attack, and she used it to great effect when breaking into the tomb.

### ESSENCE ENGORGEMENT TECHNIQUE

This Charm allows the Mistress to gain Essence from drinking the blood of others. It is already reflected in her high Essence points.

### FIVE SHADOW FEINT

This Charm causes her weapon and arm to flicker with confusing shadows allowing the Mistress to reduce the dodge or parry dice of an opponent by one die per point of Essence she spends while attacking her target. She cannot reduce a target below his permanent Essence in dice, which is 3 for all of the characters except Kade, who could be reduced to 2.

### FLUTTERING MOTH DEFENSE

For 2 points of Essence, the Mistress can make a parry at her full parry dice pool without using her action for the turn. As usual, she cannot use any other Charm the same turn she employs this one, but she can use this Charm more than once in a turn in order to parry more than one blow.

### FURIOUS BLADE

Provided she has a weapon, the Mistress can invest the blade with roiling darkness that grants her +1 die to her attack roll per point of Essence she spends. She cannot use this Charm to add more than 12 dice to her attack.

### OX-BODY TECHNIQUE

This Charm gives the Mistress extra health levels. They are already included above.

### PASSION-UNVEILING GLANCE

This Charm allows the Mistress to perceive the flickering aura of emotion overlaying her target. She is not likely to use it unless the characters talk to her and agree to let her leave, in which case she activates it quietly, spending 3 points of Essence, in order to sense the emotions of the main speaker. If he seems treacherous, she will not deliver up her weapons and will, instead, begin fighting immediately. Roll six dice, and provided you score at least one success, ask the players whether they intend to keep their part of the bargain. If they lie to you and attack her, don't worry about it — just assume she failed — but do at least make it seem as though she can tell, and hope they are honest with you.

### THIEVING RAITON CLAWS

Because her own weapon lies beyond her reach in the Underworld, the Mistress will likely try to use this Charm to summon that of one of the characters. The Charm cannot affect

magical weapons, though it may affect those that are exceptional. Providing the characters went through all of the chambers, it is likely that only Morning Breeze has a high-quality non-magical weapon, in the form of the exceptional slashing sword. Spotting its golden hue but lack of artifact size, the Mistress can spend 3 points of Essence, and the Storyteller then rolls six dice. If she garners at least three successes, then Morning Breeze's weapon flies through the air to her hand, as Morning Breeze starts with surprise. If he did not yet gain that sword, then assume she recognizes a fine blade held by one of the fallen bandits and grabs that instead. The monk can fight very well without a blade, and he may still have his original slashing sword if he kept it.

### UNFURLING IRON LOTUS

For 9 points of Essence, the Mistress can greatly increase her speed and attack four times in a single turn with a blade. Each attack must be parried or dodged separately, and a single target faced with more than one attack can only do so if he has an appropriate Charm.

### SHADOWLANDS CIRCLE NECROMANCY

This allows the Mistress to learn necromancy spells. Those spells important to this story are listed below. Her spells take her two turns to activate, just like Rinan's. In this case, if the Mistress is attacked, the Storyteller must roll at least one success on a Wits + Occult roll (six dice) for each health level of damage she suffers. If she fails to gain enough successes, then the spell fails to activate, but she still loses the points of Essence invested.

### RAISE THE SKELETAL HORDE

This spell takes two turns and 1 Willpower point to activate. Each 3 points of Essence she spends animates one dead body, turning it into a zombie. If the characters don't press the attack swiftly enough, and you think she has time, she can use this to animate the dead bandits in the central chamber, if the characters left them there. This is one of the spells she used to create various walking dead in the complex. It is not precisely the same as the Charm she used to create the walking war machine, but that is not something she could currently use during combat anyway.

During the course of finishing this adventure, each character has been presented with the chance to gain an Artifact of 2 dots rating. In the chests is a wealth of silver and jade coins taken from Barrow Black's bandits, equivalent to enough to make one 5 dot purchase (or multiple lesser purchases) for each character once they return to Nexus.

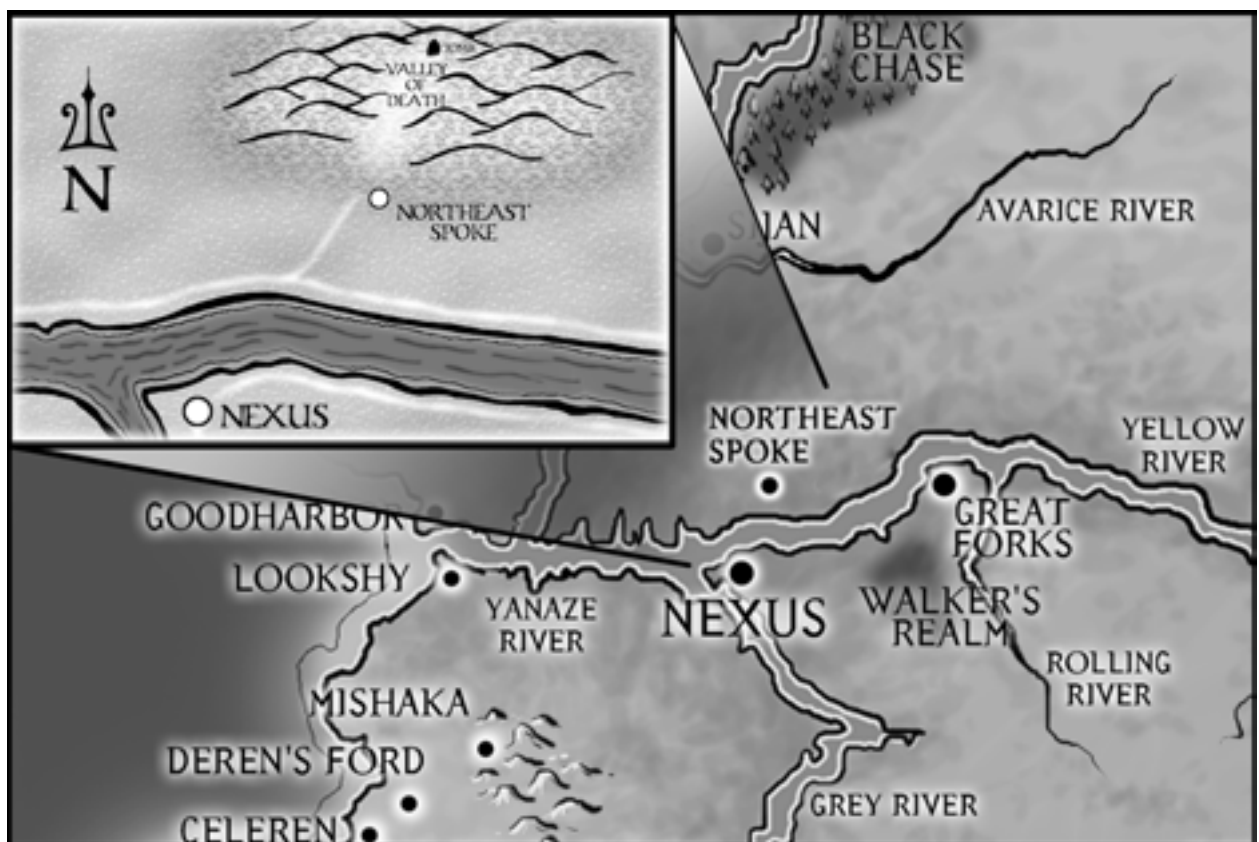
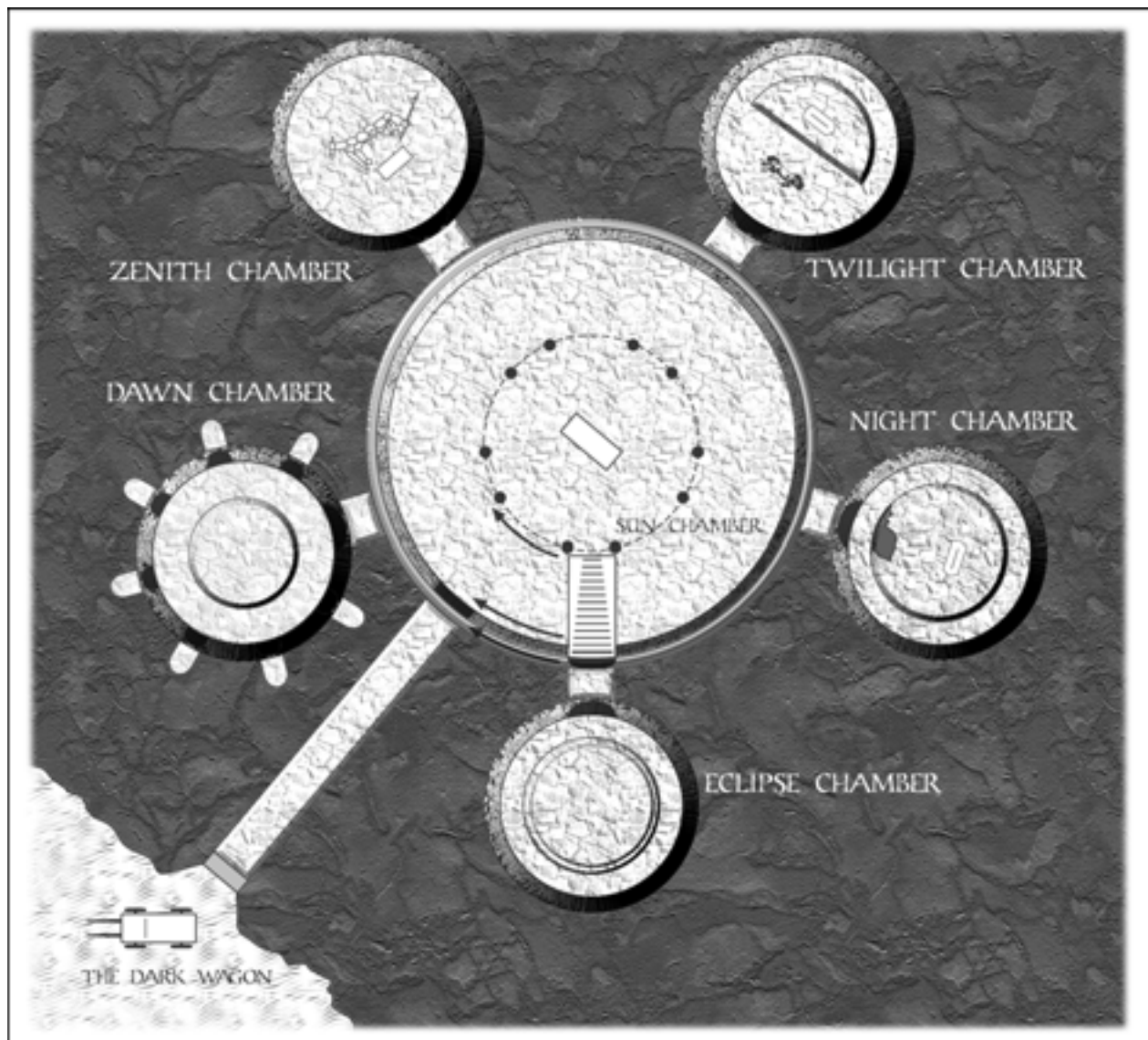
### THE HEROES RETURN

#### Read this part aloud, assuming the characters survive:

Your victorious Circle emerges from the tomb and heads back to Northeast Spoke to gain provisions. A shepherd has already arrived with tales of the heroes entering the tomb, and villagers gather round to hear the heroes speak. What legends do you tell of your deeds?

**Stop reading aloud.**

What happens now is up to you, the Storyteller, and the desires of your players. You can always make up more stories on your own, and the **Exalted** rulebook has tons of advice on how to do so. Many mysteries await discovery by the characters. Is Barrow Black finally dead? What of the Mistress of Pacts Sealed in Blood? Is her belief true or close to the truth? Now that he has awakened the Hearthstone, what other uses might Rinan gain from his mother's Manse of power? Will being armed with a greater weapon help Naria atone for her past misdeeds or drag her further into violence? Will Kade use his money to build a band of mercenaries again? What wisdom has Morning Breeze gained from the house of the dead?



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