

A FALLEN AGE

Being a redesign “from the ground up” of the Exalted Roleplaying game which employs the same basic system concepts but differs in some notable ways.

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Dedicated to the memory of Matthew “Smithers” Smith.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Exalted 2nd Edition System by White Wolf has many wonderful features. It also has many flaws which become apparent after extended play (and some which become apparent almost immediately). Some of these flaws are so fundamental to the system that a “patching approach” which gradually attempts to fix the system doesn’t appear to work properly. For that reason the goal of this project is to create a new modified version of the Exalted System which keeps the core features of the system, but fixes some of the many flaws.

With that in mind there are no sacred cows here (except the Sacred Cattle of Ahlat, obviously). Every element of the official Exalted system is subject to consideration before inclusion.

Chapter 2

Mortal Character Generation

Unlike the official Exalted System *A Fallen Age* does not have characters created fully formed as Exalts. Instead it takes a leaf from the *A World of Darkness* games (also published by White Wolf) and requires that all characters be created as mortals first and then have “templates” applied to turn them into whatever type of character they will eventually be.

Mortals come in three types:

- **Extras:** Have no Motivation (or no Motivation which would have any effect on the game). They are faceless (and usually nameless) masses who’s purpose is to provide mobile scenery in someone else’s story. They have their own simplified rules which will be explained later on p.??.
- **Ordinary Mortals:** Compose the majority of the named and communicative population with whom a player character might interact. Ordinary mortals have a Motivation and associated Goals, but their motivation is always simple and mundane. They are rarely exceptionally skilled or talented since they rarely have a good enough reason to become so. Unlike Extras they are fully realised (if somewhat boring) characters who use the full character creation rules in this chapter.
- **Heroic Mortals:** Compose a small percentage (maybe 1%) of the mortal population. They have an Heroic Motivation and associated Heroic Goals. They are usually exceptional in some way, and often very driven. Mortal leaders, wise-men, and rebels are usually Heroic, and they form the basic characters upon which supernatural “templates” are layered when making God-blooded, Enlightened Mortals and Exalts.

2.1 Motivation, Goals, and Concept

The first step in creating a character in *A Fallen Age* is to choose a Motivation. A Motivation is an overarching goal which drives the character's entire life. Most Motivations are unachievable, or at least should appear so to the character. They are an ideal which drives the character's choices rather than a specific achievable goal. Some examples of ordinary and heroic motivations are listed below:

- Be the best farmer in the village
- Become as rich as possible
- Write love poetry
- Keep the village safe from monsters
- Serve a particular god/demon/king/country/ideal (possibly Heroic)
- Wipe out all the monsters (Heroic)
- Destroy all Shadowlands (Heroic)
- Conquer the World (Heroic)
- Defeat the Primordials (Heroic)
- Reunite the World (Heroic)
- Make the world safe (Heroic)
- Destroy Heaven (Heroic)
- Restore the Primordials (Heroic)
- Win and Keep the love of a particular person (possibly Heroic)
- End hunger (Heroic)
- Destroy the World (Heroic)
- End the Slave Trade (Heroic)
- Surpass all human limitations (Heroic)
- Go beyond the Impossible! Kick Reason to the Curb! (Heroic)
- Kill everyone (Heroic)
- Avenge my husband's death (possibly Heroic)
- Defeat all my Enemies (Heroic)

Characters gain mechanical bonuses for acting in line with their motivation and receive some protection from being persuaded to act against their motivation. Completing one's

motivation, however, is a very bad thing. A character's motivation is her main means for regaining **Willpower**, an important tactical resource in play and a measure of a character's will and the strength of her character – a character who loses the ability to regain willpower through her motivation must find other ways to replenish it – and such ways are rarely healthy (see **Limit Breaks and Debauchery** p.??). Gaining a new motivation when one has been completed is extremely difficult, even for the mightiest of the Exalted.

As well as a motivation, which describes a character's overall personal ideals, a character also has at any one time a **Goal**, which represents what she is currently trying to achieve. A goal should be achievable within the span of about one to three sessions of play, and should be directly linked to the character's motivation. A character whose motivation was to be the best farmer in the village might have a goal of ensuring that his harvest comes in faster than his next-door-neighbour. A character whose motivation was to win and keep the love of the princess of the next kingdom over might have as a goal defeating a mutant boar which had been harassing the local villages, because the king had promised to raise anyone who did so to the nobility (which would bring her one step closer to her beloved). A character whose motivation was to defeat all of the Primordials might have a goal of killing the defining soul of The-Void-Which-Binds.

Unlike a motivation a goal does not provide benefits from simply acting in line with it (though since it should be in line with motivation the benefits for acting in line with motivation will likely apply). Instead a goal grants the character certain mechanical benefits when she completes it. Completing goals is a good way to gain power and progress in *A Fallen Age*. A goal may also be swapped out for a different goal at any time, though doing so takes a scene of personal doubt and soul-searching (which does not count towards other progression) and should not be done lightly (see **Progress through Play** p.12).

Write your Motivation and your First Goal in the spaces provided on the character sheet. Note whether the character is Ordinary or Heroic.

2.2 Attributes

Unlike in *Exalted* and *A World of Darkness* each mortal character in *A Fallen Age* has six attributes each rated between ●○○○○ and ●●●●●. Non-mortal characters may sometimes have attributes which range as high as ●●●●● ●●●●●. The six attributes are separated into three categories: Physical, Social, and Mental, and within each category one attribute represents Power, and one Finesse. The attributes are:

- **Strength:** (Physical Power)
- **Dexterity:** (Physical Finesse)

- **Charisma:** (Social Power)
- **Manipulation:** (Social Finesse)
- **Intelligence:** (Mental Power)
- **Wits:** (Mental Finesse)

These descriptions are relatively self-explanatory. I note that unlike in *Exalted*, in *A Fallen Age* Appearance is not an attribute. In some ways I regret this as I like the effects of Appearance as an Attribute, however I was unable to think of a good way to make it work properly as one, and decided to go instead with the *A World of Darkness* concept of Power, Finesse, and Resilience attributes for each category.

Choose one of the three Attribute Categories to be your primary Category. Choose another to be your Secondary. The remaining one is your tertiary category. Divide 3/2/2 dots amongst the attributes, with all attributes automatically starting at ●○○○○.

If the character is Heroic then instead divide 4/3/2 amongst them.

2.3 Abilities

Unlike in *Exalted* in *A Fallen Age* there are not 25, but 15 abilities. Each is rated between ○○○○○ and ●●●●●. These abilities are:

- **Athletics:** (⌘ ■)
- **Awareness:** (⌘ ■ ♡)
- **Bureaucracy:** (♠♠)
- **Craft:** (⊕)
- **Crime:** (■)
- **Lore:** (⊕)
- **Melee:** (⌘)
- **Oratory:** (♡)
- **Persuasion:** (♡)
- **Resistance:**
- **Politics:** (♠) Covers understanding people and groups, not just high-level diplomacy.
- **Ranged:** (⌘)

- **Stealth:** (■ ✕)
- **Voyaging:** (♠♠ ✕) (includes Medicine)
- **War:** (✕)

Where ✕ means that the ability is useful in combat, ✕ means it is useful in mass combat, ♠ means that it is useful in debate, ♠♠ means that it is useful for social engineering, ⊕ means that it is useful for magical science, and ■ means it is useful for infiltration and exfiltration.

Distribute 15 points between the abilities, all starting at ○○○○○.

If the character is Heroic then choose one ability to be favoured and instead distribute 20 points amongst your abilities. The chosen favoured ability must be at least as high as the highest of your other abilities.

No ability may be raised above ●●●○○ at this point, except for the favoured ability which may go as high as ●●●●○.

2.3.1 Specialties

Specialties are extra bonuses for particular abilities which apply in specific situations. No character may ever have more than twice as many dots in specialties for an ability as he has dots in that ability, and no single roll may ever benefit from more than three dots of specialty. Specialties which apply when using a particular type of equipment (such as a melee specialty in “swords”) are limited to going no higher than ●○○○○. Specialties which apply in situations must be in relative narrow situations compared to when the ability can be used: “in combat” is not a valid specialty for Melee, but is a valid specialty for Athletics. Appropriate specialties may be used when calculating static values such as DVs.

One last note: “When following my motivation” is never a valid specialty, “when channelling a virtue” always is.

2.4 Backgrounds

Backgrounds in *A Fallen Age*, much like in *Exalted*, are used to represent various traits which a character can have other than innate capabilities and learned skills. In particular they are often used to represent possessions, relationships, and connections. These abstract “social” advantages can often be every bit as effective in play as being a better speaker or a better shot with a bow.

Some backgrounds may be purchased several times independently. In this case the same background may appear multiple times on the character sheet. In addition some backgrounds may be purchased at the ○○○○○ level. This costs nothing, and provides only minor background and style benefits. A character may not have more copies of a single ○○○○○ level background than his rating in the governing trait, which will be listed in the description of the background.

Some backgrounds may also be purchased beyond the usual ●●●●● limit. This is a special situation and is dealt with further down. ●●●●● ●○○○○ through ●●●●● ●●●●● backgrounds are not available to mortal characters, but some supernatural templates provide bonus dots in particular backgrounds which can raise the level of the background this high.

Several Backgrounds are available to all characters in the *A Fallen Age* game:

- **Allies:** Represent people who owe you a favour. They can be called upon to do something for you from time to time, but not very often. The GM is also encouraged to have the Ally occasionally ask the PC for a favour.

- Extra (Limited to no more than **Charisma**).
- Heroic Mortal
- Dragonblood
- Celestial Exalt
-
-

The ratings above are for starting characters, a more powerful character is one to two dots higher (Celestial Circle Sorcerers are one dot more expensive, Solar Circle Sorcerers are two dots more expensive), as is an extremely influential character. For example Harmonious Jade is a standard ●●●○○ Solar Ally, V'Neef is a ●●●●○ Dragonblooded Ally, One of the leading mortal council-members in House Nelens is a ●●●○○ Mortal Ally, Mnemon would be a ●●●●● Dragonblooded Ally, and Raksi is a ●●●●● ●○○○○ Lunar Ally. For the record Chejop Kejak would be a ●●●●● ●●○○○ ally (as would the First and Forsaken Lion), Venus would be a ●●●●● ●●●○○, the Unconquered Sun would be ●●●●● ●●●●○, and ●●●●● ●●●●● is reserved for entities such as a free living Primordial eg. Gaia or Authothon.

This assumes your game is set in Creation. If it's set elsewhere these power levels can be adjusted up and down as appropriate.

- **Appearance:** Represents a stunning or distinctive physical appearance. Often, though not necessarily, a particularly attractive appearance. It provides a good key in helping to visualise the character, and also provides a pool of extra successes which can be spent to boost the raw effectiveness of any "point" in debate which would naturally benefit from that type of appearance. In general these are only points designed to create Passion-type influences or made in support of an Agenda

which includes the creation of Passion-type Intimacies.

- An ordinary mundane appearance.
- Good looking, slightly intimidating, an honest face, etc ...
- Striking good or bad looks, an easily forgettable face, elemental colouration, etc ...
- Extremely attractive features, a face partly burned, Green skin, etc ...
- Gorgeous or hideous almost beyond human capability, flaming eyes, rows of sharp teeth, etc ...
- Heart-stoppingly beautiful or mind-rendingly ugly, a face half-gnawed by maggots, skin like a walking statue's, etc ...

- **Backing:** Represents holding a rank and influence within an organisation. For a Kingdom in the Hundred Kingdoms, a minor Province in the Realm, or something of comparable size:

- Member of the organisation.
- Junior Management
- Senior Management
- One of the rulers of the organisation
- Supreme ruler of the organisation if the organisation has one, many don't. There are still limits on your power to some extent.
- God-King. Beyond any kind of purely temporal ruler.

This is modified by the scope which the organisation has, and the level of power the organisation has within its scope. Covering an area about the size of a direction is +1, covering an area about the size of Creation is +2. By default the organisation is influential but not executive, being part of the executive process (such as a Great House, the Realm Deliberative, etc ...) gives +1, being the supreme executive within the scope is at +2 – not all entities have this, a +3 level exists for entities with incredible and overwhelming supernatural power – such as Yu Shan.

- **Contacts:** This background provides a network of informants who provide information.

Needs more.

- **Familiar:** Represents not simply a pet or an animal which is owned by the character, but an animal of unusual intelligence and loyalty which has some a magical bond directly to the character. Except for a ○○○○○ level familiar all familiars have certain capabilities:

- All are at least as intelligent as a five-year-old child, though normally without the ability to speak (and often with somewhat more emotional maturity).

- All are absolutely loyal to the character, prepared to lay down their life for his benefit if needs be.
 - Any Familiar is always aware of which direction its master lies in, and if separated will attempt to rejoin him by whatever means of travel it is capable of employing.
 - Any Familiar is always immediately aware if its master is injured, sick, or emotionally distressed. It may attempt to express this information to others in any way it sees fit.
- An ordinary pet. Limited by Charisma.
 - A small animal such as a dog or a cat with the above listed capabilities.
 - A large animal such as a Horse or a Tiger, or a particularly intelligent smaller creature with Mental attributes on par with those of an ordinary mortal.
 - A large animal with exceptional mental attributes, or a smaller creature with exceptional intelligence which also provide a supernatural capability such as the sharing of senses.
 - A godblooded animal such as a pony or a wolf with enlightened essence and charms. Or a similar creature of equivalent power.
 - An extremely potent creature such as a five tonne god-blooded rhino with its own charms and artifacts capable of full human intelligence and instant telepathic conversation with its master.
- **Followers:** As per *Exalted* p.112.
 - **Mentor:** A mentor is rather similar to an ally in many ways, however rather than owing you favours they are willing to teach you things or provide you with equipment and authorisation. A Mentor costs one dot less than the same character as an Ally. They still require you to do favours for them occasionally much as an ally does.
 - **Resources:** The descriptions for the various levels of this background are kind of wrong, the rules work differently, see the Social Engineering system p.32.
 - **Languages:** The character can speak multiple languages. There are a number of language families in Creation, one for each threshold direction, Rivertongue in the the Scavenger Lands, and Realm in the centre. As well as these exoteric language families there are several esoteric and arcane languages – the most well known being Old Realm, and High Holy Speech.

- The character speaks his own local dialect.
- The character knows languages from two groups.
- The character knows languages from three groups.
- The character knows languages from four groups.
- The character knows languages from five groups.
- The character knows languages from six groups. For all practical purposes the character can be assumed to know every language they will encounter.

All languages in the same family are considered mutually comprehensible – with some practice.

Other backgrounds may be available to certain types of characters and will be detailed later.

Distribute 5 dots amongst the various backgrounds.

Heroic characters gain an additional 2 dots of backgrounds.

No Background may be raised above ●●●○○ at this point.

2.5 Virtues and Intimacies

Exactly as in *Exalted* there are four virtues in *A Fallen Age*. They have the same names and descriptions, and serve much the same purpose in play. Each virtue is rated between ○○○○○ and ●●●●●. Unlike other traits virtues can never be rated higher than ●●●●●.

After choosing Virtues a character needs to select Intimacies. These are personality traits defined in a more fine-grained manner than the extremely broad strokes of the Motivation, Goal, and Virtues. Intimacies are grouped into four categories, one for each of the virtues:

- **Compassion – Passions:** These are strong emotional ties: love, hate, lust, pity, etc. . . . They are often focused on a person or a place, and never on an ideal – though when a person is seen to embody an ideal it can get murky.
- **Conviction – Beliefs:** These are strongly held personal ideals. They affect the way that a character sees the world and control the ways in which she can interact with it. They are targeted towards ideals and ideas rather than individuals or organisations – but as with all of these things this can get murky.
- **Temperance – Taboos:** These are strong restrictions on behaviour. If a personality trait can be expressed as an unwillingness to behave in a particular way then it is a taboo. Examples include abstinence from some (or all) worldly pleasures,

refusal to have dealings with people of a particular ethnic group, or behavioural restrictions such as heterosexuality or pacifism.

- **Valour – Duties:** These represent actions which a character feels he must perform due to the presence of some external authority. They differ from Beliefs which come from within. A duty does not have to actually be enforced upon the character through any coercive means, rather the character personally feels that a particular source of external authority is responsible for the duty. Examples include a military officer's duty to his nation, a priest's duty to his god, or a husband's duty to his spouse.

All Intimacies are rated from ●○○○○ to ●●●●●, and no intimacy may be rated higher than the controlling virtue. There is no upper limit on the number of Intimacies a character may have, but there is a lower limit: every character must have at least twice as many dots of intimacies related to a particular virtue as she has dots in that virtue

Each virtue begins at ●○○○○. Distribute an additional 4 dots amongst the virtues. Then Choose Intimacies associated with these virtues.

No virtue may be raised higher than ●●●○○ at this point.

Note that ○○○○○ and ●●●●● in any virtue are incredibly unstable and require crazy behaviour to maintain.

2.6 Willpower, Essence, and Health Levels

This section needs some serious thought once I get as far as writing the Combat and Debate systems, for that reason expect it to be seriously subject to change.

The current mechanism for determining Willpower seems fine to me.

Set Willpower to the sum of the two highest Virtues. All mortal characters start at Essence ●○○○○.

2.7 Progress through Play

Are Experience points actually the best way to handle progression? Most games use them, and they certainly make maintaining power balance during a campaign easier – but games like *Burning Empires* instead use a sort of progress through play mechanic. Something like that (though with less bookkeeping required) could be cool.

Unlike the system of experience points used in *Exalted* and *A World of Darkness in A Fallen Age* we make use of a different mechanism for representing progression and character advancement. On the character sheet each ability, attribute, virtue and background has a number of rows of very small boxes underneath it. These boxes form a sort of “progress-bar” for development in that attribute.

After each scene a character may choose any one attribute or ability which was used in that scene and all virtues which were channelled during the scene and may fill-out one of the boxes in the progress bar underneath. Boxes should be filled out vertically and then horizontally under traits which have more than one row of boxes under the trait. Whenever the addition of an extra box would put the box underneath an “empty” dot for the trait the player instead adds an extra dot to the trait and resets all of the boxes to be empty.

This form of advancement may not be used to raise any trait higher than ●●●●● or the character’s **Essence**, whichever is higher.

Example: Frost Peony has just emerged from a heist on a Delzahn noble’s personal private museum, armed with a whole host of valuable items which she intends to sell on the black-market. During the scene she made use of the pools **Dexterity + Stealth**, **Wits + Awareness**, **Dexterity + Athletics**, **Manipulation + Larceny**, and **Dexterity + Larceny**.

She also channelled her **Conviction** virtue. Her **Dexterity** and **Larceny** are already at ●●●●●, whilst her **Stealth** and **Athletics** are only at ●●●●○ with three boxes underneath apiece. Her **Wits** and **Manipulation** are also ●●●●○ and have 6 and 7 boxes underneath filled out respectively – but attributes have three rows of boxes, so she’s a long way from raising those attributes. Finally her **Awareness** is at ●●○○○ and has two boxes filled out. She chooses to put fill out one box under **Awareness** – because this would raise the boxes under **Awareness** past the number of dots in the trait she instead raises it to ●●●○○ with no filled out boxes. She also gets to put a box under **Conviction**, but it does not raise as a result.

Any time a character has the opportunity to fill out a box under an ability she may instead opt to put the box towards a speciality in that ability which would have applied in one of the roll she made during the scene. Each “box” translates directly into one “dot” of speciality. The same speciality cannot be purchased more than three times for the same ability and no ability may ever have more dots of speciality associated with it than twice it’s current rating. Finally recall that no roll may ever benefit from more than three dots of speciality at the same time.

If a character puts a box under a trait currently rated at ○○○○○ then the trait immediately raises to ●○○○○ with no filled boxes. However a character cannot apply a box of progress to an ability rated at ○○○○○ unless the character not only rolled that ability during the scene, but also succeeded on the roll.

Whenever a trait is raised then all calculated values based upon that trait are also adjusted. For example if a character's highest virtue were to go up by one dot then so would her **Willpower**.

2.7.1 Regression of Virtues

Each time a scene ends in which a character suppressed one of his virtues he must place a mark in one of the boxes underneath that virtue. These marks, unlike progression marks, are placed starting from the *right-hand* end of the row. Whenever a character would have to mark a box which lies underneath a filled in dot on that Virtue the virtue goes *down* by one dot, and all marks underneath (progression and regression) are wiped away.

It is possible for a virtue to fall to ○○○○○ this way. When it does so *any* action which is in agreement with a virtue during a scene is considered channelling, even though there is no benefit to channelling a ○○○○○ virtue.

This means that constantly suppressing Virtues has effects, and that it's easier to lose dots in high virtues than it is to lose them in low ones. It also means that characters who suppress a virtue once in a scene may as well suppress it again as many times as they like for the remainder of the scene, since the bad effects have already occurred.

2.7.2 Progress through Completing Goals

There is a further way to gain advancement – completing a goal. Whenever a character completes one of his goals he immediately receives seven boxes worth of advancement which can be assigned to abilities, attributes, virtues, and backgrounds as he sees fit. If he is not mortal then he also receives a box of advancement for his **Essence** score – this is the only way in which this score can be advanced.

2.7.3 Building More Experienced Characters

The above guidelines produce very inexperienced mortal characters – likely callow youths with little sway in the world. For a more experienced or powerful mortal character suitable for exaltation grant three goals worth of progression.

Spend three goals worth of progression: That is to say 21 boxes of advancement which can be spent however desired except that since the character is still mortal no boxes may be assigned to **Essence**.

Each Ability has one row of boxes beneath it. Each Attribute has three. Each Virtue and Background has Two. **Essence** has only one, but advancements to that trait are rarer.

The result is that it takes $[\text{old trait rating} + 1]$ scenes to raise an ability, $[\text{old trait rating} \times 3 + 1]$ scenes to raise an attribute, and $[\text{old trait rating} \times 2 + 1]$ scenes to raise a virtue or background.

Raising **Essence** requires the completion of $[\text{old essence rating} + 1]$ Goals.

Chapter 3

Drama and Systems

The basic mechanics of *A Fallen Age* are very similar to those of *Exalted*. Rolls are divided into *success rolls* and *effect rolls*. Success rolls involve rolling a pool of dice normally equal to:

$$\text{Attribute} + \text{Ability} + \text{Equipment Modifiers} + \text{Situational Modifiers}$$

These dice are all d10s and by default any die which scores 7, 8, or 9 is considered to be “a success”, any die which rolls a 10 is considered to be “two successes”. On some rolls a character also gets some automatic successes, which are added to the rolled successes, the order of operations is as follows:

1. Add Attribute to Ability.
2. Apply any “internal” penalties.
3. Add any dice added by charms or spells.
4. Add any equipment modifiers.
5. Add any situational modifiers.
6. If the resultant pool is lower than the character’s Essence then set it to be equal to that minimum.
7. Add any dice obtained from stunts or from channeling willpower (yes, this happens *after* the minimum die-pool is applied).
8. Apply any target-number modification effects.
9. Roll all dice. Count all dice which score higher than or equal to the target number (default 7) and add an extra one for each die which scored higher than the extra target number (default 10). This is the number of raw successes scored. If an auspicious success is in effect then apply it at this step instead of rolling.

10. Add any automatic successes.
11. Subtract any “external penalties”. If the character is mortal and has the relevant ability at ○○○○○ then subtract one additional success.
12. No roll can score fewer than 0 successes at this point.
13. If the total number of successes is equal to or greater than the difficulty (default 1) then the roll succeeded, otherwise it failed.

Some success rolls are replaced by “static values”. In this case the pool is treated exactly as if had no dice in it in step 1 except that step 6 is skipped entirely. The “static value” is then added in as automatic successes in step 10.

Die Probabilities: The probabilities and statistics for this die-mechanic are not entirely intuitive. Assuming the standard target numbers the **expectation** of any die pool is equal to half the number of dice in it. The median is very close to this value as well, dropping to a whole success less than the mean for the first time at a pool of 16 dice. The standard deviation of a pool is also quite small, falling in at just under 2 successes for a pool of 13 dice, and just under 2.5 for a pool of 20.

On the whole this means that a die-pool using this system is relatively well behaved, but also implies that a DV needs to be around 2 higher than half the attack pool in order to reliably defend against it.

Effect rolls are very similar, but are used to determine how well an action succeeded. They are almost always based upon a single Attribute rather than an attribute plus an ability, and also differ in that tens only count as a single success. The biggest way that they differ is that Effect rolls cannot benefit from stunting or channelled virtues, and have a “minimum pool” to roll of zero rather than **Essence**.

3.0.4 Stunting

On every success roll (including the use of static values in contests) a character may choose to stunt exactly as in *Exalted*. The dice granted by stunting are added to the pool for success rolls, and are rolled and the successes added for static values such as DV.

3.0.5 Combining Traits

Many systems make use of rolls against the sum of two traits – usually an Attribute and an Ability. This is written in the form **Wits + Craft** and simply means that the two traits are added directly to each other to form a combined pool.

3.1 Drama and Timing

A *Fallen Age* has three different “styles” of timing which can take place during a game:

- **Narrative Timing** is the broadest grained. This covers “downtime” when a description can cover hours, days, months, or even years of action and explain how it passes before moving on to the next scene.
- **Dramatic Timing** is smaller scale. It takes place within a scene or a series of related scenes and involves things moving in close to real-time in-game. The actual timing is not closely tracked, but things happen as the GM describes them and the players respond. This is generally used in social and political scenes which involve characters interacting with each other in a non-physical manner.
- **Cinematic Timing** is used in tense action scenes. It involves keeping precise track of the flow of game-time using a “battle-wheel” or “scene-clock”. Here game-time often flows slower than real-time as actions which could take only a few seconds for the characters can take considerably longer for the players.

Each of the concrete resolutions systems given in the rest of this chapter makes use of one of these methods of timing. Narrative and Dramatic timing are relatively easily understood, but Cinematic timing bears closer examination.

3.1.1 Cinematic Timing

Cinematic timing keeps track of events in a very precise manner using a “battle-wheel”, which is a circular play-aid divided into 13 segments, and a marker for each involved character. A cinematically timed scene begins with an initiative roll. What pool this roll uses will vary depending upon the specific subsystem used: often Wits + Awareness. All characters involved roll the pool, and the highest number of successes scored is the **Initiative Count**, and the marker for that character is placed on the first segment of the “battle-wheel”. The characters then each progress down the initiative order in order of the number of successes which were achieved. So if the Initiative count was 7 and another character scored only 5 successes then her counter would be placed on the wheel two segments round from the first segment. No character can ever be placed more than 12 segments behind the first character – and the second character should never be placed more than six segments behind the first. In this latter case the timing of all other characters is then counted from the second character down.

The wheel indicates when characters get to act. For people familiar with games which use a battle-map the where is essentially a similar device which maps time rather than space. Each segment of the wheel represents a “split-second” – which is to say half a second. This makes the timing a little more fine-grained than in *Exalted's* combat system.

3.2 Virtue Channels and Actions

Every character has a number of “Virtue Channels” available for each virtue equal to their rating in that virtue. It is recommended that the character use actual beads or other similar tokens to keep track of these channels. On any success roll a character can choose to spend one of these channels if the action in question is being taken in support of one of the intimacies she has marked for that virtue, or if not taking the action would require a suppression of the virtue in question.

Spending a virtue channel grants the character a number of bonus dice on the roll equal to the rating of the virtue.

Any time a character acts in a way which directly goes against one of her intimacies she immediately loses a virtue channel from the associated Virtue. She can only lose one virtue channel per scene due to disobeying a particular intimacy. If she would have to lose a virtue channel and has none left then she must spend a point of Willpower instead. A character who has neither virtue channels nor willpower left cannot take the desired course of action.

Conversely any scene which is spent acting directly in line with an intimacy grants back one channel on the associated Virtue. If she currently has as many channels in that virtue as she has dots in it then she instead regains a point of willpower. If her willpower pool is also full then she gains nothing but the satisfaction of having acted as she feels is correct.

3.3 Travel (Narrative)

This will be a relatively simple mechanical system for turning a journey into a series of enjoyable challenges and encounters.

3.4 Training Montages (Narrative)

A mechanic used for downtime training when a character decides to spend significant amounts of time working to improve her traits. Should interact with training charms.

3.5 Mass Combat (Narrative)

This is simply an adaption of the *GURPS Mass combat* rules. They're absolutely fine and easily repurposed for use with a different system. This section is also *deeply* in need of reformatting.

Mass combat is a dramatically timed subsystem. Ther rules for mass combat fall into four major sectiond: Statting up mass combat elements, a competing for position/ambushing mechanic called the Reconnaissance Contest, the actual battle mechanic and a system for calculating casualties after the battle. THE SOMETIHNG subsystem has soem specific mechanics for maintaining and suppling an army out of MAss Combat.

3.5.1 Mass Combat Units

The most important concept in Mass Combat is that of an element, an abstraction of the combat capability of a group of troops. The base element is a 'fang' of 10 human troops. Each element has a number of statistics, as the example statblock below.

Haslanti Sky Pirates								
(Ten mortal Northerners with parachutes. ●●●○○)								
Strength		Movement		Features			Cost	
TS.	Class	Weight	Type	Quality	Equipment	Features	Raise	Maint.
12	(Air)*	1	Foot	Good	Good	Airborne	●●●○○	●○○○○

* Only if they start the combat airborne.

3.5.2 Troop Strength

The most important mass combat statistic of an element is its Troop Strength (TS) which measures it's total combat capability.

For an element consisting purely of human (or humaniform) troops, the TS calculation is as follows (unlike in the rest of the system, retain decimal parts until the end of the calculations, then round to nearest half):

Base TS is the average (Dex+Melee) of the unit (or Dex+Ranged of archer elements). This does not include the accuracy bonus os weapons, but should include the mobility penalty of armour. For individuals with free access to charms may add their maximum achievable add to the pool for calculating TS. Modify this number based on the training and equipment of the elements.

Troop Quality	
Elite	× 2
Good	× 1.5
Average	× 1
Inferior	× 0.5

Equipment Quality	
Artifact	× 2
Good	× 1.5
Basic	× 1
Poor	× 0.5

Elite troops are veteran professional soldiers. Good troops are professional soldiers. Average troops are trained militias, etc. Poor troops are untrained levies etc. Note that Troop quality is purely a measure of the element's training in working as a unit, not an individual's personal combat capability. POSSIBLY RENAME DRILL?

Artifact Equipment is just that - the entire element is armed AND armoured with artifact level equipment (or possesses characteristics - such as resistance charms - that are on the same power level). Good equipment is well maintained professional arms and armour. Basic is minimal non-repurposed equipment. Inferior is horrificly maintained or nearly non-existent equipment (farm scythes and leather jackets, for example)

Elite troops and Artifact Equipment are modifiers that should not be given out easily.

Note that base TS for truly incompetent, poor quality, badly equipped troops may generate a TS of 0. Since wave after wave of your own men is a well respected military tactic, in this case only, double or quadruple the number of people in the element, and double or quadruple the base TS in order that the derived TS be at least 0.5. Elements with *fewer* members is possible, just scale base TS proportionately.

EXAMPLE: A fang of well trained Realm Infantry lead by a Dragonblooded officer has TS as follows: The mortals all have a Dex+Melee pool of 6. The Dragonblood has a pool with excellency of 16 dice. $\frac{9 \times 6 + 16}{10} = 7$ so the base TS of the unit is 7. They are good troops with good equipment, so their final TS is $7 \times 1.5 \times 1.5 = 15.75 = 16$. The Dragonblood might also possess War charms that allow them to modify this number further.

Comparatively, a single Dawn Caste Solar base combat pool of 20 has a base TS of 2. The Solar's War 5 grants Elite quality, and Artifact equipment is a given, yielding a TS of 8 - a not inconsiderable number, but the Solar's contribution will be through personal heroics and leadership, not through simply grinding away at the opposition.

Troops may also fall into special classes, as tabulated below.

Special Classes	
Air	The element is capable of unaided flight and air combat. Neutralise elements may not be capable of flight but are capable of attacking air elements. Used in the Reconnaissance Contest
Armour	The element has sufficient soak to render normal attacks almost irrelevant. Units in superheavy plate may qualify, but note effect on Base TS. Neutralise elements will have some unusual capability to overcome soak (rare in Exalted)
Cavalry	The element has a movement speed significantly greater than that of a human on foot. Neutralise elements will have some way (such as pikes) or rendering this advantage irrelevant. The utility of this class is reduced in sieges and when the battle is on poor terrain.
C3I (rename)	The element has supernatural intelligence gathering capability. Rare in Exalted.
Engineering	The element is trained in battlefield engineering.
Recon	The element is capable of acting as a scouting force. Used in the Reconnaissance Contest
Fear	The element is unnaturally terrifying.
Essence User	The majority of the element is capable of spending essence in combat relevant ways [excluding the excellency]. A mortal fang with a dragon blooded officer isn't part of the Essence User class (the Dragon Blood's Excellency and War charms have already applied to the element), but a circle of Exalts acting as an element does. War gods, combat oriented elementals and erymanthoi all fall into this section. The idea of this is to represent the magical capabilities of the non-leader parts of the elements.

FIRE????? ARTIL CHECK THIS!!!

Elements should be placed in those classes at GM's discretion. Some elements are said to neutralise a special class, and are marked paranthetically. This means that while they don't increase the amount of a particular class on their side of the battle, they disable elements of that class on the opponents side. SEE [REF]. It may be appropriate that the element's strength in a class be not equal to their TS. In this case simply indicate the different strength next to the class name, e.g. "Recon 20".

3.5.3 Movement

The Movement section clarifys the movement rate of the element, and the amount of space required to transport that element. An ordinary fang of infantry has a transport weight of 1. A fang of cavalry has a transport weight of 3. Other units should have their transport weights scale appropriately. Troop transports indicate their transport weight paranthetically, this is the transport weight they can carry.

Land units have movement types of Foot, Mounted, Mech or 0. This ties into the Voyaing

system. Naval Units can have Coastal or Sea. Air Units have Fast Air (extended high speed flight capability) or Slow Air (short range flight only).

3.5.4 Features

The Features section gives the training level and equipment quality of the element (listed for reference, already calculated into TS), as well as any special capabilities of the element, such as the ability to deploy from flying transport elements. Available features listed below:

Airborne: Troops trained to deploy from Air elements. Allow them to use the quick deployment rules.

All-weather: For Air/Water/Airborne units bad weather doesn't ground Airborne or halve TS of Air/Water

Disloyal: Tag shows that that element may change sides. Need Exalted-esque rules to cover this. [P8]

Fanatic: Tag Shows that it makes it harder to Full Retreat or Parley. Element stats change for free.[P8]

Hero: Look into statting this up. Remove??

Impetuous: On first round of attack bonus to Attack/All out Attack/Raid and a penalty otherwise. [P9 for mechanics]

Levy, Mercenary, Neutralise (Class): Appears to interact with resources system.

Marine: Land troops only. If carried on a water transport in an amphibious assault, TS doesn't halve.

Night: Without, TS halves at night

Nocturnal: Swaps night and day (can take the 'Day' feature instead of 'Night')

Terrain: Interracts with the Voyaging sub-system. Recn units with Terrain double their class TS for in the appropriate terrain.

The Hero unit modifiers have been removed. The basic powers of Essence users are folded into calculating base TS and Essence User superiority. Specific War charms have their own specifications of effects. The Super-soldier modifier modifier has been removed and will hopefully be worked into the resources system if required.

3.5.5 Cost

The Cost section is unused, pending a purchasing system.

3.5.6 Reconnaissance Contest

the Reconnaissance Contest abstracts maneuvering for position, sending out scouts and so forth. It is often appropriate to skip the entire Reconnaissance Contest if the outcome is narratively determined (the Night stole the enemy's battle plans, or the two armies are drawing up for battle at an agreed time and place).

The Reconnaissance Contest is, at its heart, an opposed roll between the commanders of the two sides. Both sides roll success rolls (per chapter [3]) but the attribute+ability in step 1 is the average of the best (Intelligence+War) and (Intelligence+Voyaging) available to the command staff. At step 6, the essence minimum is that of the highest essence of the two people contributing to the averaged roll (of it requires two people). This roll represents an extended effort that is too diffuse to benefit from Excellencies and other dice adding charms that do not specify they apply to the roll.

At step 5, include the following situational modifiers:

If the commander's force is mobile: Flying: -1 if all flying

Forced March: -1 (or -2 if forced march failed) (see Voyaging subsystem)

If the force is on land and has no Recon elements: -1 if none

If the force is on land and is made up purely of Recon elements: +2

If the force is operating with No Security: -5 (voyaging subsystem)

If the force is tied to a road network (voyaging subsystem): -1

Speed: +1 if both forces mobile and you are 1.5x faster

Terrain: +1 if any troops have an appropriate Terrain feature, +4 if they all do.

Modify between -1 and +1 dice for relationships with the locals.

For Encamped Forces:

Bunkered: +3, but victory on the contest becomes a tie

If the force is operating with No Security: No Security: -5

Relations with locals: +2 if good, -2 if bad.

Class superiority in Recon and Air also apply (see [ref])

Once the roll is made, compare the results. Based on the type of terrain, different margins of success for the victor open up different options.

If one of the two sides succeeds their roll and gains more successes than their opponent, they are said to have Initiative. If the Reconnaissance Contest winner gets the Terrain Rating of the local terrain (see table below) or more successes than their opponent, they

achieve an ambush. If they get Terrain Rating -3 or more successes more than their opponent (and still win the contest), they are said to have achieved surprise.

The base terrain ratings of different kinds of terrain are listed below. Decrease this value by 2 in poor weather, and halve it at night (AFTER applying weather mod). Round up.

TERRAIN TABLE

A side with Initiative may choose to fight a Pitched or Encounter battle. If no side has Initiative, roll 1d10 and compare the result to the terrain rating. If the result is less than or equal to the terrain rating, then an encounter battle occurs, otherwise pitched. If both sides failed their reconnaissance roll, neither side has Initiative and an encounter battle ensues, with both sides starting confused. A side achieving surprise and choosing an encounter battle causes the opposing side to be confused on the first round. a side achieving ambush causes the enemy to be confused even in a pitched battle.

3.5.7 The actual battle

As a battle begins, the GM should describe approximate number of troops within each mobility class (to within about 20

Each combat round, both sides roll (Wits+War) with appropriate situational and circumstantial strategy modifiers.

Situational strategy Modifiers

The Situational strategy modifiers are those modifiers that are relevant independent of tactics. They are as follows

1. Relative Troop Strength bonus (see table [ref] below)
2. Relevant Class Superiority bonus (see table [ref] below)
3. Casualty modifiers: If a force begins with or suffers casualties, each 5

The roll is also modified by circumstantial strategy modifiers, such as position bonus, defense bonus and heroic action bonuses.

SPECIAL RULE: If penalties would take the pool below essence minima, the opposing side instead gains those penalty dice as bonus dice. This is because personal Essence should constitute less of an advantage on large scales.

SPECIAL RULE: The battle roll may not be auspicious effected.

OPTIONAL RULE: Mass Combat can stack up very large dicepools. To make rolling easier, when both pools contain more than 20 dice, decrease both pool sizes until the smaller pool stands at 20 dice.

The Relative Troop Strength bonus is calculated by finding the ratio of total TS on both sides and cross referencing to the table below. The listed bonus is given to the side with troop superiority [IDEA: Halve, and apply as both bonus and penalty to roll?]. If the battle is happening at night, elements without the Night feature halve their TS for this calculation (Nocturnal elements without the Day feature halve TS during the day). This may cause a recalculation half way through a battle if night falls.

Relative Troop Strength	
TS ratio	Dice bonus
Under 1.5:1	0
1.5:1 or more	+2
2:1 or more	+4
3:1 or more	+6
5:1 or more	+8
7:1 or more	+10
10:1 or more	+12
15:1 or more	+14
20:1 or more	+16
30:1 or more	+18
50:1 or more	+20

(Class) Superiority bonus is calculated by finding the ratio of total Class TS on both sides and cross-referencing to the table below once for each class. The listed bonus is given to the side with troop superiority. Neutralise Class Strength count only for the side with the lowest total Class TS, and may never increase superiority above parity. [May only act in one role rule. P31 ?? - review]. If the battle is happening at night, elements without the Night feature halve their Class Strength for this calculation (Nocturnal elements without the Day feature halve Class strength during the day)

Relative Class Strength	
TS ratio	Dice bonus
Under 2:1	0
2:1 or more	+2
3:1 or more	+4
5:1 or more	+6

Special Rules: In encounter battles, Air Artillery and C3I decrease by one step (to 0). Engineering only applies during a siege, and Recon never applies. If a side has elements in a class and the enemy has none, it counts as 5:1 superiority. If a force's Class TS is less than 1% of the enemy's total TS their class superiority bonus for that class is capped at 0 even if the enemy has no elements of that class.

EXAMPLE: DO ONE HERE

Circumstantial strategy Modifiers

Circumstantial strategy Modifiers are those that add to a roll depending on the commanders strategy and the individual heroics of members of the force. They are:

1. Heroic Action bonus (see section [ref] below)
2. Commander's risk modifier
3. Strategy modifier, which is specified by the strategy adopted by the commander
4. Position bonus, which measures the flow of the battle as a whole.
5. Defense bonus, a bonus representing advantageous terrain. It is available only to the side with Initiative in a pitched battle. In an Encounter battle it is available only to a side which was encamped at the beginning of the battle (even if it begins confused). It only applies with certain strategies.

The defense bonus achievable in open plains is +1. Even slightly hilly terrain can give a bonus of up to +3 (GM discretion). Actual hills add +1 to this, mountains or buildings +2. MAKE BIGGER??? (Siege?)

Position bonus starts at 0, and each round of battle can cause a shift in this bonus. Shifts decrease an opponent's bonus to zero before increasing yours above 0 (so only one side can have position bonus at any one time)

3.5.8 Order of Actions

A battle takes place as follows:

After calculating situational modifiers, both sides choose a strategy (see ref). A confused force may only choose to rally or full retreat. Heroic actions (see section blah). A commander chooses their risk modifier at this point. Based on strategy, circumstantial modifiers are calculated. The contested Wits+War rolls are made. The results are cross-referenced to the table below. Casualties are taken, modified as appropriately for strategy. Commanders of confused forces that have attempted to rally roll Charisma+War now. If both sides survive, repeat, else go to aftermath.

Strategies

This section tabulates possible strategies available to commanders. Deliberate Defense and Deliberate attack are not available in encounter battles, confused forces may only take the Rally or Full Retreat actions.

Strategies		
Strategy	Strategy Modifier	Additional rules
Attack Strategies		
All-out Attack	+2	Inflict extra 5% casualties on enemy, but own casualties double unless wins by a margin enough to reduce losses to 0%.
Attack	+0	Double margin of victory if victorious. Additional +1 modifier if possess Artillery superiority, halves enemy defense bonus
Indirect Attack	-3 (?)	
Deliberate Attack	+1	
Defense Strategies		
All-out Defense	+2	Position bonus loss is decreased by one if lose, but cannot gain position bonus. ??Defense bonus applies??. Own casualties double unless wins by a margin enough to reduce losses to 0%.
Defense	+1	Defense bonus applies, but cannot gain position bonus on victory.
Deliberate Defense	+1	Additional +1 modifier if possess Fire superiority. Inflict +5% casualties on win or tie, but cannot gain position bonus. Only available in sieges or the first round of a pitched battle, and only to a side with a defense bonus [in a pitched battle].
Mobile Defense	+0	Additional +1 modifier if possess Cav or Naval superiority. Casualties decreased by 5%. On lose or tie, enemy gains +1 position bonus (even if defending!). Cannot gain position bonus on victory.
Parley	+0	Special. (explain).
Rally	-2 (??)	give rallying mechanics.
Retreat Strategies		
Fighting Retreat	+3	On win or tie, escapes. On loss, enemy gains +1 position bonus (even if defending) and retreatign side takes damage to logistic force too.
Full Retreat	+8	(+6 if confused) On win or tie, escapes. -10% casualties, but all casualties go to both fightign and logistic force. Difficult retreat paths may apply a -2 or worse penalty - or render retreat impossible!
Raid Strategies		
Raid	+0	+1 for each of Air, Cav, Nav, Fear and Recon superiority. Can reduce enemy position bonus but not increase own. Can choose to place some or all of damage onto logistic force..
SkirmishRaid	+2	+1 if has any of Air, Art or Fire superiority. Cannot gain position bonus, margin of victory halves (if wins!). Win or lose, reduce casualties by 5%

Timing rules! (strategy changes etc) deliberate/parley

Desperate!

Heroic Actions

The heroic action mechanic is the part of the Mass Combat mechanic that allows individuals to sway the course of the battle.

This system explicitly assumes that there will be one heroic action per non-commander PC. If a PC elects not to take a heroic action, their 'opposite number' is automatically deprived of the chance to take a heroic action. If you wish you can have a pool of heroic actors on both sides. The important thing is to have equal numbers of actors on both sides.

The GM should, along with the enemy force, prepare as many 'enemy heroes' as there might be special characters in the PC force (This will almost certainly be equal to the number of PCs at the table). Depending on the design of the battle, it might be appropriate a larger set of special characters for more flexibility. These enemy heroes need not be statted up as complete characters - a suitable minimum is a one line description, an 'on concept' pool and a smaller 'off concept' pool.

Tepet Lisara

Fire-aspect Dragonblooded Duellist

Dexterity+Melee+6motes = 14 dice

Wits + War + 6motes = 10 dice

Each battle round, before the battle roll is made, assign one such enemy hero to 'oppose' a PC-allied special character, and assign a risk modifier of between +3 and -3 for each of them. The assignation is random by default. In the interests of a challenging game, they should in general have broadly comparable pool sizes to their opponents (although an all mortal army is going to be special actioned to death by a circle of Exalts)

Then each allied special character elects whether to take a special action, and what risk modifier to take (-3 to +3).

The special characters then stunt their intervention into the flow of the battle, and roll an (attribute+ability) pool appropriate to the stunt. Without a stunt, the only appropriate pools are Dex+Melee, Dex+Ranged and Wits+War. Risk modifiers constitute success bonus or penalty on this roll. Stunted-in charm use, equipment, etc. apply +1 dice by default, possibly more or even auto-successes as relevant. The GM should feel free to apply dice penalty to stunts or pools that don't seem very appropriate ways of modifying the flow of the battle. A character in the logistic force takes a -1 success penalty on their roll.

The enemy hero then rolls their 'on concept' pool (possibly with a stunt), and the two are compared. Note that the special character and enemy heroes need not actually take directly opposed actions in narrative terms (although they might, in the case of a duel) - this contested roll is an abstraction of special action countering special action.

Stunts may force specific NPCs to oppose with 'off concept' pool sizes (GM should make up pools on the fly if required), or swap around which special character faces which enemy hero. Doing group stunts of concerted actions is appropriate, but each character needs to be described as doing something relevant which requires a challenging roll in order to count the group action as their special action.

Whichever character succeeds grants a +1 circumstantial strategy battle strategy bonus that round. If the roll is a tie or both character fail, no modifier.

The commander MUST choose a risk modifier, but may not take a special action. Their risk modifier applies directly to the battle roll.

After all special actions have been resolved, make the battle roll.

The concept is that special action parity is absolute, and the opposition NPCs make it less trivial for a large PC group to wind their battle strategy up above the opponent's even if the opposing group has a large number of heroes (or vice versa).

On the flip side, special actions carry risk. By taking chances, characters expose themselves to danger. The mechanic for arbitrating that risk follows:

Each character who took a dramatic action needs to roll a pool of 8 dice, and get a certain number of successes. Failure to achieve this threshold triggers a consequence, missing the target threshold by 4 a dramatic consequence [so if you need 5 successes and get only 1, a dramatic consequence].

The base number of successes needed is determined by casualties suffered by the character's side that round, as follows.

Consequence Probabilities	
Casualties	Threshold
0%	1
5-10%	2
15-30%	3
35-40%	4
45+0%	5

Risk modifier then directly adds or subtracts from this threshold (minimum 1 success required) Desperate strategies add 1 to the threshold, being in logistic force takes 1 away (rules for reducing effect of logistic actions!)

Modifier for being with Impetuous or Fanatic units??

A consequence is generally [dice] of damage as a cost of taking the action. It may not be soaked or reduced in any way. Other effects as functions of stunts or GM fiat may be appropriate.

A dramatic consequence is death (probably not for PCs) or capture. Maybe [levels] of damage

Rather than deal damage to enemy heroes, apply a 1 die penalty to their pool per 2 levels of damage dealt. Upon death of 0 in a pool, replace with a new, weaker enemy hero (or just grant autosuccess on roll?)

Rolls for unconsciousness and death are made as normal. If a force's commander becomes a casualty, the person who is next in command must make an immediate Cha+War roll vs. an assigned difficulty (typically 3 or 4). Success means he's able to avert panic. Failure means the force is immediately confused.

D K thinks War dice and War x 2 levels (no excellency!) should be the damages. I think +1 die is calibrated correctly for a heroic action, but doubling this to making it successes might work. Your Creation May Vary.

Special rules: Sieges, round length, multi-way fights. Aquatic assaults, etc.

3.5.9 The aftermath

3.6 Social Engineering (Narrative)

Characters make actions, domains do not. That's the core principle I'll be working with whilst designing this mechanical.

Social Engineering is a system which characters can use to influence the attitudes and structure of a Domain. A Domain is an abstract representation of a large group of entities with common attitudes and goals (at least to some extent). Example of Domains include Kingdoms, Religions, merchant associations, private members' clubs, martial arts schools, Great Houses, or the old girls' network for a specific Realm boarding-school.

3.6.1 Statting a Domain

Statting a Domain should, in general, be relatively quick and simple. Domains have five traits which measure their capabilities in five distinct areas of statecraft:

- **Magnitude:**
- **Military:**

- **Commerce:**
- **Influence:**
- **Loyalty:**

In addition all domains have a *Policy*. Much like the policy of a crowd (see. p.44) the policy of a domain consists of a rating in each of the four virtues plus a series of intimacies attached to each one. In general the intimacies of a domain are used to establish the laws, traditions, and social structures of a society.

Finally each domain can have a number of *Civilities* – traits that societies and groups have. There is no requirement that every domain have civilities, nor that those which do have one from each of the categories below. Some domains will combine multiple apparently contradictory civilities – the explanation for how this works should be worked out by the GM or players.

Religious Civilities

- **Immaculate:**
- **Illuminated:**
- **Cult:**
- **Opportunistic Polytheism:**
- **Pantheon Worship:**
- **Ancestor Worship:**
- **Fae Worship:**
- **Demon Worship:**

Economic Civilities

- **Slavery:**
- **Feudal:**
- **Serfs:**
- **Guilds:**
- **Banditry:**

Governance Civilities

- **Despotism:**
- **Monarchy:** Single ruler.
- **Divine Rule:**
- **Aristocracy:**
- **Deliberative:**
- **Hereditary Rule:**
- **Meritocracy:**
- **Plutocracy:**
- **Divine Selection of Rulers:**

Military Civilities

- **Professional Military:**
- **Citizen Levies:**
- **Feudal Nobility:**
- **Warrior Caste:**

Social Civilities

- **Astrological Determinism:**
- **Hereditary Caste System:**
- **Matriarchy:**
- **Patriarchy:**
- **Celestiarchy:** High position automatically given to Celestial Exalts.
- **Drachiarchy:** High position automatically given to terrestrial Exalts.
- **Matrilinear:**
- **Patrilinear:**
- **Migratory:**
- **Agrarian:**

- **Legalism:**

This list is not exclusive, and the GM and players should feel free to construct new civilities to apply to a domain.

The most important thing to remember about Domains is that Domains *are not characters*. They cannot take actions or make decisions. They can be the targets of social engineering actions taken by characters, and they can be *used* by characters to enhance their own actions – but a domain itself does not take actions or make decisions.

3.6.2 Savants and Legitimacy

Many domains have **Savants**, character who have control or influence over the way that the domain functions and whom may use the resources and traits of the domain for their own purposes. A Character who is a Savant for a particular domain also finds it a lot easier to use Social Engineering to alter the policy and civilities of the domain. Some social engineering actions can *only* be taken by a Savant, others can be attempted by any character, but work better when performed by a Savant.

A character who is not a Savant for a particular domain may be granted temporary **Legitimacy** by the use of the action **Grant Legitimacy**. Such a character may take actions targeted at that domain which require legitimacy. Savants always have Legitimacy.

3.6.3 Engaging in a Social Engineering Sequence

A character who wishes to interact with a domain directly may choose to use social engineering to influence it. Social Engineering is Narratively timed, meaning that each action which may be taken is given a length and a roll interval, which assumes that the character is working at the action for around eight hours each day. Splitting time between multiple simultaneous narrative actions is permitted, but applies a -1 die penalty to each action for each action after the first, and also increases the time taken proportionately. Similarly a character capable of dedicating a higher percentage of his time to a project (due to not needing sleep or rest, for example) can take multiple simultaneous narrative actions without the extra time penalty. Some narrative actions can even be sped up by such a character – though in general not the ones in Social Engineering.

The actions available in a social engineering sequence are:

- **Discover Policy (1 day, Wits + Politics):** A character can attempt to ascertain the nature of the policy and civilities of a domain. This action involves spending time and effort talking to the people of the domain and finding out what they believe and how they react. Each action acquires a single piece of information, the difficulty of the roll depends upon the nature of the information:

Information	Difficulty
Choice of Highest or Lowest Virtue	1
Rating of Highest or Lowest Virtue	1
Rating of Specific Virtue	2
All civilities	2
All intimacies under a specific virtue	5 - rating of virtue

A character may also attempt this action without directly interacting with the domain in question. trying to obtain information only through hearsay and rumour imposes a -1 external penalty if the character is within a hundred miles of part of the domain, and an additional -1 external penalty for every doubling of this distance. A character attempting to ascertain this information via access to a good library instead has a flat -1 to -3 external penalty depending upon the quality of the library – but may obtain information which is out of date.

- **Form Agenda (-,-):** A character may at any point choose to form an Agenda targeting a particular domain. A Social Engineering Agenda is similar to an Agenda in Debate (see p.38), in that it is a specific set of changes the character wishes to see occur to the domain: this can include changes to intimacies, the removal or adding of civilities, and even the desire for a character to become a Savant for that domain. Unlike an Agenda in debate an Agenda is Social Engineering cannot include actions the character wishes the domain to take, since domains do not take actions. This action takes no time and requires no roll. Of course forming an Agenda targeting a domain who's policy one is not aware of is likely pointless.
- **Propaganda (1 month, Wits + Politics):** A character who wishes to may stage a propaganda action against a domain. The purpose of a propaganda action is either to apply influences to the domain, such as temporary panics fads or similar brief changes in the attitude of the domain, or it is to help effect an Agenda the character has formed or is in support of.

Each propaganda action consists of 1 month spent talking to the people, passing out documents, and generally attempting to influence the domain's members. It is resolved in a manner very similar to a **Point** in debate *except* that the success roll is made with **Wits + Politics**, and the effect roll is based upon **Intelligence**. Domains themselves have no native Counterpoint, Rhetoric, or Equivocation DV. Instead they have a natural DV of **Magnitude + Loyalty** modified as usual.

A character without Legitimacy for the targeted domain takes an extra -2 external penalty on this action.

- **Grant Legitimacy (-,-) [Savants Only]:** This action can be taken by a Savant to grant another character Legitimacy in the domain.
- **Effect Policy (1 week, Wits + Bureaucracy) [Requires Legitimacy]:** A legitimate character may use this action to directly alter the civilities of a domain.

Needs more work, the general structure has promise.

3.7 Dynasty (Narrative)

A mechanical system for families and inheritance. Covers the selective breeding of human beings for desired traits (such as dragonblooded exaltation).

3.8 Magic Science! (Dramatic)

A subsystem for creating and designing magical wonders such as artifacts and manses. Some inspiration can be taken from the Tech Burner in *Burning Empires*.

3.9 Purchasing (Dramatic)

A bit dull, but we need to cover a means of buying and ordering stuff.

3.10 Debate (Dramatic)

A System of persuasion. Explicitly *not* “social combat” as that is too adversarial a concept. This is a system for altering people’s beliefs and ideas. Should make use of explicitly defined intentions and ought to reward compromise.

Debate is a dramatically timed subsystem. It normally begins when an already existing scene involving a discussion between characters suddenly turns more confrontational as one player says something which is easily interpreted as a **Point**.

Example: Azure-Sunrise and Monkey-Puzzle-Tree are out hunting in the woods near Sunrise' manse. They're not actually trying very hard to hunt right now, instead taking the opportunity to gossip about the other local courtiers. After sharing a joke about how Seaks-the-Waves (a local dignitary) has taken to wearing a massive Realm-made medalion which doesn't match his Eastern-style clothes at all Puzzle deflects the conversation to more serious matters:

"He does look ridiculous, darling, but that's not what concerns me most of all in this."

"No?" her friend replies,

"It's the fact that so many of the middle orders are getting fat and rich on imported Realm goods, and starting to wear realm fashions and use Realm words. If it goes much further we might be at risk of becoming a Satrapy before your grand-daughter takes her place on the throne..."

At that point Sunrise' player looks at the GM and says "that sounded like a debate action to me". The GM concurs and Puzzle's player picks up the dice ready to try and convince her friend of the risks of too much association with the Dynasty.

A debate scene starts with the establishment of **Agenda** and consists of a series of actions – generally **Points**, though other actions are also possible. In general which character acts should follow the flow of the conversation – with Points being resolved as characters make dramatic statements. Generally any character may make a point at any time when another character is not currently resolving one. If two characters try to make a point at once then this should be resolved by using the **Interruption** rules (see. p.43).

Characters joining a debate later may choose to establish a new Agenda, they may choose to throw their weight behind an existing Agenda, or they may choose to have no Agenda.

3.10.1 Pre-calculated Values

Each character needs a small number of pre-calculated static values based upon their character traits. These should all be written down in the places provided on the character sheet.

- **Counterpoint DV:** This is calculated as $(\text{Manipulation} + \text{Persuasion}) \div 2$.
- **Rhetoric DV:** This is calculated as $(\text{Manipulation} + \text{Oratory}) \div 2$.
- **Equivocation DV:** This is calculated as $(\text{Manipulation} + \text{Politics} + 3) \div 2$.

3.10.2 Establishing Agenda

All Agendas involved in a debate should, in general be made public to all players, though not necessarily all characters. The debate begins with one character establishing an Agenda – other characters can choose to establish Agenda later in the procedure.

Some groups may find this separation of in and out of character knowledge is a problem for suspension of disbelief. If that is the case with your group then feel free to make all Agenda hidden, but making them public avoids unnecessary complexity.

An Agenda should be fairly explicit, and if desired can make direct reference to game-mechanical concepts such as intimacies and compulsions. It should describe changes in opinion which the character setting the Agenda wants to bring about in other characters. It may also contain descriptions of particular actions the setter of the Agenda wishes other characters to take. Bear in mind when setting an Agenda that the more complex and far-reaching an Agenda is the more difficult it will be to force it through.

Example: Monkey-Puzzle-Tree’s player writes down her Agenda for the scene: “**Convince Sunrise that the Realm pose a threat to her people’s way of life**”.

Azure-Sunrise’s player considers. She wasn’t exactly expecting to be in a debate about the Realm right now – although it’s not entirely surprising to her – after all she knows that Puzzle distrusts them. After some thought she realises that Sunrise doesn’t care about the influence of the realm nearly half as much as she cares about getting Puzzle to return to her court (since she has plans for marrying her to her son who has recently been widowed).

She chooses “**Persuade Puzzle to take back her old place at court.**” That said, she has no intention of simply giving in to Puzzle’s Agenda – the Realm are a useful ally.

3.10.3 Making a Point

The primary action used during a debate is the **Point** action. Each time a character attempts to make a Point they are presenting an argument to their target which they hope will persuade them a little more round to their side of the debate. A point can be used for one of two purposes, either it can be used to directly try to persuade a character to adopt the character’s Agenda, or it can be used to place **Influences** upon a character.

Influences are like temporary Intimacies. They are categorised by Virtues like Intimacies are, and they have strengths like Intimacies do, but they exist only for the duration of the Debate scene – they are temporary points which a character might be persuaded to accept briefly – but are intended as stepping-stones towards the permanent effects of accepting an Agenda.

The process of making a point follows an 11 step process:

Step 1. Speaker declares intent Including what kind of Point she is trying to make. If she is trying to create an Influence then she needs to specify exactly what it

is (and which Virtue it targets). At this point she also stunts her action.

Step 2. Target declares Response The target declares whether he is using a counterpoint or an equivocation defence. The Counterpoint is a good-faith argument which undermines the point itself, whereas an equivocation defense has more to do with undermining the speaker and questioning her motives for making the point.

Step 3. Point Roll The speaker rolls **Manipulation + Persuasion + modifiers**. This roll has a base difficulty of 1.

Step 4. (by default nothing happens at this step)

Step 5. Subtract External Penalties/Apply Special Responses At this point the target tallies up all modifiers which apply to his DVs and his DV is subtracted as an external modifier. See below for these modifiers.

Step 6. (by default nothing happens at this step)

Step 7. Calculate Raw Effectiveness A character's raw effectiveness roll is equal to her Charisma plus 4.

Step 8. Apply Integrity At this point the defender's **Integrity** is subtracted from the raw effectiveness. His Integrity is equal to whichever of his virtues would most oppose the intent of the point.

Step 9. Roll Effect The remaining dice in the effectiveness pool are rolled if any exist. This is an effect roll so 10s do not count as two successes.

Step 10. (by default nothing happens at this step)

Step 11. Apply Effects The results of the roll are applied – either creating new influences, or moving one character closer to conceding the point.

Some of these steps require additional commentary.

Step 5: Defenses and Modifiers

A number of modifiers exist which affect a character's DVs. In particular it is generally harder to make a point directly to support an Agenda than to make a point to create an Influence. In addition an Influence should be assessed on how outrageous a suggestion it is:

Influences	Modifier
Laudable / Expected: Obvious ideas	-2
Normal: Lust / like, Plausible Idea, Inconsequential Duty or Taboo	-1
Unusual: Dislike / respect, Inconvenient Duty or Taboo	0
Inappropriate: Unusual idea, Onerous Duty or Taboo	+1
Dangerous: Love / hate, Dangerous / silly idea, Dangerous Duty or Taboo	+2
Ridiculous: Devotion, Absurd idea, Very dangerous but useful Duty	+3
Impossible: Pointless and suicidal duty	-

An attack to directly enforce the Agenda takes the same modifiers, but with an additional +2 to defensive value. Such an attack is rarely worthwhile unless the defender is taking other penalties.

A defender's DVs are also modified based upon his own personal feelings on the subject as determined by his Motivation, Goal, Virtues, and Intimacies/Influences:

- **Motivation ± 5 :** Creating an influence or persuing an agenda which directly contradicts the target's Motivation grants him a +5 to his DV. On the other hand an influence or persuing an Agenda which clearly and directly supports his Motivation grants a -5 to his DV (and likely makes success very easy). This should be judged very carefully, erring on the side of assuming that this modifier does not apply.
- **Goal ± 3 :** Creating an influence or persuing an agenda which directly contradicts the target's current Goal grants him a +3 to his DV. On the other hand an influence or persuing an Agenda which clearly and directly supports his current Goal grants a -3 to his DV. This should be judged very carefully, though allowed perhaps a little more flexibility than the previous modifier.
- **Intimacy/Influence $\pm 1-5$:** For each of the four virtues in turn look for the highest rated intimacy or influence already existing on the character which would support or oppose the intention of the point being made. The target receives a bonus or penalty to his DV equal to the rating of this intimacy or influence. If the highest rated applicable intimacies or influences under a particular virtue are tied in strength and one supports and the other opposes then their effects cancel out and the calculation should be made as if neither was present.

Very Importantly: **No combination of the modifiers from Motivation, Goal, Intimacies, and Influences can ever apply more than ± 5 to the target's DV, in total.**

Virtues do not directly affect DVs, instead they take effect in the Integrity step.

Step 11: Applying Effects

Applying the effects of a point intended to create influences is very simple: Create a new influence on the character of the desired type with a strength equal to the number of successes made on the effect roll. In future this influence will have effects exactly as any other influence does. If a similar influence already exists then the new strength can instead be added to the existing one – and if an intimacy of the same sort also exists then the newly created influence has a rating equal to the sum of the rating of the intimacy and the successes rolled on the effect roll. Attacks to create an influence cannot weaken another influence, but they can create an opposed one which cancels it out (see above).

At the end of a debate scene all influences disappear unless a character's player chooses to keep one as a new intimacy (which may form part of a compromise agreement).

No influence can be created with a strength higher than the controlling virtue.

When a point intended to directly promote a character's Agenda hits home the process is different. Every character has ten **Composure Levels** *for each Agenda in play which would affect her*. Successes rolled on the effect roll in this case simply directly subtract from these levels. When a character loses her last **Composure Level** with respect to a particular Agenda reconciliation begins between her and the supporters of that Agenda.

Reconciliation

When a character loses her last Composure level against a particular Agenda then she is normally forced to accept the effects of that Agenda upon her. The exception is when the character is currently behind an Agenda which some of the supporters of the Agenda against her has lost Composure against.

When reconciliation begins the remaining composure of the lowest composure “winning” character is examined, and how much he has lost determines how much of a compromise is required.

If the “winner” has lost no composure then no compromise is required, and the loser must accept his Agenda in its entirety. Which can including gaining or losing an intimacy or being required to perform some immediate task.

If the “winner” has lost a small number of points of composure, but still has more than half his starting composure left then he must give a minor compromise to the loser. Either one of the elements of his Agenda must be dropped (or reduced in magnitude) or he must comply with a weak version of one of the elements of her agenda.

If the “winner” has lost more than half of his composure, but still has more than a quarter left then he should give the loser a significant compromise. In this case a major part of his Agenda is still unfulfilled or a significant part of hers is.

If the “winner” has less than a quarter of his starting composure remaining then a major compromise is required. In this case both players are on a nearly even footing, but if some edge should be given to either character it should be to the winner. The most common form of this result would be for neither character to achieve much, but for the loser to concede to the smallest part of the winner’s Agenda (perhaps altering the strength of an intimacy by 1). An alternative version has both characters achieving their Agenda almost entirely, with only the smallest part of the loser’s Agenda weakened in some way.

After reconciliation the Agenda which succeeded and any Agenda which was sacrificed to get a compromise no longer applies against the characters involved. If the Agenda would originally have applied against other characters still in the debate then it still does so.

If players of characters supporting mutually opposed Agenda mutually agree to enter reconciliation before the Debate would normally end they may do so. In this case both are on an equal footing regardless of the relative composure levels. In this case, however, either player can decide that reconciliation has failed and return to the Debate as normal if she wishes.

3.10.4 Leaving debate

A character supporting no Agenda (including a character whose Agenda have all been applied through reconciliation) can leave debate at any time with no adverse effects. A character who supports an Agenda on the other hand must suppress the virtue with which the Agenda most closely resonates with in order to leave debate. It may also give characters with an opposing position a good subject to reference in future points.

3.10.5 Interruption!

If two or more characters attempt to make points (or take other similar actions) simultaneously this leads to a conflict in the timing. In this case all characters who are trying to get the initiative roll their **Wits + Politics**, and their actions are resolved in order starting from the character who rolls highest. Resolve ties in order of pool size, resolve ties in order of Essence. If that ties then have each player roll 1d10 and keep rerolling till you get a non-tied result.

3.10.6 Crowds and Mass Debate

The mainstay of the debate system assumes that characters will be acting as individuals. Perhaps a group will join together in support of a single Agenda, but there are no thronging masses to be persuaded of the error of their ways.

This isn't the only kind of debate scene, though. In many debate scenes the active characters are surrounded by a **Crowd** of extras. Extras in debate do not get treated as single characters, instead all of the extras who share a common set of ideas are treated as single crowd. A scene may contain multiple crowds, each with a different **Policy**. The Policy of a crowd is simply a set of four virtues together with appropriate intimacies and influences. These are rated and designed exactly as for an individual character – and they represent the overall ideas and beliefs of the crowd – not everyone in the crowd necessarily shares them completely, but they are a good general guide to the crowd's behaviour.

General rules for crowds

When a character forms an Agenda in a scene including a crowd she may, if she wishes, choose to form an agenda which targets the crowd rather than any individuals in the scene. Such an Agenda will normally be for the crowd to take a particular action – although wanting to change the crowd's intimacies is also valid.

When a point is targeted at a crowd it must be made using **Oratory** in place of **Persuasion**. Otherwise it is resolved in a similar manner to an ordinary point. Crowds do not have the option of using a counterpoint DV, and their equivocation DV has a base value of 0 before any modifiers are applied. Crowds are, however, naturally more resistant to long-term persuasion than individuals, and as such have *double* the normal number of composure levels against each Agenda which target's them.

Responding for the crowd

When a character makes a point against a crowd another character who supports an opposed Agenda may, if he wishes choose to respond for the crowd. Only one character may do this against any single point, though – if there is a conflict make use of the interruption rules.

When a character chooses to act this way the crowd uses his **Rhetoric** DV in place of their Equivocation DV – but DV modifiers, Integrity, and composure levels are all based upon the crowd's policy not the character's.

A character who chooses to make such an argument, however, may have to suppress his own virtues if the crowd's opinions and his differ significantly. In particular making a

Rhetorical response which is supported by an intimacy or influence in the crowd's policy constitutes violating a virtue if the character making the response has an intimacy or influence underneath that virtue which is directly opposed to that of the crowd.

The Madness of Crowds

Some crowds don't just take a passive part in a scene but actively rally behind a leader and support his agenda. Normally this happens when one character starts a scene leading a crowd, but it can also come about as the resolution of an Agenda. An active crowd grants its leader a number of automatic successes on any point intended to intimidate equal to their **magnitude**. The magnitude of a crowd is equal to 0 for a crowd of 0-4 people, 1 for a crowd of 5-24, 2 for a crowd of 25-124, 3 for a crowd of 125-625 and so on.

However, a character who is leading a crowd leaves herself open to attempts to undermine the crowd's loyalty to her. Any character may attempt to make a point to this effect no matter what Agenda he supports. This point is made with **Manipulation + Oratory**. Any intimacy or influence of the crowd which contradicts an intimacy or influence of the leader *which the point draws attention to* is considered to support this point. Otherwise the point is treated as if it was an attempt to directly support an Agenda. The crowd has a special composure pool (called "loyalty") specifically for such points.

Of course, the real benefit of leading a crowd is the ability to influence it more easily. A crowd gains an external penalty of -2 on its DV against any point mad by its own leader.

3.11 Combat (Cinematic)

Everyone wants a combat system in their game, it seams. In many ways this is the part of *Exalted* with the most mechanical crunch existing, and hence the part which needs the most work.

Combat is a cinematically timed subsystem. It requires the use of a "battle-wheel". The initiative roll (sometimes called "Join-Battle") is made against **Wits + Awareness**, and behaves exacty as normal for a Cinematic subsystem.

3.11.1 Pre-calculated Values

Each character needs a small number of pre-calculated static values based upon their character traits. These should all be written down in the places provided on the character sheet.

- **Stability Value (SV):** This is calculated as $(\text{Strength} + \text{Melee}) \div 2$.
- **Manoeuvrability Value (MV):** This is calculated as $(\text{Dexterity} + \text{Athletics}) \div 2$.
- **Dodge DV:** This is calculated as $(\text{Dexterity} + \text{Athletics} + 3) \div 2$.
- **Parry DV:** This is calculated as $(\text{Dexterity} + \text{Melee} + \text{Defese Bonus}) \div 2$.

3.11.2 Maps and Location

Start each combat by making a sketch map of the local terrain. This should not be detailed, should not be to scale, and ideally should be drawn in pencil on a napkin. Divide the map up into a small number of “zones” and mark “links” between the zones. Each link should be marked with a difficulty from ○○○○○ to ●●●●● indicating how hard it is to move from one zone to the other and also with a time from 2 to 10 ticks indicating how long it will take to switch zones this way. The vast majority of links have difficulty ○○○○○ and time 5. It is acceptable to have two or more links joining the same zones. Some “links” are only one way, but most are two-way.

The GM then marks a small number of “positions” on the map, each of which is assigned a position value from ○○○○○ to ●●●●●, and either a DV bonus or penalty from ○○○○○ to ●●●●●. A position with position bonus (PB) ○○○○○ *and* DV bonus ○○○○○ is normally pointless, don’t do it without a very good reason. You can have more than one position in the same zone, and you can have zones with no positions.

Some “links” between zones may be positioned so that they link to a particular position in the zone. In that case only characters currently occupying that position may make use of that link to leave the zone, and any character using that link to enter the zone will arrive already occupying that position.

During combat every character is always located in some zone. Characters can also occupy positions, but doing so is often quite difficult. A character who occupies a position gains a number of bonus dice equal to the PB on all attacks she makes, and gains a bonus to DV equal to the DV bonus (or a penalty if the position has a penalty). These bonuses and penalties are considered to be situational bonuses and penalties.

Melee weapons may only be used to make attacks against characters who are in the same zone as the attacker. Ranged weapons have a listed range in zones, which may be 0, 1, 2, or 3. They may be used to attack characters who are that many zones away (shortest path).

Furthermore any location with a DV bonus of ●●●○○ or more is considered to be a *fortified location*. When occupying a fortified location and attacking characters who are not in that location a character may only employ ranged weapons or melee weapons

which have the “R” tag.

The easiest way to mark all of this on the map is to mark next to each link a pair of values in parentheses, such as:

$$(0, 5)$$

where the first number is the difficulty to make use of the link, and the second is the tick-cost of doing so. Each position is then marked with two values in square braces, such as:

$$[+1, -1]$$

where the first number is the position bonus, and the second is the DV modifier for the position.

Under some special circumstances a position may have a difficulty of entry different from its position bonus, in this case write the difficulty as a third number in between the other two.

Stunting and Positions

A 2-die stunt can easily be used to create new positions or to modify old ones (such as kicking over a table to turn the PB for standing on it into a DV bonus for hiding behind it). The GM should be liberal in her interpretations here and err on the side of allowing changes if they seem fun and appropriate.

3.11.3 The Order within a Tick

On each tick the following things happen in order:

1. All characters acting this tick choose an action – the DV penalty for their action is immediately applied to their *current* DV.
2. All characters acting this tick resolve actions but do not yet apply any effects. Actions are resolved in order of the **Essence** of the character taking the action, from lowest to highest. Ties are resolved by **Wits** from lowest to highest, then **Dexterity** from lowest to highest. If there is still a tie simply roll 1d10 each with the higher roll winning – reroll on a tie.
3. All effects are applied simultaneously. It’s perfectly possible for two characters to simultaneously take each other out of the fight.
4. All characters who acted this tick refresh their DVs – removing all DV penalties *except* for the one applied by their action this tick.

This means that a character is most vulnerable on the tick when they act, as they have the DV penalty from their last action *and* the penalty from their current action at the same time.

3.11.4 Actions

Each character who acts in combat has a choice of several actions which they may take. Each has a tick-cost (“speed”) and a DV penalty exactly as in *Exalted*. Since the ticks in *A Fallen Age* are shorter than those in *Exalted* the tick costs are often a lot higher. Some actions are listed with a “★” after their speed – this means that they are abortable, when the action is taken move the character’s token as if they had taken an ordinary action of that speed, but at the start of any tick before their next action-tick the player may choose to “abort” the action and act instead. What effect this has depends upon the abortable action in question.

- **Aim (2★,-1 or special):** When declaring an aim action a player also declares a target. When an aim action is completed (or aborted) the character may choose to take an attack action, another aim action targeting the same target, or some other action. If they choose some other action then proceed normally. If they choose another aim action then their DV does not refresh but no additional DV penalty is applied either. If they choose an attack action targeting the same target as the target of the Aim action then their DV does not refresh, and the DV penalty for the attack is still applied, however they also receive a number of bonus dice equal to the number of successive Aim actions they fully completed with a maximum of 3 – this bonus may be taken either on the attack roll or on the damage roll, but the attacker must choose which at step 1 of combat resolution. Another option is to aim not at a particular character but at a location or link. In this case the bonus will apply on any attack made against a character who is trying to use the link or occupy the position.
- **Attack (Varies, -1):** The attack action is rather complicated and has its own section on resolving it (see p.??). The tick-cost of an attack is determined by the weapon employed in making the attack. A character wielding two weapons may, upon making an attack, choose to enter an “aggressive stance” see p. ??.
- **Dash (varies,-2):** A character may choose to use a Dash action in place of a Manoeuvre action to change zones (see below). Doing so takes half-as-many ticks as would normally be required and applies a bonus of one automatic success on the roll (if one is required), but has a higher DV penalty.
- **Draw-Strike (6,-1):** This is a combination of a Ready action and an Attack action. The Ready action must be used to draw a weapon from an easily accessible location such as a scabbard, or a weapons rack on the wall. The Attack action must be used to attack with the same weapon and suffers a 1 die internal penalty.

A character with two free hands and two available weapons may draw and attack with both simultaneously, applying an addition 2 die internal penalty to both attacks. This is incompatible with either the normal “aggressive” or “defensive” stances for two-weapon fighters. Excess successes on this attack roll cannot speed-up draw-strikes.

- **Guard (6★,-)**: When choosing a Guard action a character must choose either the Position she occupies or a “link” between two zones (one of which she occupies) to guard. Until the character ends their Guard action they may apply their parry DV as an external penalty to the roll required by someone else attempting to occupy the position or make use of the link. In addition when someone tries such a manoeuvre they may immediately abort their Guard action to attack that character – their PDV is still applied against the attacker.
- **Innactive (10, special)**: See *Exalted* p.143.
- **Intercept (6★,-1)**: This action is very similar to Guard. The character must choose either a link into or out of the zone she occupies, a position in the same zone as she is currently located (though she need not occupy it), or a character in the same zone as her. Until the Intercept action ends whenever any character attempts to manoeuvre through the link, occupy the position, or attack the character she may choose to oppose them. When she does so she immediately aborts this action to make an attack action against the interloper. The interloper may choose to abort his action to attack her instead. If he chooses not to then his action takes an external penalty equal to her MV. Either way she is no longer occupying any position she occupied at the start of the action.
- **Manoeuvre (varies, -1)**: This can be used in one of two ways: either to change zones, or to occupy a position. If used to change zones the character simply rolls **Dexterity + Athletics** with a difficulty equal to the rating of the “link” which they are using to switch zones. In this case the tick-cost of the action is also the time given for that link. Some links use **Strength + Athletics** instead.

The other option is to use this action to attempt to occupy a location. This takes 6 ticks, and requires a **Dexterity + Athletics** roll with a difficulty equal to the PB of the location. This action can be opposed by use of the Guard and Intercept actions (see later).

- **Miscellaneous Action (10,Varies)**: See *Exalted* p.143. The Join Battle action is precisely as described there when taken by a non-participatory character. Drawing weapons is no longer a miscellaneous action, nor is jumping (which is covered under Manoeuvre).
- **Ready (6,-1)**: The character takes a currently non-useable item and makes it ready for use, but doesn’t attack anyone in the process. This normally only requires one action (to draw a sword, or take a bottle of wine from a belt-pouch) but can in some circumstances require many more (such as preparing a siege crossbow for

use).

3.11.5 Mobility Penalties

Some things (particularly wearing heavy armour) apply a “mobility penalty” to actions. This penalty is taken off of all **Dexterity** or **Athletics** related rolls (though it is not subtracted twice from **Dexterity + Athletics** rolls), and also the calculation pool for all static values based upon these traits. This means that a mobility penalty penalises DVs, MV, and Manoeuvre rolls, and attack rolls in combat, but not consciousness and death rolls.

3.11.6 Attacking

Each attack is resolved in a series of steps:

Step 1. Declaration of Attack:

Step 2. Defender Declares Response:

Step 3. Attack Roll:

Step 4. (by default nothing happens at this step)

Step 5. Subtract External Penalties/Apply Special Defenses:

Step 6. (by default nothing happens at this step)

Step 7. Calculate raw damage:

Step 8. Apply Soak:

Step 9. Roll Damage:

Step 10. (by default nothing happens at this step)

Step 11. Apply Results:

Currently this is essentially identical to the order of attack events used in <i>Exalted</i> . I expect this to be subject to change.

The resolution of an individual attack progresses in a similar way to in *Exalted*. The major difference is that **Extra successes on the attack roll do not add to damage dice**. Instead each additional success on the attack roll (up to a maximum of three) can be used to reduced the number of ticks which the character must wait until his next action – though no mechanism may cause a character to gain another action in fewer than three ticks.

Note also that characters still receive an automatic Bashing Soak equal to their **Strength**.

The final step, applying the damage to the character is different also, because of the different way in which damage is treated in *A Fallen Age*.

Twin Weapon Fighting

A character who wields two weapons at once (including a shield, which is a kind of weapon) may each action choose whether he is adopting an “aggressive stance” or a “Defensive Stance”. The effects of these are different and last until his next action-tick:

- **Aggressive Stance:** The character may choose this stance on any tick in which he chooses an attack action. In doing so he takes a -3 dice internal penalty on his attack and an extra -1 penalty on his DV and must use the same weapon he attacked with to parry if he makes use of his parry DV, but reduces the number of ticks he needs to wait until his next action by 3. If his next action is an attack it must be made using a different weapon – though he does not have to choose aggressive stance again. This stance is rarely worthwhile with a shield. Excess successes on the attack roll still reduce attack speed.
- **Defensive Stance:** The character may choose this stance on any action-tick. He may use whichever weapon he wishes to parry with regardless of which one he uses to attack.

3.11.7 Shove and Slam attacks

Any character may engage in a shove attack, attempting to push another character into a particular location. The target must be in the same zone as the attacker. The attacker makes an attack roll with the “Shove” weapon listed on the weapons table as normal. This attack roll can be dodged, but parries with weapons which do not have the ‘S’ tag are inadmissible. If the attack hits it does no damage (as indicated on the weapons table), but the attacker makes a **Strength + Melee** roll with an external penalty equal to the defender’s SV. If the defender is currently occupying a location then the difficulty of this roll is the difficulty to enter that location and success forces the defender to leave it. Otherwise the difficulty is either the difficulty to enter a location in the same zone, or the difficulty to make use of a link. Success forces the defender into the location or through the link as if she had taken a Manoeuvre action.

Slam attacks never benefit from the aggressive stance of multi-weapon fighters.

A character who is carrying a weapon with the ‘S’ tag may choose to use that weapon to enhance a shove. If he does so then the weapon is unavailable for parrying until his next action-tick. The attack is still made with the “shove” weapon as usual, but the character has a number of automatic successes on the opposed roll equal to the defence

bonus of the weapon.

A character may choose to make a slam attack instead of a shove. A slam attack can never be made as part of an attack triggered from a Guard action. A character who makes a slam attack is no longer occupying in any locations he started off occupying. A character making a slam attack makes his attack roll based upon **Dexterity + Athletics**. Slam attacks *do* cause damage, though not a lot of damage unless a weapon is used. Once damage has been resolved the attacker rolls **Strength + Melee** with an external penalty equal to the target's SV as for a shove attack. However success on a slam attack does not force the target to move, but instead knocks them to the ground. There is a downside, however. If the character rolls fewer raw successes than the target's SV then *she* falls to the ground.

Weapons with the 'S' tag can also be used to enhance slam attacks. When doing so use the weapon's damage instead of the damage of the slam attack.

3.11.8 Wounds, Injury, and Death

As in *Exalted* or *A World of Darkness* there are three kinds of damage in *A Fallen Age*. Bashing Damage, Lethal Damage, and Aggravated Damage. The health-level chart for an ordinary mortal in *A Fallen Age* looks somewhat different from that in *Exalted*:

–	–	□□□□□□□□
–0	1	□□□□□□□□
–1	2	□□□□□□□□
–2	3	□□□□□□□□
–3	4	□□□□□□□□
–4	5	□□□□□□□□

When bashing damage is being applied ignore all boxes which already have any kind of damage in them, and start with the first empty box in the top row and fill towards the right until either all the damage has been applied or the top row is full. When this happens any remaining damage is now applied exactly as it was lethal damage (see below). Obviously if the top row is completely full to start with then all the bashing damage becomes lethal. Boxes filled with bashing damage are marked with a single slash.

When lethal damage (including damage which started as bashing and has been converted) is applied start at the top left box and proceed to the right, moving down to the next row at each row ending. Lethal damage is applied starting from the first box one comes to which is either empty or filled with Bashing damage. Boxes are then filled in order until either there is no more damage left to apply, or all boxes in the grid have been filled. Lethal Damage is marked with an “×” symbol.

Some damage is labeled as being “aggravated”. This is not an extra type of damage distinct from Bashing and Lethal, but is simply a property some attacks have. Against mortals aggravated damage is identical to non-aggravated damage of the same type.

The following rules apply:

- A character who has filled the entire first line with any kind of damage must make an unmodified **Strength + Resistance** roll every time her action-tick comes round – unless she chooses to take the Inactive action. The difficulty is one, and any failure indicates that the character falls unconscious. Wound penalties affect this roll normally.
- Each time a character fills the final box in a row other than the first one she must make an immediate **Strength + Resistance** roll with a difficulty equal to the number in the second column above. Failure indicates that the character has succumbed to her wounds and dies.
- When the final wound box is filled the character dies.
- If mortal a character has received any wounds below the line and has not yet recieved medical attention then she will take another die of lethal damage per minute due to bleeding.

There are also some special situations:

- A mortal character who takes more health-levels of damage *in one blow* than their **Strength** has taken a critical wound. They must immediately make a **Strength + Resistance** roll (with difficulty equal to the number of health-levels taken in one go) to avoid unconsciousness and even if they stay conscious they take an internal penalty equal to half the number of health-levels dealt in the blow to all actions as long as the wound lasts. Mark a circle around the boxes which composed the critical wound as a reminder.
- A character who took a critical wound during a battle needs medical attention. The attending physican can make an **Intelligence + Voyaging** roll with a difficulty equal to the number of health-levels of the wound to set the injury. A Success indicates that the wound will go away once the health-levels are healed – a failure indicates that the injury is permanent. Each scene which passed since the injury was taken without medical attention adds one to the difficulty. The wound cannot heal until medical attention has been received. If the wound was caused by aggravated damage then the wound is automatically permanent – such damage is not easily healed.

In some ways these injury rules are quite harsh. That’s fine, they should be. The exalted will have an easier time of it.

Not Being on Fire

A character can be set on fire in a number of ways. The most common is to be hit by a flaming weapon (one with the F tag). Whilst on fire a character takes a -3 external penalty to all actions. In this case the character is set on fire if a 10 is rolled on the damage roll. When the first character during a combat is set on fire add a “fire” marker to the battlewheel on the current tick . Each time the fire marker comes up on the wheel all characters currently on fire take 1 level of Lethal damage, and the counter is moved 6 ticks round the wheel.

Putting out a fire on yourself is a miscellaneous action with a -2 DV penalty, and requires a **Dexterity + Voyaging** roll with difficulty 1. Putting out a fire on another character is a miscellaneous action with a -1DV penalty, but requires no roll.

3.11.9 Weapon Stats

The statbar for a weapon is read in much the same way as the statbar for a weapon in *Exalted*. All weapons have a Speed, an Accuracy, a Damage rating, a Defence rating, and tags. Weapons no longer have rate because magical flurries no longer exist. Accuracy is still an equipment bonus added to attack pools, and Defence is still an equipment bonus added to Defence pools before they are halved to calculate DVs. The available tags, however, are somewhat different:

- **2** – 2-handed
- **B** – Bow type
- **N** – Natural
- **P** – Armour piercing – Soak from armour is halved when attacked by this weapon (rare).
- **R** – Reach: Can be used from a fortified position to make attacks.
- **F** – A Flame weapon. Can set targets on fire if any 10s are rolled on the damage roll (see p.54).
- **L** – Lance-type weapon – add the P tag when used in an attack triggered from an aborted Guard or Intercept action.
- **U** – Underwhelming – add your opponent’s Mobility Penalty to your raw damage. However when using this weapon your own mobility penalty is doubled for the purposes of your attack pool and parry DV.
- **S** – Shove enhancer. This weapon can be used to enhance a shove or slam attack.

Ranged weapons also have a number of Ready actions required to reload. A weapon with a 0 for this stat can be reloaded instantly as a reflexive action, a weapon with a

“–” in this stat cannot be reloaded – a new weapon has to be Readied each time it is used.

Weapons which list a damage rating with an “=” in front of it do not add Strength to raw damage, all other weapons do.

3.12 Intrusion (Cinematic)

A system for entering and exiting places where other people don't want you. Covers all kinds of jumping, climbing, and sneaking puzzles, as well as dealing with guards and traps. There is some feeling that this is not innately fun, and also that my initial system was too complex and time-consuming. There is also the need for a planning mechanic, and it needs to interact better with social.

Infiltration is a cinematically timed subsystem, it requires the use of a “scene-clock”. The initiative roll is made against **Wits + Awareness** and behaves exactly as normal for a Cinematic subsystem.

In fact Infiltration is entirely compatible with the other Cinematically timed subsystems such as Combat. It is entirely possible to play out a single scene which uses both subsystems simultaneously.

3.12.1 Pre-calculated Values

Each character needs a small number of pre-calculated static values based upon their character traits. These should all be written down in the places provided on the character sheet.

- **Dodge DV:** This is calculated as $(\text{Dexterity} + \text{Athletics} + 3) \div 2$.
- **Concealment Value (CV):** This is calculated as $(\text{Dexterity} + \text{Stealth}) \div 2$.

3.12.2 Maps, Locations, Challenges, and Complications

Much like a combat scene an infiltration scene begins with the GM drawing up a simple sketch map of the starting area. Unlike in combat it is quite likely that this initial sketch will be added to later as the scene continues. For this reason at least one “link” should generally be paced leading off the map into unknown additional zones which can be drawn in by the GM as needed.

The basic structure of zones and locations is identical between combat and infiltration, but because of its nature infiltration requires unusual cases far more frequently. GMs should feel entirely free to set up links between zones and locations, to give locations difficulties which are very different from their PB, and similar complexities.

One construction which comes up frequently in Infiltration is the “path”. A path is a series of locations which have a defined order. A character cannot simply occupy any location in his zone by making a Manoeuvre roll, but must instead occupy them in order – moving from one to another by using links which have been set up between them.

Example: A zone consists of a pool of flowing water filled with ravenous giant crocodiles. A series of pillars rise up out of the water, each is a location. The pillars form a path, with links between each of them representing jumping from one to another. A character in the water at the bottom of the room cannot simply Manoeuvre to occupy the final pillar (from which he can exit the room), but must instead go all the way back to the first pillar (which can be accessed from the water via a spiral staircase). What kind of mad First-Age Twilight built a room like that?

Some locations have an associated challenge. A challenge is characterised by a particular die-pool and a difficulty. Attempting a challenge is an action which helps build up successes towards the difficulty. Many challenges have very high difficulties and will require several actions before they are completed. Challenges normally also have an effect once they have been completed – often making a link where none existed before, or sometimes altering the nature of positions, links, complications, or even zones.

Example: In a deserted corridor in the Tri-Kahn’s palace Frost Peony comes across a challenge. Concealed behind a wall-hanging is a large iron door fitted with an expensive imported lock from Varangia. The lock has three tumblers and an automatic relocking mechanism meaning that Peony will have to amass a total of 25 successes on a **Dexterity + Crime** roll to break through it – but any time she fails to get 5 successes on a single roll the door will reset, and she’ll have to start over again. Hoping that no guards pass by whilst she’s working she kneels down and takes out her tools . . .

Positions, Links, and even whole zones can also have complications associated to them. Complications are aspects of a locations which make it unusual or dangerous in some way – pits of spikes, whirling blades, unstable walk-ways, moving platforms, chompers which descend from the ceiling – you get the idea.

Complications come in two general types: those which do something specific whenever a character enters the zone, uses the link, occupies the position, etc . . . or ones which have a timed component to their behaviour. Timed complications have their own marker which is placed on the scene-clock, and take specified actions whenever their action-tick comes up. Most such complications will always take the same action – but this is by no means always true. Examples of complications are listed later.

Positions and zones can also have concealment bonuses or penalties. The following is a

rough guide to these:

Condition	Modifier
Iconic Solar Anima	-4
Outside, Bright sunlight	-3
Outside, somewhat cloudy	-2
Indoors with windows in Daylight	-1
Indoors, lit by many Torches	+0
Deep Shadows	+1
Lit only by one torch	+2
Starlight	+3
Pitch Darkness	+4

3.12.3 Concealment and Observation

Not every infiltration scene involves concealment, but many do. Concealment only matters when two opposed characters are present in the same zone (though in some cases the GM should adjudicate that adjacent zones count as the same zone for this purpose) and one is trying to remain hidden from the other. By default a character who wishes to remain concealed can be considered to begin the scene concealed. A character who wishes to become concealed later needs to take the **Hide** action.

A character who begins the scene concealed begins with 7 “Stealth Levels”. Every action she takes costs her some Stealth Levels. She can regain Stealth Levels via taking the **Hide** action. Furthermore whenever an opposed character in the same zone as her takes a **Spot** action this can reduce her number of remaining Stealth Levels. If her remaining Stealth levels ever fall to zero then the nearest opposed character immediately becomes *aware* of her presence, and will likely respond accordingly (possibly by raising the alarm). A character can also sacrifice some of his own Stealth levels to restore an ally’s by taking the **Distract** action.

Any character who takes a spot action immediately becomes aware of any opposed characters who have no remaining Stealth-Levels.

Yes, it’s like a sneaking computer game with a little bar indicating how concealed you are. This is intentional.

3.12.4 Actions

Combat actions may be taken during infiltration. A concealed character suffers the following Stealth-level loss for doing so:

- **Aim** – 1 SL

- **Attack** – 5 SL (but see **Surprise Attack** below), this loss is doubled if the character makes use of aggressive stance.
- **Dash** – 5 SL
- **Draw-Strike** – 5 SL (but see **Surprise Attack** below)
- **Guard** – 1 SL
- **Innactive** – 0 SL
- **Intercept** – 1 SL
- **Manoeuvre** – 4 SL (but see **Sneak** below)
- **Miscellaneous Action** – Varies, but generally 1 to 3 SL unless it's very obvious or loud.
- **Ready** – 2 SL

In many cases a special version of these actions used in Infiltration exists, which has a lower SL cost. In all cases a character with a Mobility Penalty who attempts any action whilst Concealed (including **Innactive** and **Hide**) loses an additional number of Stealth Levels equal to her Mobility Penalty.

Extra actions available to a character in Infiltration include:

- **Attempt Challenge (10, varies) [varies]:** Any character who is occupying the same location as a challenge can attempt it. Doing so normally confers a -2 DV penalty and costs 3 SLs, but this can vary (any differences will be written in the challenge's write-up). The character rolls the pool indicated for the challenge and any successes are counted towards the difficulty of the challenge. Some challenges also list a **Threshold** – any roll which scores fewer successes than the threshold has additional special effects as listed in the challenge's description.
- **Disable Mechanism (10, -2) [-3 SLs]:** A character occupying the same position as a complex mechanical or magitech mechanism may attempt to disable it through skill (disabling it through physical damage is simply an attack action). This is treated exactly like an Attack Action except that it is based upon **Wits + Craft** (and equipment bonuses can be provided by tools), and the raw damage is equal to the character's **Intelligence** plus any bonuses for appropriate tools (see the Panoply Chapter p.81). The mechanism will have an appropriate DV, Soak, and health-level track listed in its statistics. Most simple mechanical mechanisms have no DV – but some magical devices are capable of dynamically responding to an attempt to disable them and hence have one.
- **Distract (8, -2) [-2]:** A character may use a distract action to help confuse guards and observers, hence rendering them less likely to spot her allies. Make a **Manipulation + Stealth** check with an external penalty equal to the concealment

penalty of the targeted character's location. Any excess successes can be used to refresh the target's Stealth Levels.

- **Hide (8, -2) [special]:** Any character may attempt a hide action at any point. Roll **Wits + Stealth** with an external penalty equal to the concealment penalty of the character's location (or a bonus if the location provides one). Any excess successes can be used to refresh the character's Stealth Levels. A character who is not currently concealed at all who attempts to become concealed by Hiding takes an automatic -2 external penalty. A character who is invisible gains two automatic successes. A character who is invisible, inaudible, and otherwise completely undetectable is automatically considered fully concealed (with maximum stealth levels) at all times and does not need to take a Hide Action.
- **Sneak (10,-2) [-1 SL]:** This action is identical to the **Manoeuvre** Action except that it takes longer, has a higher DV penalty, and costs fewer SLs to take.
- **Spot (10, -2) [-2 SLs]:** Any character may attempt a Spot action. Roll **Wits + Awareness** and compare the number of successes to the SV of every opposed concealed character in the same zone. If the check fails to beat any of these SV values the resolution process stops there. Otherwise roll an effect roll based on **Intelligence**. All characters whose SV didn't protect them lose SLs equal to the resultant successes.
- **Surprise Attack (varies,-3) [-2 SLs]:** This action is exactly like the **Attack** action in combat *except* that it can only be attempted against a character who is unaware of the attacker. Both dodge and parry are inapplicable defences against a surprise attack. If the attacker chooses to make use of an aggressive stance then the SL loss is doubled.

3.12.5 Examples of Challenges and Complications

Challenge: Locked Door (Dexterity + Crime)

A locked door is a challenge which can be placed in any location. Mechanical locks are fairly primitive throughout most of creation and have only a **Difficulty** of between 5 and 15. Some advanced mechanical locks have additional tumblers: increase the difficulty by 5 for each one after the first. A few special Varangian locks also have automatic relocking mechanisms, giving them a **Threshold** of 5 – with failure to achieve the Threshold wiping out all accumulated successes.

When the challenge is completed it normally creates a new link (0,3) which can be used to exit the current zone and enter somewhere else. Sometimes a lock will instead allow access to the control panel for a mechanism, or open a container with some sort of object in it.

Challenge: Geomantic Realignment (Dexterity + Lore)

The character is presented with an object which was designed to redirect or focus Essence flow, but for some reason is not aligned correctly. Repositioning such an element will have a difficulty somewhere between 5 and 30 depending upon the complexity of the operation. Often several different locations in the same zone (or even sometimes different zones in the same manse) will have challenges of this type on them and all must be correctly aligned for any effect to happen. Sometimes the same sets of geomantic redirectors can be aligned in multiple different ways – with different results depending upon which alignment is chosen.

The normal result of realigning essence flow is to remove certain types of complications from other zones or positions – for example removing the **Elemental Flux** complication – or merely causing it to operate with a different speed. The result could also be to activate artifacts, create or destroy links, or even create new complications in particular locations.

Some geomantic realignment systems have a threshold (usually around five). Failure to achieve this threshold will usually result in a complication somewhere coming into existence, or getting worse in nature. Elemental Flux is particularly common.

Complication: Spiked Pit (8L damage on entry)

This complication can be applied to a zone, making all who enter that zone take 8L dice of damage (soaked normally) immediately. Sometimes a particular link into the zone may bypass this damage, but in general most ways of entering it do not.

Complication: Elemental Flux (variable damage, usually at timed intervals)

This complication can be applied to positions, links, or even whole zones, and represents large amounts of elemental essence flowing through a region causing flames, sudden bursts of waves, gale-force winds, blasts of sand or rock, wrapping tendrils and creepers, or similar effects. This Complication is normally timed, though it may occasionally apply on entry instead. The timing of the bursts generally varies between once every tick to once every 12 ticks. When the action occurs all characters currently occupying the position (or in the zone, or using the link) must make a **Strength + Resistance** roll with a difficulty between 1 and 5 depending upon the power of the elemental discharges. Failure indicates that the character takes one *level* of Lethal damage, bypassing the normal soak rules.

Complication: Moving Platform (location moves at set intervals)

This complication can be applied to a location. Give it a speed (generally between 6 and 12 ticks). Every time it acts the Platform immediately moves. Previous links are severed and new ones are formed. A moving platform might even move between zones, and may in fact be the only way of doing so.

Moving platforms can be used to represent the back of large beasts of burden, carts which run on rails, baskets which rise up through water power, first age essence-powered lifts, and actual moving platforms.

Chapter 4

Thaumaturgy

Thaumaturgy is rather important. It's the only magical capability available in a mortal game, and shouldn't be entirely pointless even in an exalted game.

Thaumaturgy is the art and science of manipulating Creation's most basic natural laws. Less powerful than sorcery, but drawing from the same Primordial well-spring.

Thaumaturgy is divided into **Arts**, each of which is associated to one of the abilities. Most arts are associated to **Lore**, but not all. Each Art contains a number of rituals. Each ritual lists the level of schooling in the art which is required to use that ritual, from 0 to 3. If the listed rating is 0 then all that is required is that the character know the appropriate ability at ●●●○○ or higher. The higher levels of requirement require that the character have a speciality in the relevant Art for the associated ability at the listed level. Learning a speciality in an art requires that the character spend a scene taking actions which the specialty would benefit, as for any other specialty. Since specialties in a particular art only benefit the rituals of the art a character wishing to learn an art must spend time practising those of its rituals which she can already attempt. In addition to the normal requirements for learning a specialty a character may not purchase a certain level of specialty in a thaumaturgical art unless her rating in the ability is high enough, as shown on the following table:

Art level	Minimum Ability Rating
1	●●●○○
2	●●●●○
3	●●●●●

A Thaumaturgical art is described as follows:

Name (Minimum Art Level, Attribute, Difficulty, time taken):

For a mortal casting a Thaumaturgical ritual takes the listed amount of time and requires

either a value of rare and exotic reagents determined by the minimal art level:

Art level	Reagent Cost
0	○○○○○
1	●○○○○
2	●●●○○
3	●●●●●

or access to a permanent workshop designed to aid that Art at that level and rare and exotic reagents with half the normal cost (round down). The time taken is the time listed for the ritual. At the final moment of casting the thaumaturge rolls **Attribute + Ability + Art Level** and spends **1 wp**, the difficulty is listed for the ritual. Failure indicates that the ritual fails, and any reagents used are wasted.

If an essence user chooses to cast a thaumaturgical ritual then he may choose to spend essence to improve the ritual's effectiveness. Every **2 m** spent in place of reagents reduces the reagent requirements by ●○○○○. Motes can also be spent to reduce the time requirement of the ritual. Each step on the following list requires an expenditure of **10 m** to change the duration of the ritual from being measured in the longer unit to the shorter one:

Years
 Seasons
 Months
 Weeks
 Days
 Hours
 Minutes

A ritual who's time is measured in Minutes can be reduced further by additional expenditure of Essence: each additional expenditure of **10 m** will cause the ritual's time to be measured in speed 12 miscellaneous actions, but will double their number. After this each additional **5 m** spent will halve the number of such actions required, to a minimum of one.

Example: The ritual *Summon Erymanthos* (2, Intelligence, 5, six hours) is part of the art of demon summoning, which is associated to **Lore**. A mortal with the 2nd Level of initiation in the Art would take 6 hours to cast this ritual, would need to use resources ●●●○○ worth of reagents, and would roll **Intelligence + Lore + 2** with difficulty 5 as well as expending **1 wp**.

An Exalt with the same rank of initiation in the art could cast the same ritual in three miscellaneous actions with no reagents or workshop for **36 m 1 wp**, and would still need to roll **Intelligence + Lore + 2** with difficulty 5. This would not provide any form of binding on the demon.

4.1 Thaumaturgical Arts

Most Thaumaturgical rituals can be used pretty much exactly as written in *Exalted* as soon as their Attributes have been converted and their Arts have been assigned Abilities. Unless details are given below the rules for the ritual should be assumed to be the same as those in *Exalted*

4.1.1 The Art of Alchemy (Craft)

Alchemical Touchstone uses **Wits**. Heavenly Transmutation Process uses **Intelligence**. Internal Alchemy uses **Strength**. Any ritual which states that it requires Medicine instead requires an appropriate level of **Voyaging**. Valiant Warrior Formula doesn't exist. Most rituals work as described, with the following exceptions:

- *Draught of Blessed Respite* (1, Intelligence, 2, 1hr): As in *Exalted* except that the addiction effect occurs to people who use it more than **Temperance** times in a week.
- *Eagle's Eye Potion* (1, Wits, 3, 1 hr): For 5 hrs this rituals grants +1 die situational bonus to all **Awareness** rolls based upon vision.
- *Hero's Recovery* (1, Intelligence, 3, 1 hr): This ritual's effects last for half a day per dot of **Strength**. Mortals cannot take more than **Strength** consecutive doses without suffering the penalty.
- *(Type) Venom-Allaying Draught* (1, Intelligence, 2, 1 hr): This ritual causes a mortal to react to a poison as if she were exalted (see p.??).
- *Final Vengeance* (2, Wits, 3, 1 hr): The penalty is dropping **Strength** to ●○○○○.
- *Munificent Antivenom* (2, Intelligence, 3, 1 hr): The removal takes one 12-tick miscellaneous action per dose.
- *Philtre of Desire* (2, Intelligence 2, 1 hr): This ritual does not behave as listed in *Exalted*. There are two forms of this potion – one gives the imbiber an external penalty of -2 on all response rolls made in debate for the rest of the scene regardless of the cause. The other version requires an arcane link to a chosen target whilst it is being created. For one scene after the potion is imbibed the target's responses in debate are modified as if he had a Passion-type Influence of attraction towards the imbiber at the maximum possible strength – though he suffers none of the other effects of such an influence. To create this version without the arcane link is difficulty 3. Creating one which works on *any* target is difficulty 4. Once created the potion retains its potency for one month.

- *Deathlord's Breath* (): **This ritual needs examination when we have poison rules.**
- *Wind-fire Potion* (3, Wits, 4, 1 hr): Heroic Mortals using this potion gain an extra health-level on every row for its duration. Otherwise this potion works as described in *Exalted*.

4.1.2 The Art of Astrology (Voyaging)

Astrology does not require disposable reagents. Instead even the level 0 rituals require (reusable) portable equipment costing resources ●●○○○. Any other rituals require access to a permanent workshop of appropriate capabilities.

Brighter Star uses **Intelligence**. The Fallen Star uses **Wits**. All rituals in the *Exalted* core book and *Oadenol's Codex* work fine as written in *A Fallen Age*.

4.1.3 The Art of the Dead (Lore)

For Art of the Dead versions of Art of Warding and Exorcism rituals see the description of that Art. Blood Magic uses **Strength** (and also see below). Body Preservation Technique uses **Intelligence** + **Voyaging**. Deathstight and Speak with Corpse use **Wits**.

- *Blood Magic* (1, Strength, 3, 5 mins): This ritual works as written except that it cannot be used to “replenish” a mote pool since that mechanic no longer exists. It *can* be used to charge a sorcerous pool, if the caster is also a sorcerer, but the sorcerer's next action *must* be Shape Sorcery, Cast (Circle) Spell, or another use of this (or a similar) ritual or he will suffer the effects of an essence explosion (as described on the Terrestrial Circle Sorcery Charm-card).

4.1.4 The Art of Demon Summoning (Lore)

For Art of Demon Summoning versions of Art of Warding and Exorcism rituals see the description of that Art. All other rituals operate as described in *Oadenol's Codex*.

4.1.5 The Art of Elemental Summoning (Lore)

For Art of Elemental Summoning versions of Art of Warding and Exorcism rituals see the description of that Art. Elemental Sight uses **Wits**. All other rituals operate as described in *Oadenol's Codex* except as noted below:

- *Jade Extraction Method* (1, Intelligence, 3, 5 mins): This ritual works as written except that it cannot be used to “replenish” a mote pool since that mechanic no longer exists. It *can* be used to charge a sorcerous pool, if the caster is also a sorcerer, but the sorcerer’s next action *must* be Shape Sorcery, Cast (Circle) Spell, or another use of this (or a similar) ritual or he will suffer the effects of an essence explosion (as described on the Terrestrial Circle Sorcery Charm-card).

4.1.6 The Art of Enchantment (Craft)

Analyze Talisman uses **Wits**. All other rituals operate as described in *Exalted* and *Oadenol’s Codex* except as noted below:

- *[Least Wonder]* (1, Intelligence, 3, 50 hours): The item cannot have a resources value greater than the enchanter’s **Craft** rating. Each success grants the property of being exceptional (see p. ??) for one decade.
- *[Talisman]* (3, Intelligence, 5, 200 hours): See the Magic Science system, p.??.
- *Warding Talisman* (3, Intelligence, 3, 50/100/150 hours): Replace requirements for Medicine with Voyaging.

4.1.7 The Art of Geomancy (Voyaging)

Essence Sense, Dragon Line Compass, Dragon Nest Compass, Pulse of the Demesne’s Heart and Scrying use **Wits**. Ritual of Dedicated Purification, Open-Eyed Dive Meditation, and House of Good/Ill Fortune use **Intelligence**. All other rituals operate as described in *Exalted* and *Oadenol’s Codex* except as noted below:

- *Magical Attunement* (0, Wits, 3, 20 minutes): **This ritual needs addressing once we know how attunement works.**
- *Bathing in the River Meditation* (1, Intelligence, 1, rating in hours): This ritual allows a mortal character to attune to a Manse or Demesne.
- *Rattle the Sanctum’s Gate* (2, Manipulation, 5, one hour): The effect of this ritual is to reduce the effective personal pool size for each spirit inside the sanctum by **1 m** per success.
- *Essence Enlightening Sutra* (3, Intelligence, 5, five years): This ritual takes five years of near constant ritual. Even eating, sleeping, and other necessary bodily functions have to be worked into the ritual. If the ritual is successful then the character becomes an Enlightened mortal with access to a personal essence pool equal to twice his essence.
- *Scrying* (3, Wits, 5, 1+ hours): The extended roll is **Wits + Voyaging**.

Chapter 5

Essence, Charms, and Spells

One of the most important elements of the exalted setting is the concept of motes of essence which can be spent to power magical effects. We wish to retain that concept. However one of the biggest problems we perceive with the *Exalted* system is the reliance on large “pools” of motes which can go both up and down as actions are taken and need to be tracked carefully. They are often too large to conveniently track with beads representing individual motes, and are also so fiddly that they become deeply inconvenient for a GM running multiple essence using characters simultaneously in a fight (and needing to keep track of up to two constantly changing values for each one).

For that reason I want to try something different.

Essence is a substance found throughout Creation and beyond, which powers magical effects. It is composed of motes, which are believed to be the smallest possible non-subdividable unit of essence (though some first age theoreticians believed otherwise).

In play essence comes in two forms, **Peripheral** essence is drawn from the surrounding environment and held in the anima of an exalt, whilst **Personal** essence is held within the soul of a character.

Spirits, enlightened mortals, and god-blooded have access only to personal essence. Peripheral essence is a trait possessed only by the exalted.

Throughout mote-costs for effects will be written as: $x\ m$, where x is the number of motes required.

5.1 Rules for Essence use

Exalted require the use of an essence tracker – a mechanism for keeping track of the current number of motes in their peripheral pool.

Essence use in Narrative Time

In any narrative sequence an essence using character can, on each action he takes during the sequence, make use of a number of motes equal to twice his Essence Level. An exalted character can choose what level to set his Peripheral Pool and Anima Flare to during the course of the sequence (they must be set to the same value), and on each action he takes he can use an additional number of motes equal to this level.

If narrative time is interrupted to switch into dramatic time then an exalted character begins the scene with his peripheral pool at the specified level.

Essence use in Dramatic Time

In a dramatic scene a character has a number of motes each action he takes equal to twice his Essence level – if he is an exalt then he also receives a number of motes equal to his current Peripheral Pool level. Each time any character takes an action all exalted in the scene may choose whether they wish to raise their Peripheral Essence level, allow it to fall away, or keep it constant. If he opts to raise it then he may add any number of motes he likes to it. If he opts to let it fall away then it reduces by **1 m**.

An exalt's anima flare level at any point during the scene is always set to be equal to the current level of his Peripheral pool.

An exalted character who enters a dramatically timed scene without a flaring anima starts with his Peripheral pool empty. A character who begins with a flaring anima may choose to start with his pool already at a higher level.

If a dramatic scene is interrupted to switch into Cinematic time each exalted character begins the scene with his Anima flare at the level his Peripheral pool was set to in the dramatic scene. He also rolls a die-pool equal to the level his Anima flare is set to – and the number of successes is the number of motes in his Peripheral pool at the start of the Cinematic scene (with a maximum equal to the level of his Anima flare).

Essence use in Cinematic time

In a Cinematic scene a character has a number of motes to use during each action equal to twice his Essence Level. At the start of his action-tick an exalted character also must choose whether he wishes to charge his peripheral pool. If he chooses to do so then he

adds half as many motes to the pool as the speed of the action he is taking. On any action when he did not charge his peripheral pool an exalted may choose to spend any number of motes from his peripheral pool (reducing the number of motes in the pool in the process) if he wants to.

If raising the number of motes in his peripheral pool would place it above the level of his Anima Flare then the level of his anima flare raises to the same level. If the level of motes in the pool remains consistently below the flare level for a minute then the anima flare level drops by **1 m**.

If there is no reason to believe otherwise an exalted character starts each cinematic scene with an empty

Anima Flare

Exalted characters have an anima flare level. This indicates how large a flare the character currently displays. It is set as motes go into the peripheral pool (not as they go out).

Mote-level	Flare Result
0	No effect
1-5	Caste-Mark burns
6-10	Coruscant Aura
11-15	Briliant bonfire
16+	Totemic

As stated before, if the peripheral pool level is lower than the flare level then the flare level will drop by **1 m**/minute until they are equal again. If the peripheral pool level would be higher than the flare level then the flare level

Virtues and Essence

On any action where a character would be able to channel a virtue the character may choose to, instead of taking the extra dice, take a number of additional motes for this action equal to twice the rating of the virtue.

5.1.1 Hearthstones and Cults

Manses and cults both provide additional motes for a character to make use of.

Cult works very simply. The background behaves like a Virtue, in that it can be channelled on actions a number of times per day equal to its rating. When Cult is channelled, however, it can only be used to gain additional essence, and not to provide bonus dice, the flip-side, however, is that cult can be channelled on ay action, not only ones which

resonate well with a specific virtue.

Manse's function differently. A character who is in a Manse or demesne to which she is attuned receives extra Personal motes each action equal to the rating of the Manse or Demesne. A character who is attuned to a Demesne and consumes an essence token gains this benefit for a single action as if she was in the Demesne. A character who is attuned to a Manse and carries the Hearthstone gains an additional number of motes every action equal to half the rating of the Manse.

5.2 How to read a Charm Card

Below is an example of a Charm Card:

(Ability) Essence Overwhelming

Keywords: Excellency

“Often known as the First Excellency this charm is virtually instinctual to most exalts, and many other essence users.”

1+ m: activate immediately before making a success roll (step 1 for attacker, step 2 for defender) using the ability this charm was purchased for. This charm adds number of dice to the die-pool equal to the number of motes spent.

2+ m: activate immediately before making a success roll (step 1 for attacker, step 2 for defender) using a different ability. This charm adds number of dice to the die-pool equal to half the number of motes spent.

The name of the charm is listed at the top of the card. Underneath it are listed any keywords which the charm has (in this case “Excellency”). After the keywords the italic text is flavour-text, and has no rules significance (though it may shed extra light on setting information). The rest of the card is then used for rules text.

The rules text is broken up into paragraphs.

If the first paragraph of rules text has no action indicated at the start (not the case here) then it describes a permanent effect of the charm which applies to any character who knows the charm regardless of their actions.

If a paragraph begins with a mote cost (such as “1+ m:” above) then this indicates that the paragraph is a *reflexive* action which may be attempted at any time for the listed cost (further restrictions may be listed in the action description).

If the paragraph begins with the name of a cinematically timed action (such as **Shape Sorcery (10,-1) x m:**) then it indicates that the paragraph describes this action, which can be taken by the character in cinematically timed scenes for the listed tick-cost and mote cost, and gives the listed DV penalty when taken.

In general different charm effects can be combined together, but the same action cannot be used multiple times simultaneously unless the rules text says that it can. Many actions are also subject to *die-caps* (see below).

5.3 Charm design concepts

A number of concepts exist in the design of charms and spells which cannot be found in the base system.

Concept: Die Caps

All characters have a natural die-cap, which limits how much their actions may be improved through the use of charms. Any dice added by a charm to a success pool (but not an effect pool) count against the cap. Any automatic successes added count as two dice against the cap. Each +1 bonus added directly to a static value counts as two dice against the cap.

The die-cap for enlightened mortals, godbloods, and spirits is equal to their Highest Virtue.

Concept: Flurries

Many charms grant the user **Flurries** of multiple attacks. A flurry is the supernatural capability to move with inhuman precision and rapidity, testing the target's defences from every direction before finally finding the target's weakest side and making a powerful blow there.

A flurry starts out like a normal attack, but if the attack fails to deal damage for any reason (such as being stopped by a DV or being completely soaked) then the attacker is permitted to immediately start again at step 1 with another identical attack, except that the target suffers a cumulative -1 DV penalty for each attack after the first, and the attacker takes a cumulative -1 internal penalty on his attack for each attack after the first. The process continues until either an attack lands and deals damage, or the attacker runs out of attacks (all flurry charms will state how many attacks they grant, if they do not state then they will provide up to the character's Essence).

Concept: Death

Some charms and effects (such as failing a survival roll when injured) say that they *kill* or cause *death*. What this means can vary depending upon the target:

- **Plants:** immediately die totally and completely.
- **Animals:** The physical body immediately dies. If the death was particularly traumatic and painful then the soul may rise again as a hungry ghost. Otherwise the soul slowly melts away into the ambient essence over the course of the next 25 hours.
- **Mortals and Terrestrial exalts:** The physical body immediately dies. If the death was particularly traumatic and painful then the lower soul may rise again as a hungry ghost and/or the upper soul may become a ghost in the underworld. Otherwise the lower soul slowly melts away into the ambient essence over the course of the next 25 hours and the upper soul goes on to its next incarnation.
- **Celestial Exalts:** Exactly as for mortals, except that the exaltation leaves the body and immediately searches for a suitable host. If it can't find one within about a day it will normally head back to Yu Shan for a while before heading out to search again.
- **Spirits:** Spirits suffer dissolution instead of death.

Concept: Spirit Death

Some charms cause spirit death. These charms totally destroy spirits rather than simply dissolving them, and cause a mortal's souls to be destroyed rather than continuing on. They have no effect upon the exaltations of the Celestial Exalted.

Concept: Perfect Defenses

A perfect defence is a charm which completely and totally, without exception, protects the user from any attack against which it is activated. All perfect defences list a *Threshold* governing what attacks they can be activated against. This is normally expressed as a level of damage, the defence may be activated against any attack with a raw damage greater than or equal to this threshold. Perfect defences may always be activated against attacks which cause instant death or spirit death. Although a perfect defence must be declared at step 2 of combat resolution like any other defensive charm it's cost is paid only if it is activated by a sufficiently powerful attack.

Concept: Mental Influence

Several charms provide actions which create mental influence in their targets. They can function in Dramatic or Cinematic time. They should be treated like an ordinary *point* in debate intended to create an influence. Some simply create an influence like an ordinary point. Other produce special effects:

- **Intimacy:** instead of creating an influence this charm creates an intimacy immediately. This intimacy is treated normally.
- **Compulsion:** instead of creating an influence some charms create a “compulsion” – a short instruction for the target to obey. The target must choose either to obey the instruction or suppress the associated virtue (which will be listed in the charm in question).
- **Illusion:** instead of creating an influence some charms create “illusions” – a short description of an apparent situation in which the target could find himself. The target must either believe that the illusion is true, or suppress the associated virtue (which is listed in the charm in question).
- **Servitude:** instead of creating an influence some charms create a “servitude” effect – until the charm duration expires the target treats all of the charm user’s normal instructions as points which produce compulsion effects. The associated Virtue for the compulsions will be listed by the charm. Many charms also apply penalties to the target’s responses against these points.

Concept: Unnatural Influence

Several charms which produce Mental Influence specify that the influence is *Unnatural* (the ordinary kind of influence is called Natural Influence). Unnatural influence cannot be ignored simply by suppressing a virtue. Instead it requires the payment of points of willpower. By default **1 wp** is sufficient to disobey a compulsion, or ignore an illusion for one scene – most charms do not create influences which last longer than one scene, but those that do will require the cost to be paid again. Some charms have higher costs to resist the influence. Some charms create indefinite influences, but always list a cost which may be paid to end the influence – all willpower paid towards suppressing the effect for a scene counts towards this cost.

5.4 Sorcery

Sorcery is a special type of magical effect which can be used by many different types of essence user. Sorcerous initiation is a charm (in fact three charms, one for each circle).

Sorcerers have access to an extra essence pool called the sorcery pool. This is a pool who's level can go up and down like the peripheral pool. The sorcerous pool is not tied to anima flare level. The notation $(n\ m)$ is used to denote motes stored in, spent from, or added to the sorcery pool. Motes can only be added to or removed from this pool when a charm or artifact explicitly indicates so:

Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Keywords: Sorcery

“The first circle of sorcerous initiation requires that the would be sorcerer undergo five trials, including making a significant personal sacrifice. The powers granted by Terrestrial Circle Sorcery are, however, great enough that many consider it worth the cost.”

The character has access to a new essence pool, called the sorcery pool, and may learn Emerald Circle Spells.

Shape Sorcery (10,-1) x m: The value of x can be any number of motes the sorcerer chooses to spend. This action adds (x m) to the character’s Sorcery pool and has no other effect. If the character currently has more than (20 m) in his sorcerous pool then he must make an **Intelligence + Lore** roll with difficulty 1 and a cumulative -1 external penalty each time he attempts to Shape Sorcery. Failure means that he instead performs the final action listed on this card.

Cast Emerald Spell(varies,varies) (y m): Here y is the number of motes currently in the sorcerous pool, and must be at least as many motes as listed in the spell description. The effects of this action vary depending upon the spell, and are explained on the spell’s card. A sorcerer does not have to choose what spell to cast until he takes this action.

(y m): Here y is the number of motes currently in the sorcerous pool. A sorcerer who chooses to take an action other than **Shape Sorcery** or **Cast (Circle) Spell** whilst he has motes in his sorcerous pool *must* immediately take this reflexive action first. An attack with attack pool 0 and 7 automatic successes targets every character in the same zone as the sorcerer. It cannot be parried, and the sorcerer also cannot dodge or soak. The attack has a raw damage equal to yL .

Celestial Circle Sorcery

Keywords: Sorcery

“The second circle of sorcery requires another sacrifice, even more serious than the first. Still very tempting for those who seek power.”

The sorcerer may learn Sapphire Circle spells.

Shape Sorcery (10,-1) x m: The value of x can be any number of motes the sorcerer chooses to spend. This action adds $(2x$ m) to the character’s Sorcery pool and has no other effect. If the character currently has more than $(40$ m) in his sorcerous pool then he must make an **Intelligence + Lore** roll with difficulty 1 and a cumulative -1 external penalty each time he attempts to Shape Sorcery. Failure means that he instead performs the final action listed on the Terrestrial Circle Sorcery card.

Cast Sapphire Spell(varies,varies) y m: Here y is the number of motes currently in the sorcerous pool, and must be at least as many motes as listed in the spell description. The effects of this action vary depending upon the spell, and are explained on the spell’s card. A sorcerer does not have to choose what spell to caste until he takes this action.

Solar Circle Sorcery

Keywords: Sorcery

“The third circle of sorcery requires a third sacrifice of greater importance still, but gives access to some of the most Creation-shaking powers available.”

The sorcerer may learn Adamant Circle spells.

Shape Sorcery (10,-3) x m: The value of x can be any number of motes the sorcerer chooses to spend. This action adds ($3x$ m) to the character’s Sorcery pool and has no other effect. If the character currently has more than (60 m) in his sorcerous pool then he must make an **Intelligence + Lore** roll with difficulty 1 and a cumulative -1 external penalty each time he attempts to Shape Sorcery. Failure means that he instead performs the final action listed on the Terrestrial Circle Sorcery card.

Cast Adamant Spell(varies,varies) (y m): Here y is the number of motes currently in the sorcerous pool, and must be at least as many motes as listed in the spell description. The effects of this action vary depending upon the spell, and are explained on the spell’s card. A sorcerer does not have to choose what spell to caste until he takes this action.

The actual prerequisites a particular character needs in order to learn Sorcery vary from character type to character type. In all cases the higher Circles require the character to already know the lower circles.

Enlightened Mortals and godblooded must have at least Lore ●●●○○ and Essence ●●●○○ to learn Terrestrial Circle Sorcery and cannot learn the higher circles.

Chapter 6

Panoply

6.1 Mundane Equipment

6.1.1 Armour

	Lethal	Bashing	Defense	Strength
Breastplate	4	2	–	●●○○○ ○○○○○
Buff Jacket	3	3	–	●●○○○ ○○○○○
Chain Shirt	2	4	–	●●○○○ ○○○○○
Reinforced Breastplate	7	5	–	●●●●● ○○○○○
Reinforced Buff Jacket	6	6	–	●●●●● ○○○○○
Chain Hauberk	5	7	–	●●●●● ○○○○○
Super-heavy Plate	9	7	+3	●●●●● ●●○○○
Plate-and-chain	8	8	+3	●●●●● ●●○○○
Chain Swathing	7	9	+3	●●●●● ●●○○○

I note that Armour no longer has a Mobility rating or a Fatigue value (which was very rarely used anyway). Instead Armour has a **Strength** rating, which is the minimum strength required to use the armour without a penalty – for each dot which a character falls short of this requirement she takes a single die of Mobility Penalty (see p.50).

The Defense column is blank for all but the most heavy of armour. For armour which lists a defense value the character may, if she chooses, use the armour to parry instead of a melee weapon – doing so provides a PDV equal to **(Dexterity + Melee + Defense) ÷ 2**, but this DV is penalised by mobility penalty normally.

Example: Rising-Falcon-of-the-Forgotten-Flame has a Strength of ●●●●●, Dexterity of ●●●○○, Melee of ●●●●● and is wearing Super-heavy plate armour. Her Bashing soak is 15, her lethal soak is 9, and she gets a mobility penalty of -3 . If she chooses to parry with her armour instead of her great-sword she gets a PDV of 6 – which is quite respectable.

6.1.2 Weapons

	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Tags
Punch	10	+3	4B	+2	N
Cestus	10	+2	7B	+2	–
Fighting Gauntlet	11	+2	9B	+2	–
Khatar	8	+3	5L	+2	–
Tiger Claws	8	+2	7L	+2	–
Kick	10	+2	7B	-2	N
Iron Boot	10	+2	10B	-3	–
Headbutt	10	+3	4B	–	N
Shove	12	+2	–	–	N
Slam	12	+2	4B	–	N
Knife	10	+3	5L	+1	U
Dagger	8	+4	5L	+1	U
Short Sword	8	+4	6L	+1	–
Straight Sword	8	+3	6L	+2	–
Slashing Sword	8	+3	7L	+1	–
Chopping Sword	8	+3	8L	+1	–
Greatsword	12	+3	10L	+1	2,R
Axe	7	+3	8L	+0	–
Great Axe	11	+3	10L	+0	2,R
Pole-Axe	12	+2	10L	+1	2,R
Club	10	+3	10B	+1	–
Mace	10	+3	12B	+1	–
Sledge	12	+1	16B	-1	2,R
Staff	12	+3	13B	+1	2,R
	8	+3	9B	+2	2
Scythe	11	+3	11L	+0	2,R
Javelin	8	+3	7L	+1	L
Short Spear	10	+1	8L	+1	R,L
Spear	10	+3	8L	+2	2,R,L
Lance	12	+1	9L	-1	R,L
Buckler	10	+0	9B	+2	–
Target Shield	12	-1	12B	+3	S
Tower Shield	–	–	14B	+4	S

	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Range	Reload	Tags
Self Bow	10	+2	–	2	0	2,B
Long Bow	12	+3	–	3	0	2,B
Composite Bow	10	+2	–	3	0	2,B
• Broadhead	–	–	6L	–	–	–
• Fowling	–	–	6B	–	–	–
• Frogcrotch	–	-1	8L	–	–	–
• Target	–	–	4L	–	–	P
Crossbow	10	+4	=8L	2	1	2,B,P
Firewand	10	+3	=16L	1	6	2,F
Flamepiece	10	+3	=12L	1	6	F

6.1.3 Concealment Aids

Equipment	modifier
Bright Clothing	-1
Dark Clothing	+0
Large Cloak	+1
Ninja Suit	+2
Camouflaged Warpaint	+3

Chapter 7

Antagonists

7.1 Extras

Extras are, to put it simply, characters who don't matter. They are simplified and designed to be easily dealt with by a fully featured character without slowing the game down. Extra is emphatically *not* a synonym for non-heroic mortal (it isn't in *Exalted* either). In fact there is no requirement that an extra be mortal – though most are.

The distinctive thing about an extra is that they don't have a motivation which could ever matter to the story. Instead they are embodied by a role they are expected to play, and a small number of stats which are used to perform that role.

An example stat-block for an extra is shown below:

Soldier/Bandit/Pirate (Combatant/Guard ●○○○○)								
Init.	Combat					Position		Spot
	Speed	Attack	DV	Dmg.	Soak	Man.	MV	
4	8	9	P4/D3	9L	2L/7B	4	2	4

This statblock contains the information needed to run the extra in combat, infiltration, and debate. It also includes a description of what the extra's role is (here Combatant/Guard, indicating that this extra is useful in combat and also as a guard in Infiltration), and a rating of how capable they are.

7.1.1 Extras in Combat

In combat an extra behaves similarly to any other character with a number of differences:

- **Extras only get one Initiative roll:** All extras of the same type on the same side in combat make one initiative roll and have a single counter on the wheel, ensuring that they all act on the same tick. In general they will all take the same action each time they get a chance, but the GM may choose to split them into smaller groups if they decide to take different actions.
- **Extras take no DV penalty for their actions:** The choice of action for an extra has no effect on their DVs.
- **Extras cannot shave ticks:** Excess successes on an extra's attack roll have no effect on the speed of their action.
- **Extras cannot stunt:** Nor can they channel virtues or spend willpower. They have none of those traits anyway.
- **Extras Have no Health Levels:** Any attack with a raw damage greater than the extra's soak takes it out of the fight.
- **Extras cannot use Stances:** Extras do not take up aggressive stance or any other similar stances.
- **Extras cannot use Ready or Draw-strike actions:** They are always assumed to have a weapon ready.

7.1.2 Extras in Debate

In debate an extra is assumed to have no intimacies and no motivation. They form part of the *Crowd* and cannot be targeted individually.

7.1.3 Extras in Infiltration

Extras in Infiltration are able to act as guards and take spot actions. They cannot conceal themselves and are not infiltrators.

7.1.4 Some Example Extras

Soldier/Bandit/Pirate (Combatant/Guard ●○○○○)								
Init.	Combat					Position		Spot
	Speed	Attack	DV	Dmg.	Soak	Man.	MV	
4	8	9	P4/D3	9L	2L/7B	4	2	4

Elite Soldier								
(Combatant/Guard ●●○○○)								
Init.	Combat					Position		Spot
	Speed	Attack	DV	Dmg.	Soak	Man.	MV	
6	8	9	P4/D3	12L	5L/11B	4	2	6

Wolfman Warrior								
(Combatant/Guard ●●●○○)								
Init.	Combat					Position		Spot
	Speed	Attack	DV	Dmg.	Soak	Man.	MV	
6	7	10	P5/D3	13L	7L/12B	5	2	6

7.2 Spirits

Spirits are not designed like other characters. They are in some ways simpler, more direct, and more primal. They are creatures of Essence formed into complex forms and endowed with intelligence. Most spirits are naturally **immaterial**. Even those which are naturally material usually have the ability to become immaterial at will. Similarly most naturally immaterial spirits have the ability to become material at will. Changing state this way requires a speed 12 Miscellaneous action in cinematic time. Changing to a state other than one's natural one requires the expenditure of **1 wp**.

Concept: Immaterial

Immaterial characters and objects are undetectable to all mortal senses and cannot interact with other beings without the use of magic, including other immaterial beings. All senses which they naturally have still function normally, allowing them to see, hear, smell, taste, and feel items which are material if they otherwise could.

Two immaterial characters may occupy the same physical space. If they do so then they can feel each other's presence and can communicate with each other silently in a manner similar to speech – although images and emotions can be conveyed directly rather than needing to be described in words.

Concept: Spirit Realms

Some locations are considered to be Spirit Realms. These include Yu Shan, The Underworld, Malfeas (and environs), and the insides of all spirit sanctums. In these locations no character can be immaterial regardless of their natural state.

All spirits also have an additional sense which mortals do not, **Essence Sight**.

Concept: Essence Sight

Essence Sight is an extra sense possessed by some characters which allows them to directly observe the flows of essence. It works without the need for additional light sources and can be used to observe any entity with an essence score higher than ○○○○○ (including all animals, mortals, exalts, and spirits, but not plants or inanimate objects except for artifacts). It is not blocked by ordinary physical barriers, but thaumaturgical wards, the magical materials, and dragon-lines block essence-sight in the same way that walls block normal vision.

Without additional abilities this sense is not sufficient to distinguish whether a character has enlightened essence, or what his essence rating is. An active charm or spell will show up under Essence Sight, but again the sense is not high enough precision to identify or analyse the effect, or even to determine whether the target is also the source of it.

Spirits are divided into a number of types. Each of which is slightly different, but all of which use the same basic rules. In addition there are certain other types of character which are often called “spirits” colloquially, but are not technically spirits (such as the Raksha and the Ghosts of the dead).

- **Least Gods:** Are the smallest spirits. Every object has a least god, which ensures that the object continues to follow the rules of Creation’s physics. The instructions for doing this are communicated to the least gods through the stars in the sky – which are controlled by the Loom of Fate in heaven. Least gods are naturally **Immaterial** and cannot materialise. In general they do not need stats, since dealing directly with them is rare. In a few very unusual situations a least god can gain power and become a God. All least gods have Essence ○○○○○ and are invisible even to Essence sight. A few thaumaturgical rituals, charms, and spells exist which briefly raise a Least God’s Essence to ●○○○○ so that it can be interacted with.
- **Gods:** Are the most common form of spirits in Creation and Yu-Shan. They are naturally Immaterial but can Materialise at will. Gods come into being naturally in accordance with certain obscure rules built-into Creation’s metaphysics, but this isn’t the only way they can be born. A least god can occasionally become a god, as can an enlightened mortal who exceeds Essence ●●●○○. Furthermore some gods can reproduce to create new gods. Many gods have jobs in the celestial hierarchy, either in Creation or in Yu-Shan. However there are also plenty of Gods who lack a proper job and simply look for work wherever they can get it.

- **Elementals:** Are spirits made of elemental essence, the fractured remnants of certain ancient behemoths. They are naturally **Material**, but can become immaterial at will. Most elementals appear to exist to perform certain action in Creation's natural order – but a few appear to have no purpose and simply come into existence without need. A few elementals have jobs in the celestial hierarchy, but most find their own work and pay heed only to a local elemental court.
- **3rd Circle Demons:** Are the component souls of the trapped Primordials known as the Yozi. They are naturally Immaterial but can materialise at will. They cannot leave Hell without either a summoning or a particular obscure set of circumstances which differ from demon to demon.
- **2nd Circle Demons:** Are the component souls of the 3rd-Circle Demons. They are naturally Immaterial but can materialise at will. They cannot leave Hell without either a summoning or a particular obscure set of circumstances which differ from demon to demon.
- **1st Circle Demons:** Are the children and creations of the other types of Demons. They are naturally Immaterial but can materialise at will. They cannot leave Hell without either a summoning or a particular obscure set of circumstances which differ from demon-race to demon-race.

7.2.1 Spirit Stats

An example of the stat card for a a Spirit is shown below:

Erymanthos									
(Demon of the First Circle)									
<i>To Battle and kill my enemies and drink their blood.</i>									
Essence ●●○○○	Compassion ●○○○○		Conviction ●●●○○		Temperance ●○○○○		Valour ●●●●○		
Willpower: ●●●●● ●●○○○									
Init.	Combat					Position		Infiltration	
	Speed	Attack	DV	Dmg.	Soak	Man.	MV	Spot	CV
6	10	11	P5/D6	11L	6L/8B	8	4	6	3
5 m 0 wp	<i>Principle of Motion:</i> A five-action flurry <i>Ox-Body Technique</i> <i>Essence Plethora:</i> Personal Pool 6								
5 m 1 wp	<i>Bane Weapon:</i> Deal Double damage to a mortal target (Step 1). <i>Ox-Body Technique</i>								
1 m 0 wp	<i>First Excellency:</i> Any combat action <i>Essence Plethora:</i> Personal Pool 5 <i>Ox-Body Technique</i>								
1 m 0 wp	<i>First Excellency:</i> Any Attack								

This requires a little more explanation than the one for an extra. Most of the statistics are similar to what one would see on a mortal or exalted character, however the charm-list in particular is unusual. A spirit's charms are listed in order on it's stat card. This order is important since spirits do not have health-levels, instead being creatures of essence they are at risk of dissipating without the strengthening of their spirit which organised charms provide. When a spirit is injured in combat instead of losing health-levels it loses charms starting from the top of the list and counting downwards.

Charms lost in this way cannot be used again until the spirit has had time to heal.

Spirits have virtues, motivations, and intimacies as usual for a character, and behave normally in debate. Many spirits also have some sort of "Nature" listed for them – this is in effect a statement of a behaviour or attitude which they cannot be dissuaded from by any means short of dissolution or death.

7.2.2 Death, Dissolution, Reformation and Healing

A spirit who loses her final charm suffers dissolution, which differs notably from the physical death suffered by mortals and exalts. A dissolved spirit has her essence patterns scattered. She can no longer be targeted by any sort of attack, and cannot in general be perceived by any means including essence sight. For all practical purposes she temporarily no longer exists.

A spirit with a *Sanctum* (see below) will slowly reform there. A spirit without a sanctum will reform at a nearby focal point of her cult if she has one. A spirit with neither a sanctum nor a cult will reform in some other location as determined by the GM – in general elementals will reform in the nearest appropriately aspected Demense, whilst gods and demons will vary in their choice of location.

The time taken before a spirit starts reforming is generally equal to her Essence in days if she has a Sanctum, and her Essence in months if she does not. This process is not instantaneous. Whilst reforming a spirit is stuck in her natural state (in that location), and effectively unconscious. During this time any successful attack against her will cause her to dissolve again. A reforming spirit in her sanctum gains a number of motes worth of recovery each day equal to her Highest Virtue plus her Cult Rating. A recovering spirit elsewhere gains these motes each week. When these accumulated motes reach a level of 100 the spirit regains the bottom charm on her charm list and regains consciousness and the ability to change state.

To heal back other charms is an easier process. A spirit which spends it's time resting in its sanctum or immersed in it's element if it is an elemental regains one charm per week of rest. What counts as rest will vary a lot, but if a spirit has a job within the celestial

hierarchy then attending to the normal processes of that job is considered as good as rest. Dealing with unusual situations and emergencies is not.

7.3 Fair Folk

Although often thought of as spirits the Fair Folk are not, in fact, spirits and do not obey the rules for spirits. In Rakshastan itself they make use of Shaping Combat for all purposes, the rules which a Fairy uses in other places are determined by the type of *Assumption* it has used to enter the shaped realms.

Concept: Faerie Deceit

Charms, spells, and other effects which rely upon a concrete distinction between truth and lies do not work well on the Fair Folk. For game mechanical purposes all Shaped Raksha, Emanations of Unshaped Raksha, Hobgoblins, Wee Folk, and other faerie creatures (but not Fae-blooded or mutants) are treated as lying at all times regardless of what they are actually saying or doing.

Unshaped Fair Folk, in the few situations where it could matter, are always considered to be truthful no matter what their statements or actions say. In the depths of Pure Chaos all things are true.

Fae-blooded impose a base -2 external penalty on all attempts to determine if they are lying. A failure on such a roll *always* leaves the accuser with the impression that the fae-blood is lying about something.

Fair folk are, at base unformed creatures of Chaos that take on form to enter Creation, The mechanism by which they take on a form is via the use of an Assumption Charm. Depending upon which assumption charm a fair-folk uses they may end up using very different rules whilst in Creation. In particular **Assumption of (Element) Shape** gives the Raksha a form which obeys the norma rules for Spirits, whilst **Assumption of Bestial Visage** and **Assumption of Dreams and Passion** both allow the Raksha to function like a mortal or exalt – with a health level track. Other assumption charms might allow a Raksha to behave as a ghost, a demon, or even a Domain.

7.3.1 Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins are the simplest of the fair-folk. They function as the foot-soldiers and servants of the more powerful Raksha, and can be created by their masters in the Wyld with little more than a whim. When entering creation proper they will pass through whichever Assumption charm their mistress uses – and will become real in the same way

that she does. Hobgoblins are almost invariably extras. Either way their game stats are fairly similar:

Hobgoblin (Combatant/Guard ●●●●○)								
Init.	Combat					Position		Spot
	Speed	Attack	DV	Dmg.	Soak	Man.	MV	
7	8	11	P5/D4	9L	5L/11B	6	3	7

Chapter 8

Your Creation May Vary ...

... and it will. We don't all play in the same version of Creation. Many of us explicitly decide to depart from White Wolf's version in small or significant ways – others make no active decision to do so, but still end up interpreting the material very differently from how the authors intended it. There's absolutely nothing wrong with this, it's one of the things which makes RPGs so interesting to play! As a result we feel that *A Fallen Age* needs a mechanism for allowing an individual group's version of Creation to vary considerably in interpretation, and to provide methods of tailoring the system to match these variations in setting. The result is a series of “sliders” and “options” which raise important questions about your group's interpretation of Creation.

It is intended that many campaigns should start with a discussion between the players and GM about how the interpretation of creation in this campaign will vary. In these discussions all players should probably have input, but the GM's opinion should be taken quite seriously, simply because whilst all players will have the play in the setting that is arrived upon, the GM will need to come up with interesting and challenging scenarios every session – rather hard to do in a setting which fails to inspire!

The options below allow small variations in interpretation of the setting. A few major variations are listed in the final section of this chapter, but they should certainly not be considered exclusive. Many choices are in the form of a series of options which can be chosen between ... others are in the form of a sliding scale rated from ○○○○○ to ●●●●● which can be varied. Some of these options have effects upon the rules, others are presented for their impact on play but don't really require rules variations.

8.1 Politics

The politics and economics of Creation are very important to the majority of *A Fallen Age* games. The politics of the setting are unavoidable dominated by a certain number of powerful groups, and the most powerful of these is undoubtedly The Realm. Nonetheless for many games the focus of play will be a lot closer to home than that. Groups should feel free to ignore or leave until later questions which don't seem to apply to the focus of their game.

8.1.1 The Realm

How Influential is the Realm in the Threshold?

How much more common are Dragonblooded in the Realm than Elsewhere?

How badly does the realm treat men?

How badly does the realm treat foreigners?

How badly does the realm treat mortals?

How badly does the realm treat godbloods?

What proportion of Dynasts are Mortal?

What proportion of Patricians are Exalted?

How peaceful is the Realm?

How Powerful are the realm Legions?

How independent are the legions?

What proportion of dynasts enter military service?

How Powerful are the Thousand Scales?

How independent are the Thousand Scales?

What proportion of dynasts enter the civil service?

How powerful is the Deliberative?

How independent is the Deliberative?

What proportion of dynasts enter the deliberative?

Do the Houses have private Armies?

How much does the Realm rely upon slave labour?

How self-sufficient is the Realm?

How much are dynasts subject to laws?

8.1.2 Lookshy

How Influential is Lookshy in the Scavenger Lands?

How much more common are Dragonblooded in the Lookshy than Elsewhere?

How badly does Lookshy treat foreigners?

How badly does Lookshy treat mortals?

How badly does the Lookshy treat godbloods?

How badly does the Lookshy treat civilians?

What proportion of Gentiles are Mortal?

How Powerful is the 7th Legion?

How independent is the civilian government?

What proportion of Gentiles enter military service?

Do the Gentes have private Armies?

How much does the Lookshy rely upon slave labour?

How self-sufficient is the Lookshy?

8.1.3 The Statrapies

These questions deal with those Threshold nations which pay tribute to the realm, the answers to some of them may vary by Satrapy.

How far into the threshold does the Realm's influence spread?

How much control does the local government have?

How crippling are the Realm taxes?

How much military force does the realm station in the Threshold?

Does the protection of the Realm provide any real benefits?

Did it used to?

How much do Realm attitudes apply to satrapy citizens?

How happy are the people with being subject to the Realm?

How happy is the government with being subject to the Realm?

How large is the independence movement?

8.1.4 Threshold Countries

These questions should be answered for each country which is going to matter to the game (except for the Realm), including Realm satrapies.

How populous is the country?

How far from the sea is the country?

How accessible is the country?

How far from the Wyld is the country?

How far from the Realm is the country?

How continuous is the area controlled?

What is the local ethnic make-up?

What is the main industry?

How is the country ruled?

How unified is the country?

How is the military organised?

How strong is the military?

Do powerful individuals keep private armies?

How peaceful is the country?

How influential is the country in the local region?

What does the country view as High Culture?

How old is the country?

How did the people cope with the Great Contagion?

Does the country have a dominant class/sex/race?

How does society treat the Exalted?

How does society treat godblooded?

How does society treat the less dominant sex/ethnic groups?

What are the marriage customs?

How does inheritance work?

How urban is the society?

How much does the society rely upon the slave trade?

How large is the Guild's presence?

8.1.5 The Guild

The following questions determine the important of the single most powerful non-religious non-governmental organisation in the setting.

How large is the Guild?

How influential is the Guild?

How unified is the Guild?

How much does the Guild trade with the Realm?

How much does the Guild trade with Lookshy?

How much of the Guild's revenues come from the slave trade?

How much of the Guild's revenues come from trading with the fair folk?

8.2 Religion

Religion is a very important subject in most games set in Creation. The power of the Immaculate order is especially important in a game involving the Anathema, but even in a mortals or dragonblooded game the local religious beliefs are very important.

8.2.1 The Immaculate Order

How influential is the Immaculate order within the Realm?

How influential is the Immaculate order within the Satrapies?

How influential is the Immaculate order in the Threshold?

How Common are Immaculate Monastries in the Realm?

How Common are Immaculate Monastries in the Satrapies?

How Common are Immaculate Monastries in the Threshold?

How large is an immaculate Monastery?

What proportion of immaculate monks are exalted?

How large is a Wyld Hunt?

How Common are Wyld Hunts in the Realm?

How Common are Wyld Hunts in the Satrapies?

How Common are Wyld Hunts in the Threshold?

Do immaculates allow temples to individual gods?

How often do immaculates hold prayer ceremonies?

How much does the immaculate order ban artwork?

Are Fair-folk Anathema?

What does the immaculate order teach about Anathema?

How much immaculate doctrine is actually known to the common man?

8.2.2 The Lookshyan Immaculate Faith

How influential is the Immaculate Faith in Lookshy?

How influential is the Immaculate Faith within the Wider River Province?

How influential is the Immaculate Faith in the rest of the Threshold?

Does the Faith have monasteries?

Does Lookshy organise Wyld-hunts?

Do lookshyan immaculates allow temples to individual gods?

How often do lookshyan immaculates hold prayer ceremonies?

How much does the immaculate faith ban artwork?

Are Fair-folk Anathema?

What does the immaculate faith teach about Anathema?

How much immaculate doctrine is actually known to the common man?

8.2.3 The Thousand Gods Heresy

How accurately does Creation's religious doctrine reflect the actual structure of heaven?

How common is worship of the Unconquered Sun?

How common is worship of the Luna?

How common is worship of the The Maidens?

How common is worship of Gaia?

How common is worship of the The Elemental Dragons?

How common is worship of high ranking celestial gods?

How common is worship of local terrestrial gods?

How common is worship of lesser elemental dragons?

How common is worship of elementals?

How common is worship of the dead?

How common is worship of demons?

How common is worship of Fair Folk?

How common is worship of the Yozis?

How common is worship of the Neverborn?

How common is worship of the Void?

How common is worship of the Exalted?

How often do gods empower their priests with Thaumaturgical rites?

8.3 Demographics

8.4 Geomancy

8.5 Technology, Artifacts and Magitech

8.6 Other Realms

8.7 The Exalted

8.8 Theme and Style

8.9 Major Variations