

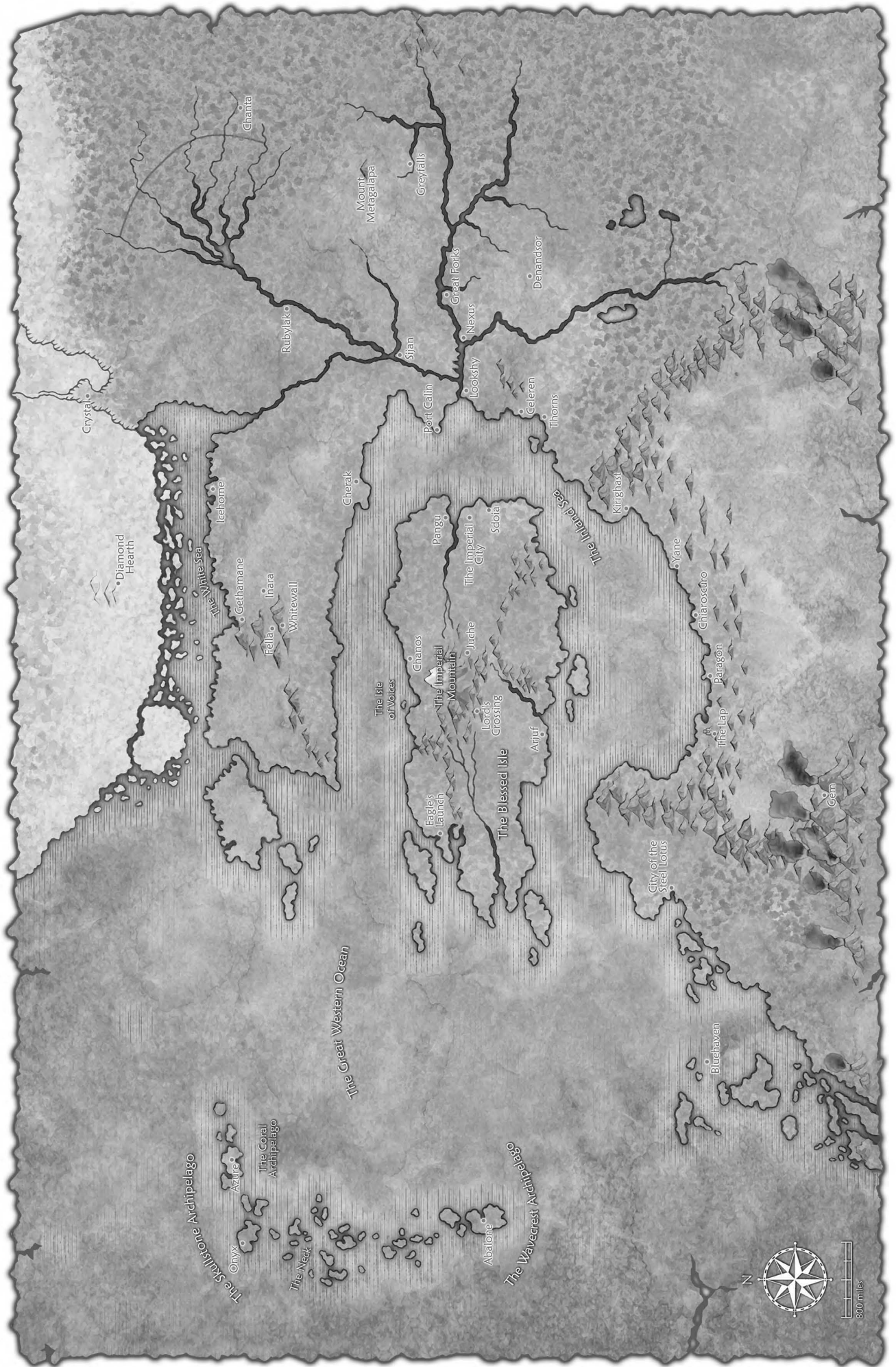
EXALTED

SECOND EDITION

RETURN TO THE TOMB OF 5 CORNERS



FREE RULES AND ADVENTURE



Crystal

Diamond Hearth

White Sea

Icehome

Gethamane

Fella

Inara

Whitewall

Cherak

Port Galin

Lookshy

Celeren

Thorns

Kinghaaf

Yane

Charosadro

Paragon

The Lap

Gem

Bluehaven

City of the Steel Lotus

The Blessed Isle

Amuf

Lord's Crossing

The Imperial Mountain

Juche

The Imperial City

Scoia

Pangu

Chanos

The Isle of Voices

Eagle's Landing

Great Forks

Nexus

Denandor

Greyfalls

Mount Metagalapa

Rubyblako

Sjan

Charita

The Skallstone Archipelago

Onyx

Azire

The Coral Archipelago

The Neck

Abalone

The Wavecrest Archipelago

The Great Western Ocean

The Inland Sea

800 miles

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THE WORLD OF EXALTED

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

—Tanith Lee, *Night's Master*

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

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

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

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

beneath the Inland Sea, and a lesser Second Age fell upon the world.

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

But no more.

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

Will they save Creation, or destroy it?

HOW TO PLAY EXALTED

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





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

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

Return to the Tomb of Five Corners is best played by five people. Four players assume the roles of returning Solar Exalts, each taking one of the sample characters included in this booklet. The fifth player assumes the position of Storyteller, reading the adventure beforehand, overseeing the rules, describing environments with which the players' characters can interact, narrating the results of actions and

playing all the secondary characters the players will meet along the way. The Storyteller and all the players should read the character sheets and the section of this booklet entitled "The World of Exalted" (the part you're reading now), but only the Storyteller should read the section entitled "The Tomb of Five Corners."

ROLLING DICE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHARACTER SHEETS

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

CONCEPT AND MOTIVATION

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

CASTE AND ANIMA

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

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

ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES

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

ADVANTAGES

CHARMS AND BACKGROUNDS

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

WILLPOWER

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

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





VIRTUES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIMIT BREAK

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

ESSENCE

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

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

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

HEALTH CHART

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



0. 2. 3. 4. 5.

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

ANIMA

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

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

ANIMA BANNER

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

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



STUNTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DRAMA

One of the most exciting parts of **Exalted** is when characters are locked in battle or engaged in explosive action.

This section covers rules for combat between small groups of characters. The **Exalted Second Edition** main rulebook also has rules for massed battle between armies with players taking the roles of commanders and generals, but that system is beyond the scope of this booklet.

TIME

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

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dash (3/-2): Characters may sprint ([Dexterity + 6] - [wound penalty + armor mobility penalty]) yards per tick (minimum two yards). Though a character may abort the dash and perform another action at any point during a dash, DV

does not refresh until the end of the action following the dash. Characters may not move and dash on the same tick.

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

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


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

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

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

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





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

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

DEFENSE VALUE

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

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

DAMAGE AND SOAK

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

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

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

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

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

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

KNOCKDOWN AND KNOCKBACK

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

At the Storyteller's option, in addition to simply be-

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

HEALTH

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

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

TRACKING HEALTH

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

"0 [/]

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

"0 [X]

"1 [/]

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

"0 [X]

"1 [X] [/]

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

SOCIAL COMBAT

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

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOCIAL ATTACKS

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

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

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


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

SOCIAL DAMAGE

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

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





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

CHARMS

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

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

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

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

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

COMBOS

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

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

HOW TO DO EVERYTHING ELSE

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

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

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

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

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

My Circlemates,

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

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

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

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

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

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

avoided by the people of the region for as long as anyone can remember.

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

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

WHAT ABOUT THE FIRST ONE?

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

