Exalted Core Rewrite Project (2009-2010)

Volume 1: Mortals

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Chapter 1: Game Concepts

What is a Roleplaying Game?

Roleplaying games are a form of structured collaborative storytelling. The players cooperate to tell a story, but they must obey certain rules. A character who is very weak cannot break a stone with his bare hands. An arrow to the chest is harmful to people without armor or magic. For the most part, the rules of a roleplaying game exist to determine the outcome of events, rather than restrict the decisions the player makes (so, the weak character can *try* to break the stone, but the players must consult the rules to see if he succeeds).

The main mechanism for determining outcomes is a random dice roll. When the outcome of an action is uncertain, the players roll one or more ten-sided dice. Exactly how many dice must be rolled, and what result must be attained, is a function of the rules.

Exalted is usually played by between 2 and 6 players. One of those players is always *the Storyteller*. The storyteller is responsible for planning and describing the story's setting, obstacles, antagonists, and minor characters. The storyteller is also responsible for interpreting and applying the rules. If there is a conflict, any player may voice an opinion, but the storyteller makes the final decision.

A particular group of players may have one regular storyteller, or they may take turns being the storyteller. Being a storyteller can be both demanding and rewarding, so there is no one right way to decide who gets the privilege.

The remaining 1-5 players are responsible for controlling *player characters*. When you control a player character, you are responsible for responding to the world described by the storyteller, making decisions when confronted with obstacles, and interacting with antagonists, minor characters, and other player characters. Generally speaking, each player who is not the storyteller controls exactly one player character.

Example:

Storyteller: After many long days of travel, you find yourselves in the village of Nowhere Special. You see a few rundown cottages, and a dilapidated well, but the village seems to contain little else of interest. The few villagers who notice you stare at you with a slack-jawed indifference.

Player 1: I approach one of the villagers and say, "Hey there, my good fellow, is there anything of interest going on?"

Storyteller: The villager looks at you with what looks like fear. He runs away, dropping his bucket.

Player 2: I look in the bucket.

Storyteller: It's water. Probably from the well.

Player 3: I start looking in the cottages, something fishy is going on here.

Storyteller: Okay, the first couple of cottages you enter are empty, except for the villagers' meager possessions. The third one you enter, you see a cowering woman, clutching her child. They seem afraid of this strange warrior who has burst into their home.

Player 3: I apologize and leave quickly.

Player 2: Do I notice anything strange about this water?

Storyteller: It looks like ordinary water.

Player 2: But I'm a trained alchemist.

Storyteller: Do you set up your alchemy equipment in the middle of the street?

Player 2: I guess I'll wait. I use one of my vials to gather a sample.

Player 1: I start scouting the area for somewhere safe to spend the night.

And so on, more or less indefinitely. Eventually, the players will discover the sinister scheme to control the villagers through their tainted water supply, but by that time, if the Storyteller is doing her job, some other obstacle or challenge will be just around the corner.

A final note, a roleplaying game, unlike a board game or a card game, is not strictly competitive. All of the players have the same ultimate goal – the creation of an entertaining and interesting story. The storyteller is not out to "beat" the players, rather, it should be her goal to create challenges that are at the very limits of the characters' ability. Similarly, while characters may find themselves in competition with each other, it is the responsibility of the players to make sure this competition does not derail the game as a whole.

Traits

Traits describe your character. They are your character's inborn capabilities, learned skills, and moral convictions. All traits have a *rating*. The maximum trait rating depends on a character's species and magical power, but for mortal humans it is usually 5. If something does not have a rating it is not a trait. Attributes, Abilities, Virtues, and Essence are traits. Charms, Health Levels, Willpower points, and Motes are not.

Dice Pools

To determine the success of the character's actions, the player rolls a *dice pool*. A dice pool is formed from one or more traits. The most common dice pool is an Attribute plus an Ability. When the character attempts an action that has a chance to fail, the player rolls a number of 10-sided dice equal to the total dice pool.

Static Values

Some actions are the function of a constant, passive capability. These actions are not rolled. Instead, the player references a *static value*. To calculate most static values, add one or more of the player's traits together (usually an Attribute + Ability) and divide by two. Some static values (such as a character's Bashing Soak or RDV) are divided by a number other than two.

If an effect references one of the character's trait ratings without requiring that trait to be rolled, the trait rating is considered to be a static value.

Target Numbers and Successes

When a player rolls a dice pool, each die's result is compared to a *target number*. If the die shows a result that is equal to or greater than the target number, the die is counted as a *success*. The player adds the successes together to determine the roll's *success total*.

The target number of a roll is **almost always 7**. Only powerful magic will raise or lower it.

Example: A character with a dice pool of four rolls against a target number of 7. The dice show 4, 5, 7, and 9. Two of the dice are equal to or greater than the target number, so the roll has a success total of two.

Difficulty

Some actions are easier than others. Hitting a bullseye is harder than hitting the broad side of a barn. Actions that are especially challenging possess a *difficulty*. The difficulty subtracts from the roll's success total to yield *threshold successes*. If the roll has at least one threshold success, the action it represents succeeds. If the roll has 0 or fewer threshold successes, it fails.

Unless otherwise stated, an action is assumed to have no difficulty. This is the same as having a difficulty of 0. In these circumstances, the threshold successes are equal to the success total.

Static values often act as a difficulty to dice rolls. A static value used as a difficulty (like a DV versus an attack) is treated as any other difficulty. The character who rolls the dice pool must still achieve at least one threshold success, regardless of the relative power of the characters (although many powerful Charms break this rule).

Bonuses and Penalties

Some circumstances will aid or hinder a character's ability to function. Blindness intense physical pain, and other negative effects will restrict a character's actions, imposing *penalties*. Exceptional equipment, well-described stunts, and other positive effects will empower a character's actions, providing *bonuses*.

Bonuses and penalties usually affect dice pools. Unless it specifically says otherwise, a dice pool bonus (or dice pool penalty) does not change static values, even static values derived from the affected traits.

Some bonuses and penalties explicitly affect static values. These effects add or subtract from the value directly, not from the traits used to calculate that value. Thus, bonuses and penalties are factored into a static value after division has taken place, not before.

Example: MDV is a static value derived by dividing a character's (Composure + Integrity + Essence) by two. Acting against a Virtue penalizes MDV. A character with a Composure and Integrity of three each and an Essence and Compassion of two each would have an MDV of 2 ([Composure + Integrity + Essence] / 2 – Compassion) instead of 3 ([Composure + Integrity + Essence – Compassion] / 2) when acting against Compassion.

Some powerful effects will provide a bonus to (or penalize) both dice pools and static values. They will explicitly say so. If a bonus or penalty does not specify what it affects, assume it alters the character's dice pools.

Penalties versus Difficulty

Penalties and Difficulty both make a roll less likely to succeed. Apply a penalty when a hindering condition affects only a single character (the narcotic effect of a drugged weapon). Raise the difficulty if the hindering condition would affect everyone present (high winds), even if there is only one character attempting a restricted action (all of the character's friends had the good sense to get out of those damn high winds).

The above distinction is the official rule, and effects will be written with that distinction in mind, but storytellers shouldn't worry too much about it. The difference between difficulties and penalties is largely an illusion. A dice pool penalty of two is roughly equivalent to a difficulty increase of one. When judging the factors at play in any given roll, use whichever feels most comfortable.

Minimum Dice Pool

After all penalties and bonuses have been applied, if the character's dice pool is 0 or less, it is considered to be 1, provided the character originally had at least one die to roll. Many effects alter minimum dice pools. A roll's minimum dice pool can never be greater than the dice pool's original value, before bonuses and penalties.

Effects that set a dice pool to a particular value (usually 0) without applying penalties are not subject to dice pool minimums.

Static values are only rarely penalized, but when they are, they have no minimum value.

Order of Modifiers

A roll can be modified from several sources. Unless otherwise stated, all bonuses and penalties are cumulative. Most of the time, the order they're applied doesn't matter. If clarification is ever needed, they should be applied in the following order: non-magical bonuses, non-magical penalties, magical bonuses, magical penalties, extra successes, and finally difficulty increases (first non-magical then magical).

Extended Rolls

Some goals take time to succeed. Others judge success or failure based on how long they take to complete. In these cases, the character makes an *extended roll.* The action is assigned an *interval* and a *success cost.*

An interval is a length of time the character spends performing the action. Each roll made by the player represents the character's activity during an amount of time equal to the interval.

The success cost of an extended roll is how many successes the action needs to succeed. After each roll, alter the success cost based on the roll's threshold successes. Positive threshold successes "pay off" (decrease) the success cost. Negative threshold successes increase the success cost.

There is no theoretical limit to how high a success cost can rise. Most extended actions do not have a single point where they decisively fail. Instead, difficult extended rolls can take so much time and effort that it makes more sense to give up or start over than to continue.

Not every extended roll can be abandoned at will, however. Some situations (being lost in the wilderness) are by nature inescapable. Others (researching a spell) are actively hindered by a failed approach. Only if there is a reasonable place to start over (the bottom of a sheer cliff) can a player "reset" the success cost.

Rounding

Whenever a rule or effect would require the player to round a value, the players of gods, the Exalted, and other magical creatures round favorably (usually up) and the players of mortals and nonmagical creatures round unfavorably (usually down).

The Rule of 10

When making a roll based on the traits of a heroic mortal or supernatural being, count 10s as two successes.

Botches

If the success total of a roll is 0, and at least one die shows a 1, the roll *botches*. A botch is worse than a normal failure, often imposing penalties on further rolls by the character or causing the character some other serious inconvenience (a poorly made weapon will break on a botch).

Dramatic Time

Mostly, keeping track of time in the game is similar to tracking time in the real world. Activities can take minutes, hours, days, or years. But sometimes, the dramatic placement of events is more important than their precise duration and specialized terms become necessary.

The longest unit of dramatic time is the *story*. A story encompasses all the events surrounding a single goal or plot. The goal that defines a story is chosen by the storyteller, with input from the other players. It should be large enough in scope to cover all the activities of single session (going to the market to buy a weapon is not usually interesting enough to count as a single story), but not so large that a character can't complete several in the course of a career (by contrast with the previous example, conquering the Realm should be broken into multiple stories, comprising an extended plot arc).

Below the story is the *scene*. The length of a scene varies, but a good guideline to use is "interesting things happen in scenes, boring things happen between scenes." Fighting an enemy, persuading a reluctant martial arts master to come out of retirement, and exploring an ancient solar tomb should all be considered single scenes if the events take place without a break. When time passes uneventfully (the characters go to sleep, travel without incident, or withdraw to reconsider their tactics), the current scene ends.

More tightly focused than a scene is *combat time*. Combat time begins when a player makes a *join battle* roll.

Characters in combat time take *simple actions* on their *turn*. A turn begins when the character takes a simple action and ends after one or more (usually 3 to 6) *ticks* have passed. A tick is an abstract measure of time that is meant to represent the relative speed of characters in a scene. In an intense physical combat between two mortals, it is equal to about one second. In a clash between armies, it is equal to about one minute. If the Unconquered Sun ever fought Lieger, a single tick might equal a day and a night.

The smallest unit of time is the *instant*. An instant is "just long enough." It is the length of time required to avoid a single attack, to spot smoke on the horizon, or shout a warning to a friend. The main purpose of the instant is to limit the number of responses to a single event (activating a counterattack charm only takes an instant, but it is usually impossible to counter the counterattack because the instant is just long enough for a single response.)

Action Types

Anything the character does that references the character's traits is an *action*. Riding a horse, making an attack, writing a letter, resisting a poison, and applying a defense are all actions. Talking to a friend is not an action, but telling a lie is. If an activity does not involve a static value or dice pool, it is not an action.

Most of the time, the character performs *basic actions*. A basic action is any action where speed is not measured in ticks. A basic action can take as long as an age or be over as quickly as an instant. If an activity takes too long to perform in combat, or is considered an instant response (most commonly, applying a defense or resisting an effect), it is a basic action.

If an action takes a meaningful amount of time in combat, it is a *timed action.* There are two types of timed actions: *simple actions* and *reflexive actions.* The defining characteristic of timed actions is that every such action possesses a *speed rating.* The speed rating of a timed action determines the duration of a character's turn in combat. If the character performs more than one timed action on a turn, the turn's total length is equal to the sum of the actions' speed ratings.

A simple action represents a major commitment of the character's time. The player always declares a single simple action at the beginning of each turn. Simple actions never have a speed rating lower than two.

A reflexive action requires the character's effort and attention, but is not as complicated as a simple action. Reflexive actions can be declared at any time during the character's turn and their speed rating delays the start of the character's next turn by up to a single tick. The speed rating of a reflexive action is always either 0 or 1, and without magic, a character can take only a single reflexive action per tick.

Example: A character's turn begins on the fourth tick of combat. The player decides to make an attack with a speed rating of 5. That character's next turn begins on the ninth tick (4 + 5). Once per tick, the character may take a reflexive action. If the character takes a Move action (speed 0) on tick 6 and two Dash actions (speed 1) on ticks 7 and 8, the character's next turn begins on tick 11 (9 + 1 + 1) instead.

Stunts

Exalted is a game of heroic action. When the players immerse themselves in the spirit of the game, the characters reap the benefits. Describing a character's actions in terms that go beyond dry mechanics yields a *stunt bonus*. A character can try for a stunt bonus on any action, but are limited to at most one stunt per tick. Any stunt bonus achieved applies equally to every action taken on that tick.

Stunt bonuses can award 1 to 3 dice to a dice pool or a similar amount to a static value (if appropriate to the stunt description). The size of a stunt bonus depends on how the player describes the character's action.

A level one stunt **is unique and avoids system terminology**. *Example: Saying "I duck under the blow" instead of "I apply my ADV," provided that same description was not recently used.* If an action enhanced by a level one stunt is successful, the character regains one point of spent willpower.

A level two stunt **incorporates elements of the scenery or environment**. *Example: "My razor sharp blade slices a falling leaf in two as it surges for the Dragon-Blooded's head."* If an action enhanced by a level two stunt is successful, the character may regain either one point of spent willpower or a single spent mote.

A level three stunt is subjective. It is a stunt that provides an especially beautiful, thematically appropriate, or memorable moment. *Example: Five times fifty virgins dance in the village square, the jangle of their ceremonial gold jewelry a counterpoint to the lowing of the victim. A jagged obsidian hatchet, as old as Creation, is raised in salute to the God. The stench of the beast and the high heat of the endless savanna make the priest's eyes water, but the moment is perfect. The hatchet falls and the screaming of the victim is drowned out by the cheering of the crowd. The prayer is complete.* If an action enhanced by a level three stunt succeeds, the character restores one spent point of willpower and one spent mote.

Stunts, even level three stunts, do not need to be long and complicated. Their overall effect on the game should by cumulative and subtle. Declared at the right time, even something as simple as "so I kick him in the nuts" can be a level three stunt.

Stunts can also allow a character to temporarily do the impossible. Some charms have the Stunt (#) keyword. If the player describes an appropriate stunt, the character can access those charms without having to learn them. Further details can be found in **Chapter 8: The Three Worthy Disciplines**.

Rule Zero

If following a rule makes the game less enjoyable, or if a rule is too difficult to remember, ignore it. The democratic will of the players and storyteller is the final authority on the rules of the game.

Chapter 2: Characters

The Four Trait Types

Characters are defined by four types of traits. *Attributes* are the character's inborn qualities. They represent broad tendencies and natural talents. They are things that cannot be learned, only nurtured and developed. Physical strength, reaction time, and native charisma are all determined by the character's Attributes.

Abilities represent trained skills. They are what the character has learned to do over time. Wielding a sword, building a house, and swaying a crowd are all governed by the character's Abilities. Abilities are often associated with *Specialties*. A Specialty is a sub-category of an Ability, an area where the character is especially skilled.

Virtues are the foundations of the character's moral code, personality, and world view. They represent the great, heroic passions. Someone with low Virtues is weak-willed and ordinary. Those with high Virtues are often counted among the great.

Essence is the character's overall magical power. It represents the power to perceive and manipulate the fundamental energies of Creation. Any naturally material creature with an Essence score of 1 is considered a mortal (even if that creature is a demon or elemental). Anyone with an Essence score of 2 or greater is considered a supernatural being of one sort or another.

The Seven Advantages

Traits have ratings that determine the size of dice pools and static values, but they are not the only mechanically important qualities of a character. Characters also possess non-numerical *Advantages*. The seven types of Advantage aren't necessarily the only ones that exist, but they are the only ones that are intrinsic to natives of Creation.

Charms are magical powers that are a natural outgrowth of a character's traits. A powerful flaming punch attack is viewed as a perfectly ordinary, albeit impressive, aspect of a character's Unarmed skill. Charms are superficially similar to, but technically distinct from *Spells*. Both are magical, but Spells manipulate the laws of Creation directly. Their power is considered unnatural, and exterior to a character.

Intimacies are associated with a character's Virtues. While Virtues represent great and persistent moral passions, Intimacies represent beliefs, preferences, goals, and relationships the character thinks important. Possessing an Intimacy extends the benefits and drawbacks of having a Virtue to other things the character might want to protect (defending one's family isn't always a necessarily compassionate goal, but with an Intimacy, it is treated as one).

Willpower represents the character's determination and strength of purpose. It is an inner reserve of strength that allows a character to continue, despite a natural inclination to stop.

Motes are tiny bursts of magical energy. Many Charms have a more powerful effect when charged with a mote. All Spells need at least one mote to cast.

Panoply Slots are an abstraction representing the overall persistent power of a character's soul. In order to use the most powerful Artifacts, a character must harmonize them with the energy of the soul, taking up one or more Panoply Slots. Certain long-duration charms (of the Panoply type) also fill up a character's Panoply Slots.

Finally, most characters have nine *health levels*. When a character is struck by an attack, the damage "fills in" one or more health levels. A character with no remaining unfilled health levels is likely, but not guaranteed, to die. Many large beasts and supernatural creatures have more than nine health levels. Those mortals without a great heroic destiny (never a player character) are called *extras*. Extras have three health levels (health levels are discussed in **Chapter 4: Combat**).

Attributes

Characters possess nine Attributes. Most living creatures possess a rating of at least one in every Attribute. A rating of zero is equivalent to a terminal illness or incapacitating disability. Normal humans have a maximum attribute rating of five in all the attributes. Gods, Exalts, and nonhuman species have their own limitations.

Attributes are broken down into three categories. Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina are the physical Attributes. Charisma, Manipulation, and Composure are the social Attributes. Intuition, Intelligence, and Wits are the mental Attributes.

Physical Attributes

The physical Attributes represent the character's body. They are the character's power, speed, and toughness.

Strength

Strength is a measure of the character's physical power. Strength determines how much the character can lift and carry, how hard the character hits in hand-to-hand combat, and how far the character can jump. It is paired with an Ability whenever a task would benefit from pure muscle power.

A character with a Strength of 1 is a complete weakling, barely able to lift a melee weapon, let alone swing one. Seasoned warriors and skilled athletes possess a Strength of 3. A Strength rating of 5 is on the verge of supernatural. It is the rating possessed by the mightiest of heroes.

Dexterity

Dexterity governs the grace and precision of the character's actions. A character uses Dexterity to balance on a narrow beam, aim a ranged weapon, weave a tapestry, or squeeze through a tight space. It is paired with an Ability whenever a task would succeed primarily through a delicate touch or flexible frame.

A character with a Dexterity of 1 is a klutz, someone who could miss an elephant at ten paces. A skilled jeweler or dancer will possess a Dexterity of 3. Dexterity 5 is the province of the most silent assassins or slippery thieves.

Stamina

Stamina is a measure of the character's toughness and overall physical health. It is used to resist poison and disease, endure torture, and push beyond the character's normal physical limits. Stamina is paired with an Ability whenever a task would call for physical stability and consistency of performance.

A character with a Stamina of 1 is sickly and frail, and probably suffers from chronic illness. Seasoned travelers and those who practice preventative medicine are likely to have a Stamina of 3. Only the toughest, most unkillable survivors have a Stamina of 5.

Social Attributes

Social Attributes govern how the character interacts with other people. They represent force of personality, social insight, and self confidence.

Charisma

Charisma is a measure of social forcefulness. It is used when the character unapologetically demands to be heard. Characters with a high Charisma tend to be raging egoists, but many find them strangely likable. Charisma is paired with an Ability when a task calls for forthright honesty, appeals to virtue, or refusing to let an adversary get a word in edgewise.

A character with a Charisma of 1 is socially invisible in the worst possible way, a meek, apologetic loser. An experienced leader or naturally vivacious soul probably has a Charisma of 3. Charisma 5 puts a character into the same league as history's greatest generals and demagogues.

Manipulation

Manipulation represents a character's ability to influence with subtlety. It is used to express empathy, tell believable lies, persuade through innuendo and suggestion, and adopt a mien of righteousness. Manipulation is paired with an Ability when a task requires sympathetic tact, carefully chosen words, or a smokescreen of lies.

A character with a Manipulation of 1 is harsh, undiplomatic, and blunt, completely blind to other people's motives. A skilled salesman or kindly priest is likely to have a Manipulation of 3. Characters with a Manipulation of 5 are never what they appear to be, concealing great wisdom under a guise of foolishness or great ambition under a cloak of false piety.

Composure

Composure represents the character's social equilibrium and consistency of mood. It is used to resist fast-talk and noble-sounding speeches, defy supernatural mind control, and keep conflicting goals and imperatives in perspective. Composure is paired with an Ability whenever a task calls for a careful, considered decision in the face of conflicting social pressures or emotional urges.

A character with a Composure of 1 is impulsive and flighty, tending to confuse truth with the most recent set of lies. An experienced judge or respected matriarch is likely to have a Composure of 3. A Composure of 5 is the sign of a lifetime of wisdom and deep spiritual strength.

Mental Attributes

The mental Attributes are the innate qualities of the character's mind. They govern the character's connection to the environment, mental acuity, and reaction time.

Intuition

Intuition represents a character's subconscious reasoning, automatic mental processes, and spontaneous creativity. It is used to draw unexpected conclusions, create new ideas and inventions, and to take stock of the character's surroundings. Intuition is added to an Ability whenever a task calls for noticing seemingly unimportant details, defying conventional wisdom, or making a shrewd guess.

A character with an Intuition of 1 is mentally inflexible and arbitrarily skeptical of anything new. An insightful poet or scrappy street urchin is likely to have have an Intuition of 3. Those thinkers and inventors with an Intuition of 5 become the central figures in new religions and cutting-edge industries.

Intelligence

Intelligence represents the character's logic and memory. It is used to follow premises to their natural conclusion, draw on academic knowledge, and systematically separate good information from bad. Combine Intelligence with an Ability whenever a mental task would benefit from careful consideration of competing options, expert knowledge, and rigorous double-checking.

A character with an Intelligence of 1 is a genuine know-nothing, as likely to trust rumor and superstition as verifiable facts. Skilled scholars and bureaucrats are likely to possess an Intelligence of 3. An Intelligence of 5 is the sign of an exemplary sage.

Wits

Wits represents a character's ability to think in the moment. It is used to react to unexpected events, respond without hesitation, and ignore distractions. Wits is added to an Ability whenever even a slight delay would cause a task to fail and speed is more important than insight or reason.

A character with a Wits of 1 is panic-prone, unable to handle stress and the unexpected. An expert waiter or battle-weary veteran soldier is likely to have a Wits of 3. Those with Wits 5 are completely unflappable, able to react better than most people plan.

Abilities

Abilities lie at the heart of a character concept. Unlike the broad, universal tendencies of the Attributes, Abilities represent specific, consciously learned capabilities. In many ways, the Abilities possessed by a starting character form an abbreviated history of the character's life before the game began. For most creatures of Creation, the absolute limit on an Ability's rating is 5. Only those who have practiced an Ability for more than a human lifetime can have a higher rating.

It is possible, even likely, to have an Ability rated at 0. An Ability of 0 is one the character has never practiced or developed. In general, only heroic characters develop high Abilities by neglecting unwanted skills. Most people have a variety of 1's and 2's and very few 0's and 5's. The perceived skill level of the five standard Ability ratings is as follows:

1. Characters with this level of skill are interested in an Ability. They may pursue it as a hobby or study it at an apprentice level.
2. Characters with this level of skill may practice an Ability professionally. They may not be standouts in the field, but they can make a living.
3. Characters with this level of skill are considered experts in an Ability. They can command a higher than average wage and are often consulted by professionals who run into difficult problems.
4. Characters with this level of skill have practiced an Ability for a lifetime. They are considered unassailable authorities by most of those familiar with the field.
5. Characters with this level of skill are the masters' masters. They have developed the Ability over the course of a lifetime and then managed to distinguish themselves from similarly experienced peers.

Player characters are not bound by the above guidelines, but they should be aware of them. A simple farmhand with a Weaponry Ability of 5 is a freakish prodigy, someone even legendary Martial Arts masters would find difficult to train.

The list of twenty-five Abilities is comprehensive. Each one corresponds to one of Creation's twenty-five constellations, and resonates astrologically with the basic laws of the universe. If a task does not seem to fall into any Ability's purview, the Storyteller should simply choose whichever Ability is closest.

The description of an Ability will name an Attribute that is often paired with the Ability for dice pools and static values. That Attribute is merely the default, to be used if no more appropriate choice suggests itself. *Example: Forgecraft is usually paired with Dexterity, but identifying a rare piece of metal work would call upon Intelligence.*

Specialties

True Ability ratings are actually quite rare. More frequently, non-heroic characters possess Specialties. A Specialty represents a character's talent for or focus on a specific aspect of an Ability. They allow characters to have a mastery of a single field of endeavor without being learned in those aspects of the Ability that are inappropriate to the character concept. *Example: The Forgecraft ability allows a character to work in any durable material, from iron and steel to gems and clockwork. The typical village blacksmith probably has a Forgecraft rating of zero and a two-point specialty in Blacksmithing.*

Specialties provide between one and three extra dice to an Ability roll, but Specialties are not technically traits. Rather, the dice provided by a Specialty are considered part of the Ability's rating for all purposes, when the Specialty applies. This means that the specialty dice *are* divided when calculating a static rating (unlike a universal bonus) and that charms or effects that reference an Ability treat the character's Specialty dice as part of the Ability's rating, if appropriate. Learning a charm is never considered an appropriate function of a Specialty, however, so only a character's base Ability rating can be used to meet an Ability minimum.

Example: Earth-Blessed Resistance Excellency is an Elemental Manipulation charm that has a Resistance minimum of 2. By spending a mote, it adds (Resistance) dice to a Resistance-based dice pool. If the character had a Resistance rating of 2 and 1-point Resistance specialty in "study," the character could spend a mote to get 3 bonus dice for an all-night study session, but if the character's Resistance rating were only one, the character could not learn the charm, even though learning a charm might be seen as a form of "study."

A character need not possess an Ability rating to have a Specialty in that Ability. No combination of Specialties may provide more than 3 extra points to an Ability, regardless of how many Specialties apply to a single roll. A character may possess as many specialties as desired, though the maximum size of any single specialty is always 3.

Administration

Administration governs the character's interactions with formal organizations and bodies of law. Use Administration to **feed and supply an army, petition a Dominion,** and **draw upon legal and historical knowledge.** Administration is usually paired with Intelligence for dice pools and static values.

Archery

Archery governs the character's ability to aim and service ranged weapons. Use Archery to **fire a bow or firewand** or **target any sort of artillery or siege weapon.** Archery is usually paired with Dexterity for dice pools and static values.

Athletics

Athletics governs the character's ability to squeeze the maximum performance out of the physical Attributes. Use Athletics to **jump, balance, climb, swim, sprint,** or **lift heavy weights**. Athletics is usually paired with Stamina for dice pools and static values.

Awareness

Awareness governs the character's ability to get the most out of the five senses. Use Awareness to **spot an ambush, notice subtle details, join battle,** or **spy or eavesdrop.** Awareness is usually paired with Intuition for dice pools and static values.

Brawl

Brawl governs the character's ability to fight with unconventional tactics. Use Brawl to **use ordinary objects as weapons, use a weapon improperly (throwing a sword), wield light or brawling weapons effectively,** or **employ dirty tricks and underhanded tactics.** Brawl is usually paired with Strength for dice pools and static values.

Conveyance

Conveyance governs the character's ability to control various means of transportation. Use Conveyance to **ride or calm a horse, pilot a ship, navigate by the stars or with a map,** or **cope with unexpected problems with the character's transportation.** Conveyance is usually paired with Wits for dice pools and static values.

Deception

Deception governs the character's ability to effectively and artfully conceal the truth. Use Deception to **tell a believable lie, disguise the character's physical appearance,** or **conceal the character's motives and intent.** Deception is usually paired with Manipulation for dice pools and static values.

Forgecraft

Forgecraft governs the character's knowledge of and ability to work with durable materials. Use Forgecraft to **make an object out of metal, stone, or carved wood, identify unique craftsmanship,** or **use or identify the mechanical technology of the first age.** Forgecraft is usually paired with Dexterity for dice pools and static values.

Geomancy

Geomancy governs the character's knowledge of geography, geology, and large-scale construction projects. Use Geomancy to **identify the properties of natural terrain, locate Demesnes or likely sources of minerals, chart dragon lines, analyze Manses,** or **design and build Manses or other structures.** Geomancy is usually paired with Intelligence for dice pools and static values.

Integrity

Integrity governs the character's ability to suppress emotion and instinct and call upon inner spiritual strength for a greater purpose. Use Integrity to **resist shaping and mind control, act against a Virtue rated 1 or higher, ignore intimacies,** or **act dispassionately at a critical moment.** Integrity is usually paired with Composure for dice pools and static values.

Investigation

Investigation governs the character's ability to make sense of information. Use Investigation to **assess someone's truthfulness, understand the significance of clues and evidence, conduct research in a disorganized library,** or **discern someone's true motivation.** Investigation is usually paired with Intuition for dice pools and static values.

Larceny

Larceny governs a wide variety of practical criminal skills. Use Larceny to **disable a mechanical trap, pick a lock, pick someone's pocket, conceal smuggled goods, assess the likely security of a well-guarded building,** or **understand criminal slang and culture.** Larceny is usually paired with Wits for dice pools and static values.

Linguistics

Linguistics governs the character's proficiency with language in all its forms. Use Linguistics to **imitate an accent or dialect, decipher a code, write convincingly and clearly, compose poetry or prose, identify an unknown language,** or **use body language and the common traits of a language family to communicate basic ideas.** Linguistics is usually paired with Intelligence for dice pools and static values.

Note: A single, 1-point specialty is sufficient to gain conversational fluency in a language.

Lore

Lore governs the character's knowledge of the natural sciences, including the science of sorcery and the specifics of essence manipulation. Use Lore to **identify a supernatural creature or magical effect, use most varieties of sorcery,** and **call upon the character's knowledge of physics, astronomy, and the other sciences.** Lore is usually paired with Intelligence for dice pools and static values.

Medicine

Medicine governs the character's knowledge of medical techniques, herbalism, and the mechanics of life. Use Medicine to **diagnose and treat an illness, use Alchemy to create a poison or medicine, identify rare plants and animals,** or **raise healthy livestock and crops.** Medicine is usually paired with Intelligence for dice pools and static values.

Negotiation

Negotiation governs the character's ability to master the art of the deal. Use Negotiation to **haggle with a vendor, write an air-tight contract, reach a fair agreement,** or **assess the market value of goods and services.** Negotiation is usually paired with Wits for dice pools and static values.

Performance

Performance governs the character's ability to sway large crowds. Use Performance to **affect the emotions, beliefs, and attitudes of large numbers of people at the same time.** Performance is usually paired with Charisma for dice pools and static values.

Note: Specific performance modes are a function of Performance Specialties. A 1-point Specialty gives basic proficiency in a musical instrument or other mode. True virtuosos possess 2- and 3-point specialties. A character without Performance Specialties is assumed to be an excellent public speaker.

Presence

Presence governs the character's ability to play off a target's emotions, prejudices, and base animal impulses. Use Presence to **seduce, intimidate, garner sympathy, rouse to action, inspire loyalty,** or **bypass a target's reason.** Presence is usually paired with Charisma for dice pools and static values.

Resistance

Resistance governs the character's ability to marshal his physical resources and fight off hostile or weakening influences. Use Resistance to **fight off a poison or sickness effect, endure despite pain and injury,** or **stay awake and active despite fatigue.** Resistance is usually paired with Stamina for dice pools and static values.

Socialize

Socialize governs the character's ability to cope with informal and unspoken, but widespread social forces. Use Socialize to **gracefully adapt to local customs, smooth over cultural misunderstandings, propagandize to an entire culture, assert dominance over a large social group,** or **understand the unspoken political and social relationships of an organization or clique.** Socialize is usually paired with Manipulation for dice pools and static values.

Stealth

Stealth governs the character's ability to remain undetected. Use Stealth to **move without being heard or hide without being seen, blend into a crowd,** or **set up a feint or surprise attack.** Stealth is usually paired with Dexterity for dice pools and static values.

Survival

Survival governs the character's knowledge of the patterns of nature and the practical arts of living. Use Survival to **predict the weather, avoid getting lost in the wilderness, sew or weave, tan leather, light a fire in adverse conditions, track a target by the clues it leaves behind** or **find food and shelter far from civilization.** Survival is usually paired with Wits for dice pools and static values.

Unarmed

Unarmed represents the character's ability to fight without external aids. Use Unarmed to **fight without weapons** or **avoid attacks by moving out of the way.** Unarmed is usually paired with Dexterity for dice pools and static values.

War

War represents the character's knowledge of tactics, strategy, and battlefield leadership. Use War to **assess an enemy's strategy, call upon knowledge of famous battles and abstract military theory, command a unit in mass combat,** or **coordinate attacks.** War is usually paired with Charisma for dice pools and static values.

Weaponry

Weaponry represents the character's ability to wield serious military weapons. Use Weaponry to **attack or block with a military weapon.** Weaponry is usually paired with Dexterity for dice pools and static values.

Virtues

The four Virtues are what separate heroes from the people heroes save. They are the great, often terrible passions that move a character to live a life of legend. Virtues are more than beliefs, they are the drive to act on one's beliefs. They are not quite the same thing as morality. A moral person might feel content to live a life of quiet peace. A character with high virtues feels compelled to go out and correct the world.

Virtues start out at zero. A Virtue of rating of 0 does not necessarily mean a character is opposed to that Virtue (though it often does), it means only that the imperatives of the virtue do not inform the character's actions and following the Virtue does not offer the character strength.

All living creatures, even plants and animals, possess at least 1 point of Virtues, and most humans have 4 points (usually, but not always, one point each Virtue). Virtues are the energy that drives a soul to truly live, rather than merely exist.

A character with all four Virtues rated at 0 has no drive whatsoever. Such pathetic wretches gradually waste away when left to their own devices, finding themselves unable to move or eat, or even sleep, without being commanded to do so. Effects that reduce a person to this state are rare, however. The Fair Folk, who feed on dreams and Virtues, are the most common perpetrators.

Virtues have an absolute maximum rating of 5. Even potent gods and ancient Exalted are bound by this limit.

The Benefits of Virtues

Virtues represent a character's strength of purpose. If a mental influence effect would violate one of a character's Virtues, the Virtue rating is added as a bonus to the character's Mental Defense Value (see **Chapter 5: Social Influence**).

The size of the character's willpower pool is equal to the sum of the character's Virtues. Willpower has four main effects.

- Willpower is a common cost for certain powerful charms.
- The character may resist any mental influence (not just those that violate the character's Virtues) by spending one or more points of willpower.
- If the character takes an action motivated by or in defense of a Virtue, the player may spend 1 willpower point to add the Virtue's rating as a bonus to the action (Virtue bonuses can benefit both dice pools and static values). This is called *channeling a Virtue.*
- The character must often spend one point of willpower to willingly act against a Virtue rated one or higher.

Characters regain spent willpower by rolling their highest Virtue after they wake from a good night's sleep. Each success restores one point of willpower, up to the character's normal maximum. The character may also regain a point of willpower upon succeeding on an action motivated by or in defense of a Virtue, but only if the character did not channel a Virtue to succeed. All stunts and many magical effects have the potential to restore one or more willpower points.

Finally, the character's Virtues determine the strength and number of the character's Intimacies. An Intimacy is a specific goal, ideal, or relationship the character holds dear. Intimacies are treated as Virtues for most purposes. They add (or subtract) from MDV and can act as an excuse to channel a Virtue or regain willpower, even if the action taken on behalf of the intimacy violates its associated Virtue.

Example: A character with a Compassion of 3 has an Intimacy "my family." If the character's family were kidnapped, this intimacy would allow the character to channel Compassion to torture the kidnapper's henchmen for information, even though torture normally violates Compassion. When the kidnapper is found, this same character might regain a point of willpower for killing the rogue in cold blood.

Each Virtue supports different types of Intimacies (hatred of one's enemies is associated with Valor, love of one's friends with Compassion). Normally, a character may only possess a number of Intimacies of any given type equal to the associated Virtue's rating, but social influence can create and erode Intimacies, so the actual number at any given time varies greatly.

The Drawbacks of Virtues

Virtues are great, motivating passions. They are not always convenient or rational. High Virtue ratings can often cause characters to act against their own best interests. A Virtue's rating is applied as a penalty to mental defense when the character is subject to mental influence that seems to support that Virtue.

But more than that, characters with high Virtues find it difficult to willingly act against them, even under the best of circumstances. If an action would violate the precepts of a Virtue, the player must succeed at a Composure + Integrity roll with a difficulty equal to the Virtue's rating in order to proceed. If the roll fails, the character must spend a point of willpower or be forced to abandon that course of action.

If the restricted action is taken in support of a competing Virtue or Intimacy, the competing Virtue's rating is subtracted from the roll's difficulty. If this results in a difficulty of 0 or less, no roll is necessary.

Intimacies are subject to exactly the same drawbacks as Virtues.

Compassion

Compassion is the passionate caring for other souls. It is a Virtue born of the insight that one is not alone in the world, and that other people matter. Compassion gives people the strength to fight oppression, oppose violence, put a stop to cruel and abusive practices, and defend true love against those who would destroy it. A Compassionate character cannot stand idly by while innocents suffer or the strong abuse the weak, cannot engage in cruel, if pragmatic, activities like torture or the slaying of defeated foes, and cannot pass up an opportunity to minister to the needy or help love flourish.

Compassion Intimacies: The Intimacies supported by Compassion are those of good feeling towards people, emotions, or specific acts of kindness. The love of one's family, sympathy towards widows, orphans, and slaves, and the impulse to charity are typical Compassion Intimacies.

Conviction

Conviction is the passionate pursuit of righteous action. It is a Virtue born from the insight that unpleasant means can be necessary to achieve desirable ends. Conviction gives people the strength to suffer for a cause they believe right, endure when failure seems likely, stick to their principles in the face of danger, and inflict suffering on others for the sake of a greater good. Those characters of great Conviction cannot give up, admit defeat, abandon their loyalties for the sake of convenience, or allow distractions to prevent them from fulfilling their duties.

Conviction Intimacies: The Intimacies supported by Conviction are those of loyalty to a cause greater than oneself. Faith in a religion, the destruction of an unrighteous practice, and loyalty towards a nation are all typical Conviction Intimacies.

Temperance

Temperance is the passionate belief in the necessity of fairness and moderation. It is a Virtue born from the insight that justice is a human responsibility. Temperance gives people the strength to resist the pleasures of the flesh, defend the innocent in the face of judicial prejudice, accept punishment with good grace, and tell the truth when a lie would be more convenient. A Temperate character cannot accept an undeserved reward, bend the rules on behalf of a friend, wallow in self indulgence while work remains to be done, or sacrifice justice for the sake of expediency.

Temperance Intimacies: The Intimacies supported by Temperance are those of adherence to a sworn oath or ethical principle. Performing a job well, forsaking a vice or pleasure, keeping one's word, and acting without bias are all examples of Temperance Intimacies.

Valor

Valor is the passionate belief in the power of human dignity. It is a Virtue born from the insight that respect for others begins with respect for one's self. Valor gives people the strength to resist fear, bear one's share of the work with good humor, face death without regret, fight against overwhelming odds, and perform deeds of heroism that will live forever. A Valorous character cannot run away, let an insult pass unanswered, steal the spotlight from a friend, deny an enemy the honor of a clean death, let fear of pain or indignity act as a deterrent, fight an inferior foe on equal terms, or insult a respected figure by offering aid or mercy.

Valor Intimacies: The Intimacies supported by Valor are those of hatred towards one's enemies and pride in oneself. Destroying a particular foe, defending a particular area, and pitilessly avenging insults are all typical Valor Intimacies.

Essence

Essence is the fundamental energy of Creation. When a leaf falls from a tree, the Essence of the earth pulls on the Essence inside it, drawing it down in sympathy with the laws of elemental properties. Every time a person takes a breath, the soul gathers Essence from the ambient energies of the world. The heart wields those energies, sending Essence through the blood into the muscles and the mind. Everything, from laughter to earthquakes is the result of the movement of Essence as interpreted by the characteristics of matter.

A sufficiently enlightened soul can sense these interactions and manipulate them. Intuitive, natural manipulation of Essence is what powers charms. Charms are distinguishable from unenlightened skill only in the potency of their effects. Conscious, deliberate manipulation of Essence is what powers spells. Spells are the only form of magic considered unnatural by the natives of Creation, though the untutored sometimes have a difficult time distinguishing spells from particularly flashy charms.

The Essence Trait

Every living creature possesses an Essence rating of at least one. So do many things that aren't normally considered living creatures (ghosts and sophisticated automatons). Anything that moves under its own power and has the appearance of life must have at least one point of Essence. If an effect would reduce Essence to 0, the victim is physically undamaged, but rendered inanimate. Machines can be repaired, but living creatures are killed, and spirits are destroyed in the most horrific manner imaginable.

Only the most spiritually aware beings have an Essence score of 2 or greater. Gods and the Exalted achieve such a rating easily. To them, essence manipulation is instinctive. Mortals can attain an Essence of 2 only through years of study. With further dedication and effort, they can raise their Essence as high as three, but for mortals that is the absolute limit. Only magic that changes them to something other than human can allow them to progress farther.

The Exalted can raise their Essence to 5 within the span of a human lifetime, but ratings of 6 or higher require decades or centuries of effort to develop. A rating of 10 is the highest possible, but such levels of might are possessed only by the greatest of gods and the oldest of Exalted.

Motes

Every character who knows at least one charm has access to one or more motes. Mortals, Ghosts, and Dragon-Blooded have a number of motes equal to their Essence ratings. Gods, Elementals, Demons, and the Celestial Exalted have a number of motes equal to twice their Essence ratings. Some charms, known only to Gods and the Celestial Exalted, increase a character's available motes.

Motes are spent to power charms and spells. Any character with access to motes can spend as many motes at any given time as the charms they use call for. At the beginning of each scene, a character's mote reserve is full. Restoring motes within a scene is the province of stunts and magic.

Some effects call for the commitment of one or more motes. These motes are considered spent, and cannot be restored by any means whatsoever unless the commitment is released. Releasing a commitment ends a magical effect instantly.

Panoply Slots

Essence flows through the world. It is always in motion. Though the mind perceives objects as stable and persistent, they are in fact nothing more than patterns in the deeper currents of essence. Panoply Slots represent characters' ability to integrate foreign essence patterns into their own, to benefit from long-term magic.

Artifacts made of the Five Magical Materials are constructed to have essence patterns that resonate in the same frequencies as a humans' Panoply Slots. Most people lack the training to take advantage of this property, but even the unenlightened can learn to use specific Artifacts with only a couple of weeks of practice.

Mortals and Dragon-Blooded have a number of Panoply Slots equal to their permanent Essence. Celestial Exalted have a number of slots equal to twice their permanent Essence. Spirits of all types have effectively infinite Panoply Slots, but they cannot incorporate new magic into their Panoply without changing their fundamental natures.

Chapter 3: The Abilities

This chapter explains the rules for using the 25 Abilities in various situations. Whether exploring a shadowland, racing against time to deliver a message, or deciphering an ancient text, everything a character might want to do that is not covered by a special subsystem is to be found here.

General Systems

Some types of tasks crop up frequently, across Abilities. Calling upon the character's knowledge is the same whether the player wants the legal minutiae of Administration or the scientific insights of Lore and traveling long distances is the same by boat, horse, or foot.

Calling Upon Knowledge

Several Abilities represent the character's knowledge in various fields. Sometimes, in the game, it will be important to determine precisely what the character knows. For the most part, a character's knowledge is a function of their static (Intelligence + Ability)/2 value. Compare that value to the following chart:

0. Only the wildest, most sensational legends (Lore: the Unconquered Sun once took a mortal lover)
1. Entertaining, but factually dubious stories (Administration: the peace-keepers in Great Forks have no authority to pursue a criminal into a temple)
2. Reliable, but vague information (Lore: Wood Spiders are very dangerous and should be avoided)
3. Useful, but misleading information (Lore: Wood Spiders can be tricked into leaving a traveler in peace)
4. Helpful information that does not give the whole story (Forgecraft: the legendary Daiklaves of Conquest functioned only for the Solar Exalted)
5. Insights that allow for powerful, specific advantage: (Lore: Wood Spiders are vicious, petty creatures that view themselves as master manipulators).
6. Rare information, not commonly used in the current age (Forgecraft: Only the Dawn caste can wield a Daiklave of Conquest)
7. Information that is both rare and deliberately unspoken (Lore: the names of Lieger's seven souls)
8. Highly specific information about very obscure phenomenon (Administration: the name Cejop Kejak)
9. Information powerful beings wish to conceal (Lore: the name of a Yozi)
10. Specific information about something both obscure and dangerous (Forgecraft: reliable information about the defensive systems of the Five Metal Shrike)
11. Specific information about something obscure, dangerous, and deliberately concealed (Lore: the preferred titles of the Neverborn)
12. Information that was considered obscure and dangerous in the first age (Medicine: The physical effects of sex with a Yozi)
13. Information that was considered a state secret in the first age (Medicine: the magical benefits of sex with a Yozi)

14. Information otherwise lost to history (Socialize: the waist, bust and hip measurements of the Solar Queen, M-r-l).
15. Information otherwise destroyed in the Primordial War (Lore: the original names and natures of the Neverborn)

The character's static value represents the knowledge typically available without external aids. The character may actually know more or less about a specific phenomenon. If the player wishes to trust to luck in hopes of the character knowing more than the standard amount, the storyteller can ask for an *insight roll.* The player rolls (Intuition + Ability) against a difficulty equal to the character's static knowledge value. If the roll succeeds, the character's effective static value is increased by the threshold successes, for that question only.

But this tactic is not without risks. If the roll fails, the character's effective static value is decreased by one. If it botches, it is decreased by half.

What the insight roll represents is up to the player. Perhaps the character read something in an unrelated context that suddenly proves relevant, or maybe the character was able to draw an unexpected conclusion from unconnected pieces of information. Precisely how the character knows the extra information is a good source of stunts for the insight roll.

If the character has access to a library, or other source of information, the player may make a *research roll.* Archived information has two traits relevant to this roll: *disorganization,* and *depth.*

Disorganization represents how accessible and accurate the information is. Books stacked out of order, unhelpful archivists, and fiction mixed in with fact can lead to a high disorganization rating. Depth represents how comprehensive and detailed the information is.

To make a research roll, the player rolls (Intelligence + Investigation) against a difficulty equal to the archive's disorganization rating. If the roll succeeds, the character learns information with a static value equal to the threshold successes, with a maximum possible result equal to the archive's depth. A research roll takes one day of work.

If the roll's result fails to exceed the character's own static rating, the character finds little of use, but the new perspective achieved is a good excuse for an insight roll, possibly with a bonus if the archive's depth exceeds the character's static rating.

Research rolls may also be extended, in which case, the Difficulty is 0, the interval is the archive's disorganization rating in days, and the success cost is equal to twice the desired static rating (with a maximum possible static rating equal to the archive's depth).

Libraries frequently have different depths for different fields of study, but consistent disorganization ratings.

Travel

Characters in Exalted frequently have to travel long distances. Most of the time, they travel at the speed of plot. In these circumstances, the storyteller should simply state a travel time that seems reasonable. A good rule of thumb is 15 miles per day for a character on foot, 25 miles per day for a character on horseback, and 150 miles per day for a ship.

Sometimes, however, the most interesting story is about the events of the journey itself. In these cases, a *travel roll* is called for. A travel roll is an extended roll that is meant to simulate the hardships of travel through untracked wilderness or other harsh environs. Whether the characters are leading a caravan through the harsh Southern desert or attempting to infiltrate a castle undetected, if there are serious consequences to making a mistake, a travel roll is called for.

Like all extended rolls, travel rolls have an interval, success cost, and difficulty. But travel rolls require more preparation from storytellers than ordinary extended rolls, because travel rolls are really a way to write the plot of a travel-based story. As such, there is no single standard for what the interval and success cost should be. Instead, storytellers should use these values to construct a *travel table*. A travel table is a list of events that occur when the success cost of a travel roll meets or passes a certain level. These events occur whether the characters pass the necessary level by decreasing the success cost or by increasing it, but generally, events occur only once.

Example: The characters are traveling to a secluded manse, 100 miles from their base of operations. The terrain they must cover is difficult, but not overly hostile. The interval of the roll is 1 day, the success cost is 10, and the difficulty is 1 (if the characters have an Intuition + Survival dice pool of 4, it should take about 10 days). The travel table looks like this:

(Success cost 15): The characters are lost. Their bungling has brought them to the brink of disaster. Low on food and supplies, they are in desperate straights. Luckily, they come across an isolated village. Surely the locals will be glad to trade for food . . .
(Success cost 5): A sudden storm forces the characters to take shelter in a cave.
(Success cost 0): They arrive at the manse.

At their most basic, travel tables are nothing more than lists of events that happen to characters as they cross terrain, but travel tables need not be basic. In addition to success cost levels, travel tables can have *triggers*. There are three common triggers: before (time), after (time), and repeat (#).

The before trigger is used to indicate events that occur only if the characters make good progress on the roll. If the characters reach the success cost level before a certain time has passed, they trigger the event. This is usually, but not necessarily, a reward or an opportunity to prove a character's heroic prowess. Before triggers allow characters with high travel skills to shine.

The after trigger is used to indicate events that occur only if the characters make poor progress on the roll. If the characters reach the success cost level after a certain time has passed, they trigger the event. This event is usually an additional challenge or obstacle, though if the characters' journey is a race against time, they may find that their objective has failed.

The repeat trigger is used to expand the travel table, to allow events to occur only if the characters reach a success cost level multiple times. The number associated with the repeat trigger indicates the number of times the characters must reach that level in order to trigger the event (a repeat (2) event triggers the second time the characters meet or pass that success level). The uses of a repeat trigger are varied. Usually, characters will repeat a success cost level because of failed rolls, so a repeat trigger can be used to emphasize the price of failure. It can also be used as a "mercy exit," ending the travel roll prematurely in order to spare the players endless rolling.

A single success cost level can have multiple triggers. Often, a before trigger is paired with an after trigger or multiple repeat triggers are stacked onto a single level.

Example: Here is the success table from the previous example with triggers added:

(Success cost 15): The characters are lost. Their bungling has brought them to the brink of disaster. Low on food and supplies, they are in desperate straights. Luckily, they come across an isolated village. Surely the locals will be glad to trade for food . . .

(Success cost 10): Repeat (3): The characters have strayed far from their original route. The Difficulty increases to 2. Repeat (5): Haggard and near starving, they reach their destination. They have suffered 15 days worth of hunger.

(Success cost 5): A sudden storm forces them to take shelter in a cave. Before (5 days): The ravenous wyld-tainted bear that lives in the cave is out hunting, and won't return until the morning.

(Success cost 0): The characters arrive at the manse. After (15 days): The characters were not the only ones interested in the manse. An investigative team from the Realm has beaten them to their goal.

It is the desired complexity of the travel table that determines a travel roll's success cost. A high success cost demands more rolls and more rolls provide more opportunity for events to occur. A low success cost means that every event on the table is likely to occur in only a few rolls.

The interval of the travel roll is based on the distance to the destination and the success cost. Storytellers should look at the character's traits and choose an interval that allows them to reach their destination in a realistic amount of time. What is important to remember though, is that the length of the journey is determined by the aggregate total of the individual rolls, but that the distance traveled in any particular interval is not necessarily related to the result of that interval's roll. If the characters get 9/10 successes in 2 rolls and take 4 rolls to get the last success, it does not mean that they spent 2/3 of their time on the last 10 percent of the journey. Rather, the entire journey took the amount of time represented by 6 rolls.

Figuring a good interval takes experience, but there is a formula storytellers can use to estimate them. First, take one half of the character's (Attribute + Ability). Subtract from this value the roll's Difficulty. This is the expected net successes per roll. If the result is negative, the precise interval doesn't really matter because the characters are as likely to get hopelessly lost as they are to make progress towards their destination.

If the net successes are positive, divide the total success cost by the expected successes per roll. This is how many rolls the characters will most likely have to make before they reduce the success cost to zero (and thus arrive at their destination).

At this point, the storyteller should estimate the typical travel time, based on the journey's length and the character's mode of transportation. Divide the total distance by the distance traveled per day to get the travel time in days. Then, divide the travel time by the expected number of rolls to get the travel roll's interval.

When deciding an interval for travel rolls, it is usually better to make it too large, rather than too small. There are many factors that can delay a journey, but the maximum speed of a journey is bound by how fast the character can move.

Specific Systems

What follows is a breakdown the Abilities' most common functions. If an Ability is most commonly used for combat, social influence, warfare, statecraft, thaumaturgy, or sorcery, it will say so in the description. Abilities that are used for knowledge or travel will also say so and provide any Ability-specific modifications to those systems. If a player wishes to perform a task not covered by any of the following systems, the storyteller should simply declare an appropriate dice pool and difficulty. Example difficulties are provided with each Ability.

Administration
This Ability is used in Warfare and Statecraft.

Administration is primarily useful as a source of knowledge. A low static rating (2-3) will provide the character with reliable legal and political information about Creation's major governments and with information about major historical events. A high static rating (4-5) will provide the character with reliable information about minor governments and influential but lesser known historical events or unreliable information about the internal politics of Heaven and the Exalted. An extraordinary rating (6+) can give a character detailed, reliable information about the history and politics of the supernatural.

Administration is rolled only rarely outside of formal systems, but the storyteller may call for a roll if the character wishes to expedite paperwork, call upon bureaucratic favors, stall a formal legal preceding, or perform similarly dramatic acts of legal maneuvering.

Difficulty 1 allows a character to ask for a minor favor from a cooperative organization (issuing a building permit quickly). Difficulty 3 allows the character to ask for a significant favor from a cooperative organization (investigating an influential official). Difficulty 5 allows the character to ask for a major favor from a cooperative organization (ignoring a serious crime). Increase the difficulty by one or more if the organization is not cooperative.

Archery

This Ability is used in Combat.

Archery can be used in place of Lore or Forgecraft to represent the character's knowledge of Archery-based Martial Arts charms and famous Archery weapons. An (Intelligence + Archery)/2 static value can (but need not) replace the standard static values in these situations.

Almost all Archery rolls are attack rolls in combat. The storyteller may call for an Archery roll outside of combat to determine the success of extraordinary marksmanship challenges. A Difficulty of 1 would allow a character to hit a target at a respectable distance. A Difficulty of 3 would allow the character to hit the target's bullseye. A Difficulty of 5 would allow the character to split a previous archer's arrow.

Athletics

This Ability is used in Combat.

Athletics is frequently used for travel rolls. Whenever a journey is relatively short, but requires speed, endurance, or balance, it might be a good candidate for an Athletics-based travel roll. Running a marathon to deliver a message would use Stamina + Athletics. Climbing a sheer wall would use Strength + Athletics against a high difficulty. Navigating a precarious tree-top maze would use Dexterity + Athletics. Athletics travel rolls tend to have low success costs, high difficulties, and serious consequences for raising the success cost too high.

Jumping: The character's horizontal jumping distance in yards is a static value equal to the character's (Strength + Athletics). The maximum attainable height is equal to half that. If the character needs to jump farther than the typical distance, the player may make a (Strength + Athletics) roll. Each success increases the jumping distance by one yard horizontally or one half yard vertically.

Falling: Characters may safely fall a number of yards equal to their (Stamina + Resistance) static ratings. Falling farther than that inflicts one level of Bashing damage per yard. Armor does not protect against falling, instead adding its Fatigue rating to the damage dealt. If the character falls onto something jagged, the damage is Lethal. Due to terminal velocity, the maximum falling damage is (25 + Fatigue). If the character is jumping intentionally, or describes a stunt to mitigate the fall, the player may roll (Dexterity + Athletics) and reduce the effective height of the fall by one yard per success.

Racing: In situations where the relative speed of two characters is more important than the exact speed of either one, the slower character rolls (Dexterity + Athletics) against a difficulty equal to the faster character's (Dexterity + Athletics)/2 static rating. If the roll is successful, the slower character manages to close the distance, otherwise the faster character pulls ahead. Long distance races use Stamina instead of Dexterity.

Precise movement rates in yards per tick are the function of Move and Dash actions (see **Chapter 4: Combat**).

Feats of Strength: To lift or break an object, compare the character's static (Strength + Athletics)/2 rating to the following chart:

Static Rating	Lift (lbs)	Sample Feat
0	50	Lift an anvil
1	150	Lift a full grown man
2	250	Punch a fist through a wooden door
3	350	Lift a pony
4	500	Punch a fist through an oak door
5	650	Bend an iron bar with both hands
6	800	Lift a horse
7	1000	Pull a fully laden wagon
8	1200	Lift a camel
9	1400	Lift an unlocked portcullis
10	1700	Pull down a wooden bridge
11	2000	Rip a stone out of a castle wall
12	2300	Punch a fist through a stone wall
13	2700	Lift a locked portcullis
14	3100	Punch a fist through a metal door
15	3500	Rip iron bars out of stone with one hand

Each point of static rating beyond 15 adds 500 lbs to the character's lifting ability, and enables correspondingly fierce displays of physical might.

With extraordinary effort, characters can go beyond their normal limits with feats of strength. If the feat of strength could be accomplished with a static rating less than or equal to the character's (Strength + Athletics), the character may roll (Stamina + Athletics). Each success inflicts one die of bashing damage on the character (this damage ignores soak from armor) and increases the character's effective static rating by 1. If the character fails to reach the desired static rating, not only does the attempt fail, the dice of damage become levels of damage instead.

Aside from the specific tasks listed, the storyteller may call for Athletics rolls in a variety of situations, usually when the character needs to climb, balance, or swim and the task isn't long-term enough to merit a travel table. A Difficulty 1 roll represents a significant but not especially trying task, like hauling oneself over a shoulder-high wall. A Difficulty 3 roll represents a roll requiring exceptional skill, such as walking a tightrope confidently. A Difficulty 5 roll represents a feat of legendary athletic skill, such as treading water during a hurricane.

Awareness
This Ability is used in Combat and Sorcery.

Awareness is used primarily as a static value. The character's (Intuition + Awareness)/2 is used as a difficulty for many Larceny and Stealth rolls, and when the Storyteller describes a scene, the (Intuition +Awareness)/2 static rating should be compared to the following chart to determine what each character perceives.

0. Only the most painfully obvious details. *It's a big guy.*
1. Superficial and obvious, but thorough details. *He's about two heads taller than average, heavily muscled, and has a big bushy beard.*
2. Details that are not hidden, but not instantly apparent. *He has numerous scars, both small and large, clearly an experienced warrior.*
3. Details that begin to provide subtlety and nuance. *His armor is of high quality leather. He's no ordinary mercenary.*
4. Details that offer genuinely subtle clues. *Though it's hard to tell through the grime, his gauntlets appear to be etched with a fine tracing of gold.*
5. Details that are both subtle and hidden. *The warrior's leather breastplate doesn't quite creak in the proper way. He might have another suit of armor on underneath.*
6. Details that are especially obscure and difficult to notice. *There's a strange smell in the air, like shellfish. Does the warrior dye his hair?*
7. Details that are easily mistaken for something else. *What you thought was gold decoration on the warrior's gauntlets gleams oddly. It's probably Orichalcum.*
8. Details that require careful examination. *The stitching on the warrior's cloak is very regular, like it was made with a machine.*
9. Details on the edge of imperceptibility. *The warrior is only pretending to breath. There's no sound of exhalation.*
10.   Details that are virtually impossible to notice. *The warrior has no heartbeat, only clockwork where a heartbeat should be.*

Beyond 10 points of static rating, the character's Awareness exposes details that are microscopic, subsonic, or otherwise undetectable to normal senses. If a detail would be revealed with a static rating less than or equal to the character's full (Intuition + Awareness), the player may make an insight roll, as if trying to improve a knowledge static rating. Justification for these rolls is good stunt fodder, but never really necessary. It's strange the things people notice.

Awareness is quite frequently the subject of penalties. Darkness and fog, loud noises, and distracting scents are all common occurrences. Unless a magical effect says otherwise, anything that penalizes Awareness penalizes both static ratings and dice pools, but generally for only one sense at a time. Effects that obscure a sense (fog, a band playing in the background) penalize it by one point. Effects that shut down a sense (darkness, the sound of battle) penalize it by five points. Awareness penalties also frequently act as Difficulty increases for other Abilities.

Awareness is rolled only as a join battle roll, as part of an insight roll, or as part of the activation roll for certain charms and sorcery.

Brawl
This Ability is used in Combat.

Brawl can be used in place of Lore to identify Brawl-based Martial Arts charms. Brawlers are rarely great intellectuals, but they know how to appreciate a good move when they see one. The character's (Wits + Brawl)/2 may be used in place of (Intelligence + Lore)/2 for such a task, if desired.

Brawl is almost never rolled except as part of an attack in combat. The storyteller might call for a Brawl roll when the character wishes to make a special display of combat savagery outside of combat. A difficulty 1 roll might allow a character to club a random extra senseless. Difficulty 3 might allow the character to disperse a sheepish crowd with a shout. Difficulty 5 might allow the character to punch out an important, but non-combative NPC (like an arrogant aristocrat).

Conveyance
This Ability is used in Combat and Warfare.

Conveyance is used primarily for travel rolls. Riding cross country on horseback, sailing between the isles of the West, and navigating a First Age airship through the shadowlands are all functions of this Ability. It may also be used in place of Forgecraft or Medicine to call upon knowledge related to riding animals and forms of transportation.

Horses and other mounts: Using the Conveyance Ability for travel rolls should only be done if the characters' mounts are the journey's limiting factor. Riding across a level plain or over civilized roads allows a mount's speed to come into play. If the characters are picking their way through the mountains or if they are forced to forage for food every day, their mounts might prove as much a burden as a benefit. Travel rolls for mounts tend to have either very low or very high difficulties.

Outside of long-distance travel, mounts have a Control rating. Well trained mounts have a low rating, while poorly trained mounts have a high rating. If the character's (Wits + Conveyance)/2 static value is higher than the Control rating, the character can control the mount without problems. Otherwise, the player must roll (Wits + Conveyance) against a Difficulty equal to the Control rating every time the character wishes for the mount to do something.

Circumstances can raise a mount's Control rating. Most animals hate combat, and raise their control ratings by 2 when subjected to it. Other factors in the environment can cause an increase as well. Loud noises, unstable footing, or the presence of predators are all potential causes. If a circumstance raises a mount's Control rating higher than the character's (Wits + Conveyance)/2 static value, the character loses control of the mount until a successful (Wits + Conveyance) roll is made; even if the circumstances that provoked the out of control behavior no longer apply.

Out of control mounts tend to follow their instincts. Horses and other herbivores flee. Carnivores might flee, turn on their riders, or attack, depending on the circumstances.

Rules for mounted combat appear in **Chapter 4: Combat.**

Ships at sea: Sea travel is perfect for travel rolls. Differing winds can make the length of a voyage unpredictable, opportunities for unexpected encounters (with aquatic deities, isolated islands, or other ships) are plentiful, and expert navigation is critical. The difficulty of a ship based travel roll should depend on the nautical conditions (severe whether, frequent calms, etc) and the design of the characters' ship (a riverboat is a poor substitute for an ocean-going vessel and vice versa).

Outside of long-term travel, Conveyance rolls are made for sailing when the ship encounters an unusual threat or obstacle. Ships have three special traits: Handling, Crew, and Speed.

Handling represents the usefulness of the ship's controls and the overall maneuverability of the ship itself. A ship's Handling rating adds to the difficulty of all Conveyance rolls made to control the ship.

Crew represents the ability of a ship's crew to improve the performance of a ship. The ship's Crew rating acts as a bonus to Conveyance rolls, provided the ship has a complete, well-trained crew. If the crew is unskilled or shorthanded, the bonus it provides decreases. The Crew rating listed in a ship's statistics should be considered the maximum possible, under optimum conditions.

A ship's Speed rating represents its speed relative to other ships of a similar class. There is little noticeable difference between the typical speeds of a Speed 1 merchant vessel and a Speed 4 pirate ship, but the pirate ship is able to squeeze out the extra performance when it counts. A ship with a higher speed is able to outrun a ship with a lower Speed, all other factors being equal. Currents, favorable winds, magic, and expert sailing can all provide bonuses to Speed.

A ship's Speed rating does not represent the absolute speed of the ship, but rather the nimbleness of the ship's design. An elegant clipper might have a Speed of 5, whereas a bulky First Age cargo ship might have a Speed of 1, but the clipper's sails would still be incapable of outrunning the cargo ship's essence engine.

Large ships tend to have large Handling and Crew ratings and small Speed ratings. Small ships tend to have large Speed ratings and small Handling and Crew ratings.

To navigate a ship in difficult conditions, the character rolls (Attribute + Conveyance) against a Difficulty based on the severity of the condition. The ship's Crew rating adds to the dice pool as a bonus and the ship's Handling adds to the difficulty of the roll. The Attribute used depends on how the ship is controlled. If the character controls the ship by physically manipulating the rudder and rigging, the roll uses Wits. If the character controls the ship by issuing orders to the crew, the roll uses Charisma.

A Difficulty of 1 represents a minor obstacle like a well-charted reef. A Difficulty of 3 represents an obstacle that would threaten most ships, like an unexpected storm. A Difficulty of 5 represents a legendary obstacle, like a whirlpool created by a Behemoth.

To increase a ship's Speed (whether for pursuit or evasion) the character rolls (Attribute + Conveyance), with a bonus equal to the ship's Crew rating, against a Difficulty equal to the ship's (Handling + Speed). If the roll succeeds, increase the ship's Speed by 1 for every threshold success. If the roll fails, reduce the ship's speed by 1. If the roll botches, the ship comes to a sudden halt.

Combat between ships is covered in **Chapter 6: Warfare**.

Other Vehicles: Travel in Exalted is not limited to horses and ships. Ancient artifacts, prototype airships, and litters borne by the walking dead are just a few of the things characters might be called upon to pilot. Generally, if it acts like a machine, it should be treated as a ship. If it acts like a living thing, it should be treated like a horse.

Deception

This Ability is used in Social Influence.

In the social influence system, Deception is used to tell lies convincingly. Outside of that function, it is used for disguise and impersonation.

Careful Disguises: If the character has sufficient time and materials, disguises created with Deception can be very convincing. Anyone with an (Intuition + Awareness)/2 static value less than the character's (Manipulation + Deception)/2 static value is fooled. Disguises that are very different from the character's own appearance (different skin color, gender, or body type) will penalize the character's static value. The penalty is usually one point per difference, but if it is especially dramatic (a northerner impersonating a southerner or an especially thin person impersonating an especially fat one), a difference might impose a -2 penalty or higher. Impersonating a specific person always imposes an extra -2 penalty. Special props (prosthetics and make-up, mostly) will add bonuses to the static value.

Piercing a careful disguise requires deliberate scrutiny. Anyone who suspects the character can make an (Intuition + Investigation) roll against a difficulty equal to the character's modified static rating. If the roll succeeds, the threshold successes are added to the (Intuition + Awareness)/2 static value for purposes of piercing the disguise. Those who have special reason to suspect the character and those who know the target of the impersonation well (if the character impersonates a specific person) may receive a bonus to their Investigation rolls, but not to their Awareness static values.

Hasty Disguises: If the character has no preparation time, the player may roll (Manipulation + Deception). Those with an (Intuition + Awareness)/2 static value less than the roll's successes are fooled by the disguise. This is similar to a careful disguise, but the character may not adopt any disguise that would penalize a careful disguise's static value. Furthermore, a hasty disguise will not stand up to scrutiny. A successful (Intuition + Investigation) roll will penetrate the character's deception. Luckily, most people do not carefully scrutinize strangers.

Mimicry: If the character wishes to duplicate another person's voice or mannerisms, it requires a (Manipulation + Deception) roll. The difficulty of the roll varies, but is usually very high. A mere caricature imposes a Difficulty of 2. A convincing impersonation of a similar voice imposes a Difficulty of 3. If the voice is very different (most commonly, because of a different gender) those Difficulties increase by 1.

Animal mimicry starts at Difficulty 4 and increases based on how inhuman the animal sounds (a house cat would be Difficulty 4, a lion would be Difficulty 5, a multi-headed Wyld mutant that roared in harmony with itself would be Difficulty 7, at least). Mimicking a machine starts at Difficulty 5 and goes up from there.

Studying a particular subject for an extended period of time can add up to 5 bonus dice to the roll. An appropriate voice-based Performance specialty will reduce the Deception roll's Difficulty by the Specialty's point value.

Aside from these uses, a storyteller might call for a deception roll if the character wishes to create a quick, momentary deception that would not qualify as true social influence. Conning an extra out of some spare change is a Difficulty 1 feat. Distracting some guards long enough to get away is a Difficulty 3 feat. Tricking a lesser elemental dragon into trying to answer a meaningless riddle is a Difficulty 5 feat. These little distractions usually last for no more than a minute and tend to leave their victims quite angry.

Deceiving someone with feints and trickery in combat is a function of the Brawl Ability.

Forgecraft
This Ability is used in Statecraft and Thaumaturgy.

Forgecraft provides knowledge about craftsmanship. A low (Intelligence + Forgecraft)/2 static rating (2-3) will allow the character to accurately asses the quality and function of most normal goods. A higher static rating (4-5) will give the character broad knowledge of various mortal design schools, and knowledge of Terrestrial Enchanting, both contemporary and historical. Extraordinary static ratings (6+) will allow the character to know about more obscure Terrestrial Enchanting (particularly the function of artifacts whose use has been suppressed) and the more famous products of Celestial Enchanting. Due to the interference of the Immaculate Order, accurate information about the craftsmanship of the First Age is especially difficult to come by (usually requiring a static rating of 8 or higher).

Most of Forgecraft's building functions are covered by the Thaumaturgy system, but the storyteller might call for a Forgecraft roll if the character wishes to make temporary, improvisational repairs. A Difficulty 1 roll will allow a simple repair (patching a hole in a ship). A Difficulty 3 roll will allow a moderate repair (keeping a crossbow or firewand working). A Difficulty 5 roll will allow for very complex repairs (keeping a Halsanti Airship in the sky). Such temporary repairs never last for more than a single scene.

Geomancy
This Ability is used in Statecraft and Thaumaturgy.

Geomancy supplies knowledge about mineralogy, physical geography, and the science of large-scale essence flows. A low knowledge static rating (2-3) will allow a character to recognize a demesne for what it is, identify famous mountains, or determine if water is safe to drink. A high static rating (4-5) will allow a character to discern the functions of low rated or famous manses or find precious minerals by looking at geological signs. An extraordinary rating (6+) will allow a character to identify high rated manses or find natural sources of magical materials like orichalcum and moonsilver.

Geomancy is almost never rolled aside from its specialist uses, but a storyteller might call for a Geomancy roll for characters who wish to cause a bit of "architectural rearrangement." A Difficulty 1 roll might allow a character to dig a safe tunnel under a wall. A Difficulty 3 roll might allow a character to efficiently demolish a building with firedust charges. A Difficulty 5 roll could allow a character to engineer a landslide to bury a charging Behemoth.

Integrity
This Ability is used in Social Influence.

The use of Integrity to suppress Virtues and Intimacies has already been discussed (see **Chapter 2: Characters**). Integrity's other main use is in social defense. Integrity is rolled in other contexts only when the character wishes to call upon "the power of the mind."

Wyld Resistance: The Wyld is a place of chaos, but it is not completely unresponsive to the human mind. Those of exceptionally strong will can resist its mutative effects. To resist the Wyld, a player rolls (Composure + Integrity + Essence).

In the Bordermarches, the character must resist Wyld Mutation once per month and the difficulty to do so is 2. If the roll fails, the character receives a minor mutation.

In the Middlemarches, the character must resist Wyld Mutation once per week. The Difficulty of the roll is 3 and if the roll fails, the character receives a moderate and a minor mutation. Even if the roll succeeds, the character suffers a minor mutation.

In the Deep Wyld, the character must resist mutation once per day. The difficulty of the roll is 5 and if it fails, the character receives a major and a moderate mutation. Even if the roll succeeds, the character receives a moderate mutation.

Ancient heretical texts suggest there are hidden branches of sorcery which allow a devotee to not only resist Wyld Mutation, but control its form. If the rumors are true, the governments of the Second Age have done everything in their power to suppress such knowledge.

The storyteller might allow Integrity to replace Resistance for certain tasks, if the strength of the character's mind could reasonably make up for the weakness of the character's body. Integrity rolls are called for when the character wishes to demonstrate heroic willpower. Showing restraint while drunk is a Difficulty 1 roll. Intentionally passing along disinformation after an extended period of torture is a Difficulty 3 roll. Ignoring a powerful mind control effect long enough to issue a warning to friends is a Difficulty 5 roll.

Investigation
This Ability is used in Social Influence and Statecraft.

Investigation's primary uses are to oppose Deception and to allow a character to get more mileage out of knowledge Abilities. Used as a form of social influence, it can also discern truthfulness or tease out hidden motivations.

Outside of these situations, the storyteller might call for an Investigation roll any time the character must pore over a large amount of information and carefully scrutinize clues. A Difficulty 1 roll will allow the character to find carefully hidden contraband after a thorough search. A Difficulty 3 roll will allow a character to find clues that have been concealed by a skilled criminal. A Difficulty 5 roll will allow the character to find clues in a crime scene destroyed by fire.

Larceny

This Ability is used in Statecraft.

The character's (Intelligence + Larceny)/2 static value supplies knowledge about criminal techniques and culture. A low static value (2-3) allows the character to identify common tools (telling a good set of lockpicks from a bad) and avoid obvious criminal faux pas (asking a high status criminal to "meet me alone.") A high static value (4-5) allows the character to know of obscure techniques (a little known deficiency in an otherwise excellent craftsman's locks) or specific regional traditions (Nexus gangs' mugging etiquette). An extraordinary rating (6+) allows for very detailed information (the Iron Staffs gang uses Bright Morning) or very rare criminal information (identifying a First Age security artifact).

In addition, the Larceny Ability has other functions, useful to a criminal.

Picking Locks: While an ax is usually all the lockpick a person needs, sometimes it pays to be subtle. Picking a lock requires a set of tools. These can be anything from scavenged wires to a full locksmithing kit. Poor tools can impose up to a -3 penalty to the dice pool. Good tools can grant up to a +5 bonus.

Once the quality of the tools is determined, the character rolls (Dexterity + Larceny), modified by the tools, against a Difficulty determined by the quality of the lock. Most locks are Difficulty 2. Some low-market ones are Difficulty 1. The exceptionally poor or gullible have locks with no Difficulty. Locks with Difficulty 3 or higher are fairly rare, and usually the result of enchanting. There is no theoretical limit, other than cost, to how difficult a lock can become, and a few remaining First Age facilities are secured with double-digit Difficulty locks, supported by other security magic.

Picking a lock takes about 5 minutes per attempt. A character in a hurry can reduce this to 30 seconds per attempt by raising the difficulty by 1 and 5 seconds per attempt by raising the difficulty by 3.

Picking Pockets: To covertly remove something from someone's person requires a (Dexterity + Larceny) roll. The roll's Difficulty is 1 for back pockets, pouches, and other thief-friendly locations, 2 for front pockets and other moderate targets, and 3 for breast pockets and other objects against the skin. Raise the difficulty if the object is especially large or noticeable.

To determine whether the attempt was detected, compare the threshold successes to the victim's (Intuition + Awareness)/2 static value. If the threshold successes are greater, the attempt was not noticed. Characters who want to be especially careful may "set aside" successes before the roll is made. These successes count as threshold successes, but do not cancel the Difficulty. Set aside successes are always deducted first, before the Difficulty is applied. If the roll achieves a lower success total than the successes set aside, only those successes actually rolled are compared to the victim's static value.

Example: A thief with a dice pool of 6 decides to pick pockets carefully. Two successes are set aside for this purpose. Taking a coin pouch from an average person (static rating 1), the thief rolls 3 successes. Two successes are removed from that roll, and the remaining one success is eliminated by the Difficulty. The theft is unsuccessful, but also unnoticed. Ironically, if the thief had not been so careful, the crime would have been a success. One success would have been deducted by the Difficulty, and the remaining 2 successes would have beaten the victim's static value.

On the other hand, if the thief had not been careful and rolled only two successes, one would have been removed by the difficulty and the threshold of one would not have beaten the target's static value. The theft would have been successful, but the attempt would have been noticed.

If the thief rolled only one success, careful or not, the theft would have been both unsuccessful and noticed. Despite "setting aside" two successes, only the single rolled success could be compared to the victim's static value.

Assessing Security: A successful criminal needs to know what sort of security a target is likely to deploy. By taking the time to examine the scene of a crime beforehand, a character can learn important details. To assess a target's security, the player rolls (Intuition + Larceny). Threshold successes provide details about likely obstacles, the quality of security devices (locks and the like), and the professionalism of the guards or other security personnel. At the storyteller's option, an exceptionally successful roll might suggest an easier alternate approach.

If the storyteller has designed the infiltration of the target as a travel roll, the information revealed is more specific. A single threshold success reveals the rough level of security (the travel roll's Difficulty). A second threshold success also provides an estimate of how long the infiltration will take (the travel roll's success cost and interval). Successes beyond that might, at the storyteller's discretion, reveal events on the travel table. Particularly appropriate things to reveal include events with the after trigger and the ultimate cost of failure.

These types of rolls usually have no Difficulty. Only if the target has taken measures to conceal the exact nature of the security measures should the storyteller apply a Difficulty. A professionally designed system should have a Difficulty of 1, the private home of a paranoid Dragon-Blooded should have a Difficulty of 3, and a First Age military facility will have a Difficulty of 5 or higher.

Concealing a facility's security requires an (Intelligence + Larceny) roll. The Difficulty of the roll depends on the size of the security force. Use the Mass Combat Unit Magnitude chart as a guideline (see **Chapter 6: Warfare**). The roll has a Difficulty of 1 per effective Magnitude of the security force. The threshold successes add to the Difficulty of assessing the target's security.

Assessing security takes time. The roll takes one hour per point of Difficulty (a half hour for Difficulty 0 rolls).

Aside from the above uses, the storyteller might call for Larceny rolls any time the character wishes to call upon the skills of a criminal. Difficulty 1 allows for common, moderately risky tasks, like finding a black market in a relatively free city. Difficulty 3 allows for exceptional feats, like thoroughly concealing the evidence of a crime. Difficulty 5 allows for legendary expressions of the criminal's art, like smuggling contraband through a checkpoint by planting it on the guards.

Linguistics
This Ability is used in Social Influence.

The actual languages spoken by a character are a function of Linguistics specialties. A specialty of +1 is enough to speak a language for most practical purposes. The character has an accent, and might occasionally make an unintentional gaffe, but only the strangest, most culturally-specific conversations are unintelligible. A specialty of +2 is enough to speak a language like a native. Only an expert linguist would be able to distinguish the character's accent. A specialty of +3 represents genuine, unusual skill with a language. Native speakers emulate the character. Most people have a specialty of +1 in their native tongue, speaking without an accent, but sounding like a poorly educated rube.

The Linguistics Ability represents the character's knowledge of abstract linguistic theory. The character's (Intelligence + Linguistics)/2 static rating supplies that knowledge. A low static rating (2-3) allows the character to identify major languages after only a few moments. It also allows the character to identify simple codes or famous literary works. A high static rating (4-5) allows the character to identify minor dialects, regional accents, less famous literary works, and moderate codes. An extraordinary static rating (6+) allows the character to identify lost languages, forbidden works of literature, and expert codes.

Code Breaking: If a character can identify a code, it can be broken. Breaking a code is an extended (Intelligence + Linguistics) roll, with an interval of 1 day and a Difficulty and success cost determined by the skill of the code's writer. If the character fails enough rolls to double the initial success cost, the code is intractable at the character's current level of skill.

Breaking codes is limited by the amount of text available. The character may analyze one paragraph a day in an attempt to break a code. If the character runs out of text by not successfully breaking the code in fewer days than the number of paragraphs, the Difficulty of the roll increases by one per day until a new source of coded text is found.

Once a code is broken, all other messages written in the same code can be deciphered at a rate of one hour per page.

Code Writing: Characters who wish to restrict the audience of written information can attempt to encode it. Developing a good code is a difficult process. If the character's code has already been used, the key to solving it may already exist. Writing a code is an extended roll. The character selects a Difficulty between 1 and 5. This will be the Difficulty to both break and write the code.

The success cost of the roll is equal to the character's (Linguistics x 5). Making a single roll per day, the character accumulates successes until either the cost is paid, or the character decides that the code is "good enough." If the character quits writing a code, the success cost of breaking the code is equal to the accumulated successes.

Once a code is written, it can be reused. This can save a character a lot of effort, particularly with difficult codes, but the more a code is used, the less secure it becomes.

Communication: If the character wishes to communicate with someone who does not share a language, Linguistics can come in handy. By using gestures, cognates from similar languages, and a generous amount of pointing and shouting, the character can bridge the language gap.

Making a communication roll requires a (Wits + Linguistics) roll, against a Difficulty based on the difference between the parties' languages. The Difficulty is usually at least 3, but some mutually unintelligible dialects are close enough to allow for a lower Difficulty. One threshold success is enough for a basic exchange ("yes, that!"). Three threshold successes are enough for an exchange of fundamental concepts ("me want food, me have shiny stuff"). Five threshold successes are enough for a detailed, if juvenile, conversation, provided things don't get too specific ("I want go to god-house. I find there old things. Go into lots-of-trees-place? Find moving-water? Follow sun-towards until I see? Thank you.") Beyond that level of communication, characters need to actually learn a language.

Outside of these uses, the storyteller can call for a Linguistics roll whenever characters want to show off linguistically. Difficulty 1 allows for moderately complicated tasks (saying a tongue-twister without making a mistake). Difficulty 3 allows for tough, uncommon tasks (composing a poem in an especially restrictive form, like a sonnet). Difficulty 5 allows for legendary tasks (improvising a long, original poem using proper meter and rhyme).

Lore
This Ability is used in Sorcery.

Lore provides the character with knowledge about the physical sciences. In Creation, those sciences explain the workings of magic and magic is at the heart of the physical sciences. There is no hard barrier between the study of a thrown rock's motion, the study of a charm that allows rocks to be thrown with precision, and the composition of a prayer to the gods of rocks to allow for an efficacious throw. Science, magic, and religion are one in the same.

The character's (Intelligence + Lore)/2 static value allows the character do identify charms, spells, supernatural creatures, and strange natural phenomenon. A low value (2-3) provides information about common Terrestrial Martial Arts, Spells, and gods or about the more famous personages and techniques of the Exalted and Celestial gods. A high static value (4-5) provides information about obscure Terrestrial magic, the powers and charms of the Dragon-Blooded, and important, if less famous, Celestial gods. An extraordinary static value (6+) provides information about Celestial Martial Arts and Sorcery and the powers of the Celestial Exalted, although the interference of the Immaculate order has made accurate and detailed information difficult to come by (static value 8+).

Lore is rolled primarily in the activation of Sorcery. A storyteller might allow for a Lore roll in situations where the characters attempt to use their knowledge of science to accomplish a goal. A Difficulty 1 roll might allow a character to balance two unequal weights across a fulcrum in order to keep it level. A Difficulty 3 roll might allow a character to use a melting block of ice as a makeshift clock. A Difficulty 5 roll might allow a character to set up an intricate trap with a series of falling blocks.

Medicine
This Ability is used in Combat and Thaumaturgy.

Medicine provides a character with knowledge of chemistry and the life sciences. A low (Intelligence + Medicine)/2 static value (2-3) allows the character to diagnose diseases with obvious symptoms (the common cold, the bubonic plague), identify common products of Terrestrial Alchemy, and know about the life cycles and dietary habits of domesticated species. A high static value (4-5) allows the character to diagnose subtler diseases (cholera, smallpox), identify more obscure products of Terrestrial Alchemy, and know about the habits of wild animals. An extraordinary static value (6+) allows for the diagnosis of rare and magical diseases, the identification of Celestial Alchemy, and for specific knowledge of rare or Wyld-tainted species. Like other fields of magical knowledge, the Immaculate Order suppresses knowledge of the more sophisticated aspects of Celestial and Solar Alchemy (requiring a static value of 8, at least).

Treating Illness and Poison: Resisting Illness and Poison is a function of Resistance, and so the properties of illnesses and poisons are discussed in more detail in the Resistance entry. If the character can successfully diagnose an illness (this depends on the character's knowledge static value, which may need to be improved with an insight or research roll), the player may attempt an (Intelligence + Medicine) roll against the effect's Treatment Difficulty. If the roll succeeds, the patient may make a single Resistance roll against the effect's Treated Morbidity. If the success cost to fight off an illness is especially high, the character may need to treat the victim for an extended period of time. Treating an illness or poison takes an amount of time equal to one fifth the effect's interval.

Treating Wounds: Wounds are covered in **Chapter 4: Combat**. The use of Medicine in treating wounds is discussed there.

Aside from treating the sick or wounded and creating Alchemical formulas, Medicine is used for agriculture and husbandry. Rolls that draw on those skills will be rare in a typical game, but a storyteller might call for one when characters wish to show off their farming abilities.

A Difficulty 1 roll allows a character to perform a difficult farming task (castrating a bull). A Difficulty 3 roll allows a character to perform a rare, delicate farming task (hybridizing two similar plants). A Difficulty 5 roll allows for legendary feats of farming prowess (growing crops in an extremely hostile environment).

Negotiation
This Ability is used in Social Influence and Statecraft.

Negotiation represents a character's ability to persuade with reasoned arguments. It is used primarily in social influence to persuade someone to take a particular action.

A storyteller may call for a Negotiation roll when an agreement is so likely that social influence isn't really necessary. A Difficulty 1 roll can persuade a merchant to split the difference with a reasonable offer. A Difficulty 3 roll can persuade a merchant to spit the difference to arrive at a reasonable offer. A Difficulty 5 roll might persuade a a merchant to accept an unreasonable offer, if only to get a smooth-tongued character out of the way.

Performance
This Ability is used in Social Influence, Statecraft, and Sorcery.

Singing, dancing, musical instruments, and other forms of formal performance are functions of Performance Specialties. A +1 Specialty gives a character technical proficiency. With a single point of the Performance Ability, such a character is skilled enough to be a professional, if uninspired, musician. A +2 Specialty represents a rare talent. With or without the ability to sway crowds, such a character can perform well enough to impress professionals. A +3 Specialty represents a complete mastery of a single performance mode. True art requires mastery of the Performance Ability, but the technical abilities of a character with a +3 Specialty are flawless.

Performance is used in social influence to sway large numbers of people at once. Outside of that formal system, characters can roll Performance to demonstrate their artistic abilities. A Difficulty 1 roll allows a character to play a piece of complex music by reading a score. A Difficulty 3 roll would allow a dancer to mimic the movements of a Martial Art. A Difficulty 5 roll would allow for a legendary performance that will be remembered for the rest of the audience's lives.

Presence
This Ability is used in Social Influence.

Presence is used in social influence to play off people's emotions and urges. Outside of that system, the storyteller may call for a Presence roll whenever a character tries to be especially impressive (with or without possessing the ability to back it up). A Difficulty 1 roll allows characters to accomplish minor, but significant feats (persuading an interested, but reluctant potential lover). A Difficulty 3 roll allows the character to overcome serious opposition (intimidating a novice mugger by alluding to the character's combat prowess). A Difficulty 5 roll allows the character to perform legendary feats of chutzpah (gaining entrance to a high society party by adopting an aristocratic demeanor, despite being dressed like a beggar and lacking an invitation).

Resistance
This Ability is used in Combat.

Resistance is used to endure hardship and deprivation, and resist hostile physical effects.

Enduring Hardship: Whether the character wants to go without food, water, sleep, rest, or air, the system is the same. The character's static (Stamina + Resistance)/2 value acts as a counter. Each type of hardship has an interval. Every time the character passes that interval without resting or breathing or whatever, the character's dice pools and static values are penalized by one. If the penalties have reduced the character's (Stamina + Resistance)/2 static value to 0, the character takes one level of Bashing damage each time the interval passes. That damage cannot be healed by any means short of extraordinarily powerful magic (which must say explicitly that it heals deprivation damage) until the hardship is ended. The penalties and damage from multiple sources of deprivation are cumulative.

In the case of sleeping, resting, or breathing, if the character has the power to stop the deprivation, the player must roll (Stamina + Resistance) against a Difficulty equal to the total number of intervals that have passed in order to continue the behavior for another interval.

Hardship	Interval
Lack of Food	3 days
Lack of Water	1 day
Lack of Air	30 seconds
Lack of Rest*	4 hours
Lack of Sleep	1 day**

*This type of hardship only occurs if the character is undergoing strenuous physical activity for that length of time.

**The damage dealt by lack of sleep does not roll over into lethal. Instead, when the character's health levels are all filled, the character falls asleep. Bashing damage dealt by sleep deprivation heals at a rate of one per two hours of sleep.

Resisting Environmental Damage: There are some situations where it is dangerous simply to be in them. If the characters ever find themselves inside a burning building, lost in the northern winter, or in some other dangerous situation, they will need to resist environmental damage. Environmental damage has a Severity, a Trauma rating, and an interval. Every time the interval passes, the character takes levels of damage (the type depends on the specific environmental danger) equal to the Severity. Players may roll the characters' (Stamina + Resistance) against a difficulty equal to the Trauma rating to resist the damage. Each threshold success reduces the Severity by one. Some situations are so inherently dangerous (standing in the middle of a bonfire's flame) that they have a minimum Severity. A hazard's minimum Severity will appear in parentheses after the Severity rating.

Hazard	Interval	Trauma	Severity
Bonfire	5 seconds	3	6L (1L)
Extreme Temperatures	1 hour	1	1B
Blizzard/Sandstorm	1 minute	2	2L (1B)
Supernatural Storm	1 minute	3	10B
The Silent Wind of Malfeas	5 seconds	5	6A (1A)

Resisting Poison and Disease: Poison and disease can fell even the mightiest heroes. For purposes of this system, poisons and diseases are treated similarly, although poisons do not have a Virulence rating and their intervals are usually much smaller. A poison or disease has an Interval, an Untreated Morbidity, a Treated Morbidity, a Treatment Difficulty, a success cost, a maximum success cost, a suffering effect, and a failure effect.

Fighting off a poison or disease is an extended roll. Every time the interval passes, the player rolls (Stamina + Resistance). When the success cost reaches 0, the taint is gone from the character's system. If the success cost ever reaches the maximum success cost, the character suffers the failure effect. So long as the success cost is greater than 0 (whether the character is making progress towards resisting or not), the character is subject to the suffering effect.

The Difficulty of the Resistance roll is equal to the Treated Morbidity, if the character is currently receiving medical attention, and to the Untreated Morbidity otherwise. Diseases have a Virulence rating, in addition to the other statistics. When first exposed to the disease, the character rolls Stamina + Resistance against a Difficulty equal to the Virulence. Only if the roll fails does the character catch the disease.

Sample Disease: Cholera
Virulence: 4 Treatment Difficulty: 2
Untreated Morbidity: 2 Treated Morbidity: 1
Interval: 3 days
Success Cost: 5 Maximum Success Cost: 10
Suffering Effect: The victim finds it difficult to move. Impose a -4 penalty to all dice pools and static values that govern vigorous physical activity.
Failure Effect: Death

Sample Poison: Alcohol
Treatment Difficulty: 1
Untreated Morbidity: 0 Treated Morbidity: 0
Interval: 6 hours
Success Cost: 1 Maximum Success Cost: 1 (special)
Suffering Effect: -1 penalty to all dexterity-based and mental dice pools, as well as to the dice pool to resist alcohol. These penalties are cumulative across multiple doses. A dose can be one or more actual drinks, depending on the character's body weight.
Failure Effect: If the character's dice pool to resist alcohol is reduced to 0, the character may be vulnerable to alcohol poisoning. The threshold successes on the physician's Medicine roll act as the character's dice pool. If the resistance roll does not gain at least one success, the character is deathly ill for 3 days. If the roll botches, the character dies. In the absence of treatment, or in the face of ineffective treatment, the character rolls one die.

Quick Poisons
      Some players may wish to poison their character's blades in combat. The full disease system is probably too complex for anything other than courtly poisoning. Instead, combat poisons have a Deadliness rating and an effect. If the poison's Deadliness rating is greater than the victim's (Stamina + Resistance)/2 static value, the victim suffers the poison's effect if the poisoned weapon would roll at least one damage die. The most common poison effects are dice pool penalties and additional dice of post-soak damage.

      Resistance is almost never rolled, except as part of a special system. The storyteller might call for a Resistance roll for the character to perform extraordinary feats of toughness. Taking a punch to the stomach without complaint might require a Difficulty 1 roll. Standing on one leg for an entire day might require a Difficulty 3 roll. Grappling a fire elemental without giving in to the pain might require a Difficulty 5 roll.

Socialize
This Ability is used in Social Influence and Statecraft.

Socialize represents the character's knowledge of proper decorum and the politics of informal relationships. Characters may draw upon the Socialize Ability whenever they want to know about cultural taboos, salacious gossip, or influential legends (regardless of whether the legends are true or not).

A low (Intelligence + Socialize)/2 static value (2-3) allows the character to know about the protocols and customs of influential cultures and outrageous, memorable legends. A high static value (4-5) allows the character to know about the specific practices of less influential cultures or subcultures and express deep understanding of a culture's legends. An extraordinary value (6+) allows the character to know about lost or obscure cultures and to deal with inhuman cultures without making a major misstep.

Outside of Social Influence and Statecraft, Socialize is rarely rolled. The storyteller might call for a Socialize roll whenever the characters want to draw upon their exquisite manners or cosmopolitan sophistication. A Difficulty of 1 will allow for a significant, but common feat of diplomacy (explaining away a friend's faux pas). A Difficulty 3 roll will allow for a major feat of diplomacy (gracefully declining a duel of honor). A Difficulty of 5 is reserved for legendary feats of social manipulation (embarrassing a powerful monarch in front of the entire court without being imprisoned).

Stealth
This Ability is used in Combat.

To remain undetected, the character rolls Dexterity + Stealth. The Difficulty of the roll is based on the current environment. In the dark of night, with plenty of cover, in the presence of a distracting noise, the Difficulty is 0. Raise the Difficulty by 1 for moderate light (bonfire) and 2 for bright light (daylight). Raise the Difficulty by 1 if the character has no cover and by another 1 if the the character tries to sneak through relative silence. Some environments (attempting to walk over dry leaves) can make the roll even more difficult. Others (attempting to blend into a crowd) can make it less difficult.

No one with an (Intuition + Awareness)/2 static value less than the threshold successes can detect the stealthy character.

In situations where the character may need to make a series of Stealth rolls (most commonly covert infiltration) the storyteller may opt to use the character's Stealth as the basis for a travel roll. This is treated exactly like any other travel roll. The Difficulty of the roll represents the overall level of security and the alertness of the guards.

The events on the travel table are used to model specific, unavoidable obstacles (a locked door or magical guardian). Using the after trigger, the storyteller can plot the consequences of poor stealth (most commonly, being detected by the guards).

Stealth is used only for remaining undetected, and is almost never rolled under other circumstances.

Survival
This Ability is used in Thaumaturgy and Sorcery.

Survival is used primarily in travel rolls, when the characters wish to travel across uncivilized terrain, living off the land as they go. Travel rolls based off Survival frequently have low Difficulties and high intervals and success costs.

The Difficulty of a Survival-based travel roll depends on the severity of the terrain. Temperate, if wild, lands impose a Difficulty of 1. Harsh, nearly unlivable environments impose a Difficulty of 3. Only the worst, most utterly barren environments will impose a Difficulty of 5 or higher.

The Difficulty of the travel roll includes the tasks of finding food, water, and shelter. Generally, a single Survival specialist can provide these things for a smallish group. If the character is leading a large group with no Survival skills, the Difficulty of the travel roll should be increased by half the group's Magnitude.

Outside of the travel system, finding food and water is a 3 hour basic task with a Difficulty equal to that of an equivalent travel roll. A character can find sustenance for one person per threshold success.

Tracking and Evasion: Characters with Survival can track targets by the signs they leave behind. If the target makes no effort to conceal its passage, the character simply rolls (Intuition + Survival) against a Difficulty based on the tracking conditions. This is usually at least 2, but can rise very high over certain types of terrain (such as bare stone).

If a character wishes to avoid being tracked, the Difficulty to track him is instead the character's (Wits + Survival)/2 static value. This replaces the normal terrain Difficulty, even if the terrain's value is higher. A character may further increase the tracking Difficulty by making a Wits + Survival roll against a Difficulty equal to the terrain's Difficulty + the character's evasion static value. If the roll succeeds, the threshold successes add to the Difficulty of any tracking rolls made to find the character.

Only one successful roll is necessary for a tracker to follow a target. To close the distance requires a travel roll from the tracker. The Difficulty of the roll is equal to the Difficulty of the tracking roll + the Difficulty of surviving on the intervening terrain (even trackers need to eat). The success cost is 5. It uses the following travel table.

(Success cost 10): The target's trail is lost.
(Success cost 0): The character catches up to the target.

While very basic, this table can be expanded based on the specific circumstances surrounding the tracking attempt. Most frequently, the target is trying to reach a certain location, so the entire table can usually be seen to contain the trigger "After (time): the character arrives at the target's destination." Targets who suspect they are being followed can arrange for nasty surprises – surprises represented by triggered events.

Survival can be used instead of Forgecraft or Lore to identify certain types of Enchanting and Sorcery. If a product of Enchanting is made of cloth, leather, or other soft materials or if Sorcery is used to alter the weather or the behavior of animals, the character may substitute (Wits + Survival)/2 for the normal (Intelligence + Ability)/2 static value.

In addition to its other effects, Survival is used for a variety of practical tasks too numerous to list. Lighting fires, cooking food, making and repairing clothing, and predicting the weather are the most common. The storyteller may call for a Survival roll whenever the character needs demonstrate an unusual skill in matters of the hearth and home.

A Difficulty 1 Survival roll allows for challenging, but basic tasks (cooking a good meal with substandard ingredients). A Difficulty 3 roll allows for feats of survival that demonstrate rare skill (predicting the weather a day in advance). A Difficulty 5 roll allows for legendary feats (lighting a fire from damp wood in the middle of a blizzard).

Unarmed
This Ability is used in Combat.

Unarmed may be used in place of Lore when identifying Martial Arts charms based on the Unarmed Ability. The character's (Intelligence + Unarmed)/2 may replace the normal Lore-based static value when calling upon knowledge of unarmed techniques.

Almost all Unarmed rolls are attack rolls in combat. The Storyteller may call for an Unarmed roll when character wish to demonstrate the power and elegance of their styles outside combat. A Difficulty 1 roll will allow the character to competently perform a difficult kata. A Difficulty 3 roll will the character to perform an impressive feat (breaking a stone block bare-handed). A Difficulty 5 roll will allow the character to demonstrate amazing grace and skill (engaging in an unchoreographed mock battle with live weapons, making it look real, but ensuring nobody gets hurt).

War
This Ability is used in Combat and Warfare.

The character may use the War Ability to call upon strategic knowledge and knowledge of famous historical battles. A low (Intelligence + War)/2 static value (2-3) gives the character familiarity with common strategic theories and recent major battles. A high (4-5) static rating gives the character familiarity with obscure schools of strategic thought and more distant and less famous battles. An extraordinary rating (6+) gives the character knowledge of First Age or forbidden strategic theories (often one in the same) and long-past or minor battles.

Outside of combat and warfare, War is rarely rolled. The storyteller might call for a War roll whenever the character wants to call upon strategic or leadership abilities to achieve an end. A Difficulty 1 roll represents a minor, but significant task (properly inspecting a military unit with unfamiliar protocols). A Difficulty 3 roll represents an impressive task (winning a game of Gateway against an experienced player). A Difficulty 5 roll represents a legendary expression of strategic thought (winning a game of Gateway against a grandmaster).

Weaponry

This Ability is used in Combat.

Weaponry may be used in place of Forgecraft and Lore when identifying famous weapons and Weaponry-based martial arts. The character's (Intelligence + Weaponry)/2 static value replaces the normal static value in these situations.

Weaponry is almost never rolled, except as part of an attack roll in combat. The storyteller might call for a Weaponry roll if the character wishes to demonstrate non-combative weapons prowess. A Difficulty 1 roll represents a difficult, but minor feat (throwing a javelin accurately). A Difficulty 3 roll represents an impressive task (slicing a thrown object cleanly in half with a sword). A Difficulty 5 roll represents a legendary task (skewering a thrown object with a thrown javelin).

Chapter 4: Combat

In an action game like Exalted, violence is a constant possibility. Because it is relatively common and because the consequences for failure are great, combat has its own system.

Combat Time

When characters engage in combat, time is tracked very carefully. Combat time is divided into abstract units called ticks. Most of the time, a tick is roughly one second. After a character takes a simple action, the character must wait a number of ticks equal to the action's speed before acting again.

At the beginning of a combat, every character that intends to participate in the combat makes a *Join battle* roll. A Join Battle roll uses the character's (Wits + Awareness) as a dice pool.

The character who achieves the highest success total on the Join Battle roll acts first, on tick 0. That character's success total is then applied as a Difficulty to every other character's Join Battle roll.

Since the Difficulty of the roll is, by definition, higher than every other character's success total, the threshold successes of the other characters' will be either zero or negative. This is fine. Characters who fail the Join Battle roll first act on the tick equal to their negative success threshold or tick 6, whichever comes first. Characters with a success threshold of 0 act on tick 0.

Example: Four characters engage in a free-for-all battle. Their Join Battle rolls achieve success totals of 7, 7, 4, and 0. The highest success total is 7, so the two characters who achieved that result act simultaneously, on tick 0.

After that, 7 successes are subtracted from the other success totals, yielding success thresholds of -3 and -7. Thus, the other characters act on tick 3 and tick 6 (because even the slowest character acts no later than tick 6)

Joining the battle after tick 6 requires a (Wits + Awareness) roll with a Difficulty of 3. If the roll succeeds, the new participant may act immediately. If the roll fails, the new participant acts three ticks later. Characters attempting to Join Battle after tick 0, but before tick 6 need no roll to do so, instead acting on tick 6 automatically.

Surprise

Not everyone is prepared for combat when it comes. To launch a surprise attack a character must roll (Dexterity + Stealth), if setting up a physical ambush, or (Manipulation + Deception), if attacking suddenly in an apparently peaceful situation. The Difficulty of the roll is equal to the (Intuition + Awareness)/2 static value of the target (+2 if the character is using Deception to surprise an enemy in plain view). Regardless of whether the roll succeeds or fails, a Join Battle roll is made immediately after the attempt.

If the surprise roll succeeds, the target is deprived of a Join Battle roll, acting on tick 6. In addition, if the ambushing character attacks the target before tick 6, the target is automatically unaware of the attack (and thus unable to apply a defense). It is usually only possible to attempt a surprise attack before the Join Battle roll is made. Characters can attempt to reestablish surprise with a simple action, but doing so is very difficult.

Turns

A character's *turn* in combat is the span of time between the character's actions. A turn begins on the tick when a character takes a simple action and ends on the tick before the character takes another simple action. Turns are mostly important in the tracking of charm and spell effects that have an extended duration in combat.

Speed

Every simple or reflexive action the character takes in combat has a *speed value*. An action delays the start of the character's next turn by a number of ticks equal to its speed value. Thus, quick actions have a low speed value and slow actions have a high speed value.

Timed Actions

At the beginning of a character's turn, the player declares a single s*imple action*. This simple action is usually some form of attack, although it can be anything the character can accomplish in 2 to 6 ticks. The speed value of the character's simple action determines the base length of the character's turn.

Once per tick (including the tick on which the character takes a simple action), the character may take a single *reflexive action*. A reflexive action is anything the character can accomplish in less than two ticks. The most common reflexive action is the move action, but reflexive actions are incredibly varied.

Most reflexive actions have a speed value of 0, representing tasks that require the character's attention, but do not delay the character's next action. Certain especially powerful reflexive actions have a speed value of 1. Taking a speed 1 reflexive action pushes back the start of the character's next turn by a single tick. This can theoretically delay the start of the character's next turn indefinitely.

Example: A character's turn begins on the fourth tick of combat. The player decides to make an attack with a speed rating of 5. That character's next turn begins on the ninth tick (4 + 5). Once per tick, the character may take a reflexive action. If the character takes a Move action (speed 0) on tick 6 and two Dash actions (speed 1) on ticks 7 and 8, the character's next turn begins on tick 11 (9 + 1 + 1) instead.

Carefully balancing speed versus utility is the essence of Exalted's combat strategy. Simple actions allow the character to act aggressively, and thus win a fight, but powerful reflexive actions, which reduce the total number of simple actions taken (by giving the character fewer, longer turns) can often be helpful in keeping the character alive or in setting up more powerful attacks.

Basic Actions and Defense

As far as the combat system is concerned, some actions take no time at all. These actions are called *basic actions*. Generally speaking, characters do not decide to take basic actions. Instead, basic actions are taken in response to the simple and reflexive actions of others.

Most commonly, the only basic actions a character will perform are *applying a defense* and *resisting an effect*. These basic actions are very similar. In both cases, one or more of the character's traits, possibly divided by another number (always 1, 2, or 3), is applied as a Difficulty or penalty to another character's roll.

In order to apply a defense, the character must be aware of an attack, but that is the only limitation on doing so. Characters may apply their defense to as many or as few attacks on a single tick as desired. Most (but not all) defenses act as a Difficulty.

Resisting an effect does not even require the character be aware of the effect. Character automatically attempt to resist any and all effects directed at them, whether they are aware of them or not. Traits used to resist effects are commonly applied as a Difficulty, but there is one notable exception. The character's *soak* is applied as a penalty to damage rolls, subtracting dice from the damage dice pool.

The Two Defenses

There are two types of defense in Exalted combat. They are the *Avoid Defense Value (ADV)* and the *Respond Defense Value (RDV)*. A character can avoid an attack by deflecting it with a weapon or simply getting out of the way (usually a combination of both). To respond to an attack, the character must physically engage the attack, stopping it with an equal, opposite force. Responding to an attack is riskier than avoiding it, but many powerful charms and reflexive actions work only if the character's RDV is used.

The character may decide whether to apply ADV or RDV after the enemy declares an attack. If attacked multiple times on the same tick, the character may use any combination of defenses desired.

To calculate the character's ADV, select either the character's Brawl, Unarmed, or Weaponry. Generally, a player will want to use the highest value, but using Brawl or Weaponry requires the character to wield an appropriate weapon. A character's ADV equals (Dexterity + Ability + Essence)/2.

To calculate the character's RDV, select either the character's Brawl, Unarmed, or Weaponry. Brawl and Weaponry require appropriate weapons, as with ADV, but Unarmed RDV faces its own unique limitation. Because applying RDV involves physically intercepting an attack, characters may not use an Unarmed-based RDV to respond to attacks dealing lethal damage unless the character has a charm or equipment that explicitly allows it. A character's RDV equals (Strength + Ability)/3. Weapons with a defense modifier will provide a bonus or penalty to RDV.

Characters need not base their defense off the same Ability they use to attack, nor do they need to base their ADV and their RDV off the same Ability. Players may decide to use whatever combination of Abilities they find most favorable.

Defensive State

        Circumstances in combat can make characters more or less vulnerable to attack. For this reason, characters have a *Defensive State*. A character's defensive state represents the degree to which that character has become vulnerable to attack. Most of the time, the character is in the normal state, but certain actions, charm effects, and conditions can increase or reduce the character's state.

Defensive State	Effect
Guarded	Apply a +3 Bonus to ADV
Normal	No adjustment to ADV
Suppressed	Apply a -3 Penalty to ADV
Vulnerable	Apply a -6 Penalty to ADV and a -3 Penalty to RDV
Bypassed	The character's ADV and RDV are 0

        Multiple adjustments to defensive state are cumulative, but a character's defensive state can never rise above Guarded or fall below Bypassed.

Ignoring Defense vs Inapplicability

        Some magic will provide attacks which *ignore* ADV, RDV, or both. These attacks reduce the appropriate defense to 0 for that attack only. Most defensive charms will not function against an attack which ignores DV. The character may only activate a charm which explicitly says it functions in such situations.

        Ignoring DV is different than making a defense *Inapplicable*. A defense is inapplicable against attacks which do not match conceptually. You can't avoid gravity, nor may you respond to poison gas. Inapplicable attacks will always have some other keyword which determines exactly what is necessary to stop it. Magic which ignores DV will always enhance attacks to which DV is applicable.

        Note that no attack is irresistible, although some ignore resistances.

Cover

        Characters who possess partial cover (50% of the body or less) increase their defensive state by 1. Characters who possess extensive cover (75-90% of the body) increase their defensive state by 2. If a character has so much cover that no path large enough to permit an attack exists between the character and the attacker, the character is not a valid target for attacks.

Damage, Health Levels, and Soak

Everything that has the possibility of being damaged possesses one or more health levels, represented as boxes on the character sheet. Whenever a character takes damage, one or more boxes is filled in. When all the boxes are filled, the character is incapacitated, and possibly dying.

There are three types of damage. *Bashing* damage is the least serious. Characters suffer bashing damage when they are hit with weak or bludgeoning type attacks. Bashing damage heals quickly and is resisted easily, but too much of it can be deadly.

The intermediate damage type is *lethal* damage. Characters suffer lethal damage from piercing and cutting attacks. Lethal damage is resisted with difficulty and heals slowly.

The most serious type of damage is *aggravated* damage. Only powerful magic and coup de grace attacks will inflict aggravated damage. Aggravated damage cannot be resisted without magic and heals only with expert medical attention.

Each type of damage is represented by a different mark in the health level box. Bashing damage is represented as a slash (/), lethal as a cross (X), and aggravated as an asterisk (*).

Health level boxes are arranged in a grid, with the least serious damage in the top left and the most serious damage in the bottom right. New damage is placed in the first available box, but there is a hierarchy of damage. Aggravated always comes before lethal and lethal always comes before bashing. If a character suffers aggravated or lethal damage while suffering from a less serious type, the less serious damage is "pushed aside", so that the more serious comes before.

Example: A character takes 2 levels of bashing damage in a fist fight, resulting in the following health level chart:

$$\underline{/}\ \underline{/}\ \underline{}$$
$$\underline{}\ \underline{}\ \underline{}$$
$$\underline{}\ \underline{}\ \underline{}$$

Later, that same character gets in a knife fight, taking one level of lethal damage. The health level chart now looks like this:

$$\underline{X}\ \underline{/}\ \underline{/}$$
$$\underline{}\ \underline{}\ \underline{}$$
$$\underline{}\ \underline{}\ \underline{}$$

As if the character's day weren't bad enough, an Exalt later targets the character with a poisonous spell, dealing three levels of aggravated damage. The health level chart now looks like this:

$$\underline{*}\ \underline{*}\ \underline{*}$$
$$\underline{X}\ \underline{/}\ \underline{/}$$
$$\underline{}\ \underline{}\ \underline{}$$

The character manages to escape the Exalt, but things hardly improve. On the way home, the character is mugged by two assailants, one with a sword, the other with a club. The character takes one level each of bashing and lethal damage. The health level chart now looks like this:

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
* & * & * \\
\underline{X} & \underline{X} & \underline{/} \\
\underline{/} & \underline{/} & \underline{}
\end{array}
$$

If a character's final health level is filled with lethal or aggravated damage, the character is *dying*. The precise effects of the dying condition are covered in another section, but suffice to say, they're not good. If the character's final health level is filled with bashing damage, the character is merely incapacitated, conscious, but able to take only the Inactive action.

If the character continues to suffer bashing damage after becoming incapacitated, the excess levels of bashing damage convert the character's least serious bashing levels into lethal on a one-for-one basis. If the character suffers even a single level of lethal or aggravated damage while incapacitated, all of the character's remaining bashing levels convert to lethal and the character starts dying.

Example: the character from the previous example's day keeps getting worse. After the mugging, the character falls down the stairs, taking two levels of bashing damage. The health chart looks like this:

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
* & * & * \\
\underline{X} & \underline{X} & \underline{X} \\
\underline{/} & \underline{/} & \underline{/}
\end{array}
$$

But worst of all, while unable to move, the character is bit by a dog for one level of lethal damage. The unlucky character is now in critical condition, with the following health level chart:

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
* & * & * \\
\underline{X} & \underline{X} & \underline{X} \\
\underline{X} & \underline{X} & \underline{X}
\end{array}
$$

Suffering damage imposes *wound penalties* on characters. Wound penalties are either *moderate wounds* or *severe wounds.* If a character is suffering from moderate wounds, the character's default defensive state changes from normal to suppressed and the character suffers a -3 penalty to all dice pools. If the character is suffering from severe wounds, the default defensive state is vulnerable and the dice pool penalty increases to -6.

For most characters, the first three health levels impose no wound penalty, the second three health levels impose a moderate wound penalty, and the final three health levels impose a severe wound penalty. Many powerful supernatural creatures possess charms that grant them additional health levels in one or more categories.

In combat, characters are frequently on the receiving end of *damage rolls*. Every threshold success on a damage roll inflicts one level of damage (although only powerful magic will impose a Difficulty on a damage roll.) The dice pool for a damage roll varies, but it is usually equal to the attacker's Strength + a weapon's damage bonus + the attack roll's threshold successes. The damage dice pool, before soak and other penalties are applied is called an attack's *raw damage.*

A damage roll's dice pool is automatically penalized by the target's *soak.* Characters have three types of soak, one for each type of damage. Each type of soak penalizes damage rolls that threaten to inflict the corresponding damage type. The minimum damage dice pool, even after soak, is usually one, though many effects exist to raise it higher.

Without armor, bashing soak is equal to a character's Stamina. Mortals have no natural lethal or aggravated soak, but many powerful supernatural creatures do. Nonmagical armor increases the character's bashing and lethal soak. Magical armor can also increase aggravated soak.

Soak provided by the character's stamina is called *natural soak*. Soak provided by armor is called *armor*. Most of the time, the distinction between these categories is insignificant. However, some magic will ignore armor. Very rarely will magic ignore natural soak. Magic will state in its description what type of soak it ignores. If it does not, assume it ignores both.

Magic which improves soak can either increase natural soak or provide armor. It will usually state in its description which type of soak it provides. If it does not, assume it provides natural soak.

Another rare defensive ability, given primarily by magical armor, is *hardness*. If the raw damage of an attack is less than a character's hardness, it does no damage at all, not even minimum damage.

Some powerful effects add levels of damage to an attack. Levels of damage bypass soak, adding directly to the successes of a damage roll, before any Difficulty is applied.

The rules for dying, natural healing, and the use of Medicine to treat wounds can be found at the end of the chapter.

The Attack Sequence

All attacks in Exalted follow the same pattern, regardless of whether they are melee, ranged, or magical.

Step 1: Declare Attack

The attacker decides what type of attack to make, declaring which weapon and Ability will be used, along with any charm, virtue channeling, stunt, or other bonuses or penalties that might apply. Refer to the list of Simple Actions for rules on making an attack.

Step 2: Declare Defense

The defender decides whether to use ADV, RDV, or no defense at all. Supplemental charms are declared at this step, as are any charms, stunts, virtue channeling, or other applicable bonuses or penalties. Now is the time to figure the character's defensive state. Refer to the section "Basic Actions and Defense" for guidelines in choosing a defense.

Step 3: Roll Attack

At this point, the attacker rolls the attack dice pool that was calculated in step 1. After the roll's success total is determined, any Difficulty from interfering factors is applied, subtracting from the successes. If any successes remain, the Defender's chosen DV is applied, subtracting even more successes. If at least one threshold success remains, the attack succeeds. Otherwise, it fails.

Step 4: Attack Reroll

Certain magic allows for a second chance on attack rolls. If the character possesses such magic, it is used now. The exact rules for these effects can be found in the magic's description.

Step 5: Defensive Response

Defenders have a wider variety of choices when it comes to responding to attacks. Defensive reroll magic is used at this time , but so are most reflexive actions provided by relying on the character's RDV. The text of the charm or effect will describe the benefit of activating it at this stage.

Step 6: Calculate Raw Damage

The raw damage of an attack is equal to its *base damage* plus the threshold successes on the attack roll. Base damage will vary, depending on the precise attack used, but it is usually equal to the attacker's Strength plus the weapon's damage bonus. Some weapons, like crossbows and firewands, do not rely on muscle power. They have a fixed base damage, instead of a damage bonus.

Step 7: Apply Hardness and Soak

If the attack's raw damage is less the defender's hardness, the attack does no damage whatsoever. If the raw damage is greater than the character's hardness, the appropriate type of soak (based on the type of damage the attack inflicts) is applied as a penalty to the raw damage, yielding the final damage dice pool.

Soak cannot reduce an attack's final damage dice pool below the attack's minimum damage (usually 1).

Step 8: Roll Damage

The attacker rolls the attack's damage dice pool, calculating the success total as normal. Any levels of damage the attack might inflict are added to the success total. Any Difficulty the defender might apply is subtracted from the success total after any damage increasing effect is factored in.

The defender suffers one level of damage, of the appropriate type, for each threshold success on the damage roll.

Step 9: Apply Non-Damage Effects

Any other effects the attack might have had (knock-back, spreading an infectious disease, etc) take effect at this time. Step 9 is also when the mote or willpower reward from a stunt is added to the character's reserves.

Some charms and actions (most commonly counterattacks) can only be activated in step 9.

Simple Actions

At the beginning of the character's turn, the player declares a single simple action. Simple actions are those activities that require the majority of the character's concentration to perform. What follows is a list of the most common simple actions character's might want to take.

An action's speed value is listed in parentheses after the action's name. Actions that have variable speed will explain in the action description how the action's speed is determined.

Attack (Speed Varies)

The most common type of simple action, characters who decide to attack select a weapon, ability, and target and play through the attack sequence described above. There are four Abilities used to make attacks. Which Ability is used depends on the character's weapon.

Archery governs the use of ranged weapons like bows, crossbows, and firewands. Brawl governs the use of improvised weapons (chairs, bottles, etc), light weapons (knives, throwing stars, etc.), and weapons used outside their normal function (clubbing someone with a bow, throwing a sword, etc.). Unarmed governs the use of the character's hands and feat, benefiting from, at most, a gauntlet or boot. Weaponry governs the use of most military weapons (swords, spears, etc).

A weapon's description will say what Ability governs it. When making an attack, the character rolls (Dexterity + Ability), adding the weapon's accuracy as a bonus to the dice pool.

The speed value of an attack is equal to the speed rating of the character's weapon.

Activate Simple Charm (Speed Varies)
Charms with the Simple type require a simple action to use in combat. The speed value of a simple charm is almost always 5. Charms that have a different speed will say so in their descriptions.

Attack Object (Speed 5)
Attacking an object in combat with the intent of breaking it is an extended roll with an interval of one turn. The Difficulty and Success Cost vary depending on the object to be broken and the desired state of disrepair.
To attack an object, the character rolls (Strength + Athletics). Using a weapon or damage boosting charm adds a bonus to the dice pool equal to the weapon's damage rating or the charm's damage bonus. Charms or magic that add levels of damage to an attack add automatic successes to this roll. Negative threshold successes on an attack object roll do not add to the roll's success cost.
The following chart shows the Difficulty and Success cost to break various objects.

Sample Object	Difficulty	Success Cost (To Destroy)
House Door	1	5
Oak Door	2	7
Fortress Gate	3	20
Wood Wall	2	10
Brick Wall	4	20
Stone Wall	5	30
Iron Wall	6	40

Coordinate Attack (Speed 5)
A skilled leader can help a group of less skilled combatants break through a target's defense. The Coordinate Attack action allows a character to roll (Charisma + War) against a Difficulty equal to the target's (Wits + War)/2 static value. If the roll succeeds, the character coordinates the attacks of one ally per threshold success.
On the same tick that marks the beginning of the character's next turn, the target's defensive state is lowered by one level, but only against attacks made by those affected by the character's Coordinate Attack action. The character's allies must attack on that tick, and might have to delay the start of their next turn in order to benefit from the coordinated attack. The target's defensive state returns to normal at the end of that tick.
Characters may benefit from Coordinated Attack actions they themselves initiate.

First Aid (Speed 6)

Using the character's Medicine Ability to help a dying combatant requires a Speed 6 Simple Action. The rules for doing so appear at the end of the chapter.

Jump (Speed 3)

Using a simple action, the character may jump up to (Strength + Athletics) yards. Jumping in combat reduces a character's defensive state by one level until the beginning of the character's next turn. A character's jumping distance is a static value.

Reestablish Surprise (Speed 6)

The character can attempt to catch an enemy unawares with an attack by rolling (Dexterity + Stealth) against a Difficulty equal to the target's (Intuition + Awareness)/2 static value + 3. If the roll succeeds, the character is hidden from the target's sight. So long as the character remains hidden, the target will automatically be unaware of the next attack made by the character (and thus unable to apply a defense against it). Whenever the character makes a surprise attack, that character's concealment is automatically lost, regardless of whether the attack is successful.

An insight roll to increase the (Intuition + Awareness)/2 static value is a speed 1 reflexive action. If the static value increases enough, the stealthy character must make another reestablish surprise attempt, albeit against the original (rather than against the newly increased) Difficulty.

Miscellaneous Action (Speed 5)

This list cannot possibly encompass everything the players might want their characters to do. If an action could be accomplished in 5 or fewer ticks, a character may attempt it in a single miscellaneous action. If it would require more than 5 ticks, the storyteller should model it as an extended action with an interval of one turn.

Miscellaneous actions often allow the characters to accomplish their nonviolent goals in the midst of combat. Opening a lock, pushing a bystander out of the way, and deciphering an ancient text are all examples of the sort of miscellaneous actions characters might want to take.

Taking a miscellaneous action reduces the character's defensive state by one level until the beginning of the character's next turn.

Wait (Speed 2)

If the character does not wish to act, the player may declare a wait action. The character does nothing for two ticks, at which point the character's next turn begins (characters can wait even longer with reflexive wait actions).

Inactive (Speed 6)

If a character is Incapacitated, Dying, paralyzed, or otherwise rendered unable to take effective actions, the character is considered Inactive. At the start of each turn, an Inactive character automatically takes the Inactive action, representing the character's inability to take any other simple or reflexive actions.

Inactive characters can take only those basic actions that allow for total passivity. They are usually capable only of resisting effects, but if they are dying, the storyteller might allow for some stirring last words.

Reflexive Actions

The player may declare a single reflexive action each tick. Reflexive actions represent things that require the character's attention, but are not so difficult that they interfere with the character's other actions. They rarely require dice rolls, but often will provide bonuses to the character's simple actions or defense.

The speed value of a Simple action is listed in parentheses after the action's name. A speed 1 action will delay the beginning of the character's next turn by one tick. A reflexive action with a speed rating of 0 does not delay the character's turn at all, but still may not be used if the character has already taken a reflexive action that tick.

Activate Reflexive Charm (Speed Varies)

Activating a charm with the Reflexive type requires the character expend an reflexive action. Most Reflexive charms have a speed rating of 0. If a charm differs, it will say so in its description.

Move (Speed 0)

As a reflexive action, a character may move up to (Dexterity) yards on a single tick. A character's movement rate is considered a static value.

Dash (Speed 1)

As a reflexive action with a speed value of 1, a character may move up to (Dexterity + Athletics + 3) yards in a single tick. A character's dash movement rate is considered a static value.

Control Difficult Mount (Speed 0)

Controlling a mount with Control rating greater than the character's (Wits + Conveyance)/2 static value requires a reflexive action and a Wits + Ride roll with a Difficulty equal to mount's Control rating. If the roll receives even a single threshold success, the mount's Control rating is reduced by one for the scene. Successive reflexive actions can further reduce a mount's Control rating.

So long as the mount's Control rating is less than or equal to the character's (Wits + Conveyance)/2 static value, controlling the mount is a basic action. Loud noises, predators, and other distractions will increase a mount's control rating.

The primary value of riding a mount is that the mount possesses its own set of actions. It is usually not worth the effort of tracking a mount's simple actions (unless the mount possesses especially strong abilities). Assume, for normal beasts, that a controlled mount takes whatever move and dash actions the character desires.

Ready Weapon (Speed Varies)

Drawing or readying a weapon is a reflexive action. Most weapons require a speed 0 action to ready. Especially large, unwieldy, or inconveniently stored weapons require a speed 1 action.

Readying a loaded firewand (or similar weapon) is a speed 0 action, but reloading a firewand is a speed 1 action.

Guard (Speed 1) (Step 2)

A character may declare a guard action during step 2 of an attack to raise the character's defensive state by 1 against that attack.

Block (Speed 1) (Step 5)

Characters who apply RDV against an attack during step 2 may take a reflexive action in step 5 to reduce the threshold successes of an attack by 1. If the threshold successes are reduced to 0, the attack fails.

Aim (Speed 1)

The character chooses a target. The character's next attack against that target receives a +1 bonus to its dice pool. The character may take multiple Aim actions on subsequent (though not necessarily consecutive) ticks to increase the bonus. Each additional Aim action increases the bonus by +1, to a maximum bonus of +3.

If the character takes any simple action other than waiting or attacking the target, the aiming bonus is lost. If the target for any reason becomes an invalid target for attacks, the aiming bonus is lost. A character can aim with any weapon, not just ranged weapons.

Wait (Speed 1)

The character does nothing, delaying the start of the next turn by one tick.

Deflect Attack (Speed 1) (Step 2)

If another person is attacked within (Dexterity) yards, the character may take a Deflect Attack action to apply his RDV against the attack. This DV replaces the target's normal DV, if it is higher. If the character's RDV is lower than the target's current DV, this action instead increases the target's DV by one. The first time a character uses this action on any particular turn, his defensive state lowers by one until the end of that turn.

If more than one character attempts to deflect the same attack, only the highest DV applies. That DV increases by one for each additional Deflect Attack attempt. If the attacker still manages to exceed the improved DV, she may decide that the attack hits the original target, or any one of the people who attempted to deflect it.

Dying, Injuries, and Healing

When a character's final health level is filled in with lethal or aggravated damage, that character is dying. Dying characters are automatically Inactive. Furthermore, they must make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll at the beginning of each turn. If the roll succeeds, the character lives for another turn. If the roll fails, the Difficulty of subsequent rolls increases by one. If the Difficulty of the Stamina + Resistance roll ever exceeds the character's Stamina + Resistance dice pool the character dies.

Characters do not suffer damage past their last health level. Instead, every level of damage beyond the last increases the Difficulty of the dying roll by one. Characters who are pushed passed their final health level may reduce the Difficulty of the dying roll by taking *injuries*.

Injuries are major wounds and disfigurements. Severed limbs, lifelong scars, and damage organs are all examples of injuries the character might suffer. Injuries are rated from 1 to 5, in order of increasing severity.

Whenever a dying character takes damage, the player may decide to reduce that damage by 1 level per injury rating. Damage so reduced does not add to the difficulty of the (Stamina + Resistance) roll dying characters must make. A player may acquire as many injuries as desired, but may only take a single injury with any particular source of damage. Players must decide in step 10 of an attack whether to take an injury.

After combat is over, a character skilled in Medicine can turn injuries back into health levels, allowing them to be healed in time. Every injury has a treatment Difficulty. Successfully treated injuries turn into a number of levels of lethal damage equal to the injury's rating.

First Aid can also aid a dying character. The healing character rolls Wits + Medicine against a Difficulty equal to the Difficulty of the dying roll. If the roll succeeds, every threshold success reduces the Difficulty of the dying roll by one. If a First Aid roll reduces the Difficulty of the Dying roll to 0, the Dying character does not need to make further Dying rolls. Further attacks may still raise the Dying roll Difficulty for a successfully treated character, in which case the Dying rolls resume.

Bashing damage heals at a rate of one level per 12 hours of rest. Lethal damage heals at a rate of one level per two weeks of rest. Aggravated damage does not heal at all. Characters who refuse to rest heal at half the normal rate.

Injuries

What follows is a list of injuries, their ratings, their Difficulty to treat, and their effects.

Aggravated Damage (1-5)
Difficulty to treat: 5

Instead of increasing the Difficulty to resist dying, a character may convert up to five levels of lethal damage into aggravated damage. A successfully treated point of Aggravated Damage converts into a single level of lethal damage, but Aggravated wounds must be treated individually.

Mortal Wound (3-5)
Difficulty to treat: 8

The character may trade between three and five health levels for a delayed death sentence. Trading 3 levels guarantees the character will die withing the month, trading four levels, within the week, and trading five levels, within the day.

While the character is languishing with a mortal wound, all physical dice pools are penalized by an amount equal to the injury's rating. A character may have only one mortal wound at a time.

Permanent Scar (1)
Difficulty to treat: 1

A character may convert one level of lethal damage into a scar that will last a lifetime.

Infection (2)
Difficulty to treat: special

A character may convert two levels of lethal damage into a disease with the following statistics:

Treatment Difficulty: 3
Untreated Morbidity: 2 Treated Morbidity: 1
Interval: 1 day per infection
Success Cost: 5 per infection
Maximum Success cost: 25 (this is constant, no matter how many infections the character has).
Suffering Effect: -1 to all dice pools and static values. Penalties from multiple infections are cumulative.
Failure Effect: Death

Disfigurement (3)
Difficulty to treat: 6

A character may trade 3 levels of lethal damage to become hideously scarred. A disfigurement imposes a -2 penalty on all social roll to win affection or influence people positively. Penalties from multiple disfigurements are cumulative.

Mutilation (4)

Difficulty to treat: 8

A character may trade 4 levels of lethal damage to render a limb unusable. The effects are identical to amputation, but are theoretically treatable.

Amputation (5)

Difficulty to treat: n/a

A character may trade 5 levels of lethal damage to lose a limb. No force less powerful than the healing magic of greater gods can heal amputation. At best, a character might hope for a magical prosthetic. The exact effects of amputation vary with the particular limb lost.

Hand: Losing one hand makes two handed tasks impossible, but imposes no other ill effects. Losing two hands makes most dexterity-based actions that use the hands impossible without special tools. Even if the tools are found, the character suffers a -3 dice pool penalty.

Eye: Losing one eye imposes a -2 penalty to Awareness static values that rely on sight and a -2 penalty to all tasks that require the character to see. Losing both eyes automatically imposes a -4 penalty to Awareness static values that are not purely based on another sense and completely denies the character of all visual information. It also imposes a -4 penalty on all dice pools that benefit from sight.

Leg: A character with one leg can use crutches to move at half speed, and suffers a -3 penalty to all rolls and static values that require use of the character's legs. A character with no legs can only crawl at a rate of 1 yard per tick, automatically fails rolls that require use of the legs, and suffers a -6 penalty to all Athletics based static values.

Coup de Grace Attacks

Characters who are dying have no defense. Anyone who wants to finish off a character need only make a normal attack roll against an ADV of 0. If the roll succeeds, the attack's normal raw damage is converted to automatic levels of damage, raising the Difficulty of the target's dying roll as normal.

Because this is such a large amount, a Coup de Grace attack is all but certain to kill a dying character, but it is never wise to assume that because someone is dying, that person will wind up dead. If a character who makes a Coup de Grace attack rolls more successes on the attack roll than the character's own (Intuition + Medicine)/2 static value, the attacker is convinced the target is dead.

Chapter 5: Social Influence

Exalted uses a special system for deliberate persuasion. Whether characters want to convince reluctant potential allies to brave danger, deceive a hostile god about their intentions, or strike a good deal with a Fair Folk Noble, the players use the social influence system to determine success.

Influence Attempts

Characters who wish to aggressively persuade someone must make an *influence attempt*. When an influence attempt is made, the player rolls (Attribute + Ability) against a Difficulty equal to the target's *mental defense value*.

The dice pool for the influence attempt depends on the character's goal in making it. If the character is being blunt, forceful, or tactless, the Attribute used is Charisma. If the character is being dishonest, sensitive, or diplomatic, the Attribute used is Manipulation. If the character is being clever or cerebral, or making an appeal to reason, the Attribute used is Wits.

Influencing a person's feelings or pandering to their sentiments creates an *emotion*, and uses Presence.

Changing a person's beliefs (whether by telling a lie or correcting a false belief) creates an *illusion*, and uses Deception.

Altering a person's behavior without changing their feelings or beliefs creates a *compulsion*, and uses Negotiation.

The threshold successes on an influence attempt determine the power of the emotion, illusion, or compulsion. Compare the successes to the following chart.

Threshold Successes	Emotion	Illusion	Compulsion
1-- 2	Mild: The news from Thorns is troubling.	Implausible: Not all Anathema are pure evil.	Inconvenient: Lend me your sword.
3 -- 4	Moderate: Heaven help us, the Deathlords will kill us all!	Highly Dubious: Some Anathema sincerely want to help humanity.	Risky: Cover me with this bow.
5 -- 6	Severe: Pack up the family, we're getting out of here!!	Paradigm Shattering: The Immaculate Order lied about the Solars.	Dangerous: Grab your sword and come help me.
7 or more	The target gains an appropriate Intimacy.	The target gains an appropriate Intimacy.	The target gains an appropriate Intimacy.

Characters may have a particular goal with an influence attempt, but they do not consciously control the reaction caused by their rolls. They may want to persuade the villagers to take up arms against a local tyrant, but if they roll only one threshold success, the villagers will offer only covert aid. By contrast, a society dandy may want only to flirt with the well-connected noble, but rolling five threshold successes will still fill the noble with near-uncontrollable desire.

If the characters want to change a reaction to their social influence, they must roll a new influence attempt. The Difficulty of the new attempt is the target's mental defense value plus the minimum threshold successes necessary to achieve the previously imposed level of influence. If the roll is a success, the player may alter the strength of the influence by one level in either direction.

Example: The noble is taking the dandy's flirtation too seriously. The emotion effect created is severe. The noble has an MDV of 2, and is suffering from a severe (threshold successes: 5) emotion. The dandy must roll a Manipulation + Presence roll against a Difficulty of 7. If the roll garners any threshold successes at all, the noble's emotion reduces to moderate. (A character with a different goal could instead change the noble's infatuation into a genuine intimacy).

The extra Difficulty applies only to altering emotions, illusions, or compulsions created in the current scene. Generally speaking, it is best to let people cool down or do some thinking after influencing them socially.

Intimacies created with social influence last indefinitely. Influence short of a true Intimacy fades with time. How long it takes an effect to fade is dependent on many factors, but usually compulsions last either until they are finished or until another compulsion comes along (which is usually pretty quick for those with low Conviction and Temperance). Strong emotions tend to fade quickly, weak emotions fade slowly. By contrast, weak illusions tend to be quickly contradicted, but if someone comes to believe a strong illusion, that belief will persist for quite some time.

Eroding, Reinforcing, and Creating Intimacies
It is possible to create an Intimacy from nothing in the space of a single scene, but doing so requires such an overwhelming degree of success, that it's only really a feasible option for powerful gods and Exalted. Mortals create and destroy intimacies the hard way – one scene at a time.

Intimacies do not have ratings, but are associated with Virtues. Each Intimacy has a number of *damage levels* equal to its associated Virtue. Damage levels are lost whenever a character suffers a mental influence that is in conflict with the Intimacy. This can only happen once per scene, and a character only marks off an Intimacy's damage level if the mental influence attempt achieved 3 or more threshold successes. If the character resists the mental influence with willpower, or successfully responds to it, the intimacy does not suffer damage.

If a character has lost an Intimacy damage level in the current scene, that character is not affected by either the Intimacy's benefits or its drawbacks until the end of the scene. The character may be affected by further mental influence attempts, but those attempts do no further damage to the Intimacy, regardless of their level of success. Spending willpower to ignore an Intimacy also inflicts one level of Intimacy damage. When an Intimacy loses its last damage level, the character loses the Intimacy.

Characters who wish to retain their Intimacies may *reinforce* them. Once per scene, if the character is in a situation that would allow him to channel an Intimacy, he may spend a willpower point to reinforce that Intimacy instead. The action gains no bonus dice, but one of the Intimacy's damage levels is restored.

Building a new Intimacy follows a similar process. The player declares a desired Intimacy, which is recorded on the character sheet. Then, any time the character could channel that Intimacy, the player may spend a point of willpower to add a damage level to it, with the usual caveat that a character may only add one Intimacy damage level per scene. Once the Intimacy has a number of damage levels equal to its associated Virtue, the character gains the Intimacy. Characters suffer neither benefit nor disadvantage from new Intimacies until they are fully built, but nascent Intimacies may still be damaged as normal.

Building a new Intimacy is a life-affirming experience. When a new Intimacy gains its final damage level, the character may immediately roll the associated Virtue. The character gains a number of willpower points equal to the roll's success total. Social Influence can persuade a character to build a new Intimacy.

Mental Defense

Characters, even passive, non-heroic mortals, usually resist having their beliefs, feelings, and behavior altered. This constant, habitual resistance is represented by the *mental defense value.* The mental defense value, or MDV, is a static value equal to (Composure + Integrity + Essence)/2. Unless the character explicitly declares a desire to become vulnerable to a particular influence attempt, the MDV is applied as a Difficulty to all influence attempts.

Virtues and Intimacies

If a particular influence attempt opposes one of the character's Virtues or intimacies, the character's MDV receives a bonus equal to the appropriate Virtue rating. If a particular influence attempt supports one the character's Virtues or intimacies, it receives a penalty equal to the appropriate Virtue rating.

If a particular influence attempt would alter a target's MDV more than once (because it supports or opposes multiple Virtues and/or intimacies), only the highest intimacy or virtue applies. If an MDV bonus is in conflict with an equally rated MDV penalty, intimacies take precedence over virtues. If the bonus and the penalty come from the same type of source, use the bonus (rarely is social influence helped by sending a muddled message).

Example: A character with a Compassion of 4 and a Valor of 2 has Compassion-based intimacies of "family" and "my mentor." If the character were asked to defend the family, that influence would support both Valor and the Intimacy, so the character receives a +4 bonus to MDV (the bonus provided by the Intimacy).

If the character was subject to an emotion inspiring fear for the fate of the family, that influence would support the intimacy and oppose Valor, so the character receives a -4 penalty to MDV.

If the character were asked to torture on behalf of the family, the influence would support the family and oppose Compassion, so the character receives a -4 penalty to MDV (the intimacy is more important than the Virtue).

If the character's mentor asked about the family's shameful secrets, the influence would support the mentor but oppose the family, so the character would receive a +4 bonus to MDV (bonuses take precedence over penalties).

Responding to Influence

A character's passive mental defense is not the only thing that can interfere with social influence. Characters may respond to social influence, possibly turning it back on its originator.

After an influence attempt roll has been made and the threshold successes have been counted, the target of the influence attempt may choose one of two responses. The target may *ignore* the influence, by spending a point of willpower. This causes the influence attempt to fail automatically, regardless of the success total of the roll or the mental defense value of the target.

Alternately, the target may *counter* the influence attempt. Countering an influence attempt also requires spending a point of willpower, but instead of causing the attempt to fail, the counter response allows characters to make an (Attribute + Ability) roll of their own.

The Difficulty of the counter roll is equal to the influence attempt's threshold successes. If the influence attempt has already failed to beat the character's MDV, the Difficulty is 0. If the counter roll fails, the original influence attempt succeeds. The character may spend an additional point of willpower to ignore the attempt. If the counter roll succeeds, the original influence attempt fails.

The success total (not threshold successes) of the counter roll is then compared to the MDV of the originator of the first influence attempt. If the success total is greater, the originator of the first attempt is subject to a new social influence. A counter may be countered in turn, leading to an endless back and forth. The success total of a counter roll is compared to the opponent's MDV only if the counter roll succeeded.

The type of influence produced by a counter need not be the same type as the influence that inspired a counter. The target of an influence attempt may respond with Presence, Deception, or Negotiation, as desired.

In addition to the standard Abilities, a counter roll may use either (Composure + Integrity), (Intuition + Investigation), or (Manipulation + Socialize). If a character counters with one of these three Abilities, the counter attempt does not threaten a reciprocal mental influence. Instead, each Ability has a different effect on a successful counter.

Integrity: The character regains the willpower point spent to activate the counter.

Investigation: The character learns whether the influence attempt was truthful. In addition, each successful Investigation counter reveals one of the opponent's Virtues or Intimacies.

Socialize: The character responds politely and noncommittally. The influence attempt is ignored, but it does not appear to be ignored. The character seizes the initiative without an influence attempt (see: **Arguments and the Initiative**, below).

Interrupting

Characters may counter influence attempts not directed at them. This requires the expenditure of a willpower point, as normal, but it obviates the need for the original target of the influence attempt to respond. If multiple characters wish to counter the same influence attempt, the character with the highest (Charisma + Presence)/2 or (Manipulation + Socialize)/2 static value is allowed the privilege. If there is a tie, both the counters and the original influence attempt automatically fail.

Characters countering influence not directed at themselves may not use the Integrity Ability.

Spending Willpower

Any character can spend willpower points to resist any mental influence, regardless of the influence's strength. So it would seem that no one is capable of persuading anyone of anything. The secret is that most people *hate* spending willpower. Subjectively, it is a deeply unpleasant experience – like an ethical dilemma you suspect you resolved badly.

Having a full willpower pool feels wonderful. It fills a character with a sense of contentment and peace. Having an empty willpower pool feels terrible, like being filled with a suicidal despair. In general, most people will only spend willpower under the gravest of circumstances – when a mental influence threatens their lives or their most cherished beliefs.

Heroic characters, obviously, are made of sterner stuff. While a typical peasant wants nothing more than to keep his willpower pool full by supporting his intimacies and avoiding situations that provoke his meager virtues, heroes often have goals that force them to make tough decisions.

Even then, heroic characters don't enjoy spending willpower. Fortunately, the decision is not up to them. Spending willpower is not a conscious act undertaken by the character. Rather, it is a subconscious process under the control of the player.

Because spending willpower is unpleasant, most people accept most mental influence. Though this might seem self-destructive, it is important to remember that the typical person is subjected to no illusion effect more severe than "my brother's friend's cousin totally saw a Solar Anathema on his vacation," no emotion effect more severe than "gosh, that new shopkeeper is cute," and no compulsion effect more severe than "can you lend me your hammer for a couple of days."

Arguments and The Initiative

When a group of characters all attempt to influence each other, making counters and influence attempts in quick succession, it is called an *argument.* In an argument, only characters who possess *the initiative* may make influence attempts.

At the beginning of an argument, every potential participant rolls a Join Argument roll, using (Wits + Socialize) as the dice pool. Whoever achieves the most successes begins the argument with the initiative. If there is a tie, the person with the highest (Wits + Socialize)/2 static value gets the initiative. If there is still a tie, the tied parties re-roll.

Whoever wins the initiative gets to make the first influence attempt. If the influence attempt fails to beat the target's MDV, the target gains the initiative.

If the attempt does beat the target's MDV, any of the participants may make a counter. If the counter is both successful and an influence attempt, the person who made the counter has the initiative, and the new attempt may be countered in turn. If the counter is unsuccessful, the original speaker retains the initiative.

This continues until one of three things happens: no one attempts a counter, a counter is attempted and fails, or someone attempts a counter using Integrity, Investigation, or Socialize.

When an exchange ends, whoever has the initiative must either make an influence attempt or pass the initiative to someone else. If no one wants to make an influence attempt, the argument ends.

As a general rule, whoever made the last successful roll is the one who has the initiative. The exceptions to this are Integrity and Investigation counters. Those Abilities are not aggressive enough to seize control of the conversation.

Example: Alice, Bob, and Charlie are having an argument. Alice wins the Join Argument roll and attempts to influence Bob with an illusion effect. The attempt beats Bob's MDV. Charlie interrupts and counters with Negotiation. The counter is successful and Alice becomes the target of a compulsion influence. Alice counters with Socialize and succeeds. The exchange ends with Alice in possession of the initiative.

Alice attempts to influence Bob again, but fails to beat Bob's MDV. Bob has the initiative, but passes it to Charlie. Charlie attempts to influence Alice, beating her MDV. Alice counters successfully with Presence, attempting to influence Charlie. Charlie ignores the influence. The exchange ends with Alice in possession of the initiative.

Alice attempts to influence Charlie this time, and succeeds in beating Charlie's MDV. Charlie counters with Negotiation, but fails to beat Alice's threshold successes. Charlie does not wish to waste more willpower, and so accepts the mental influence (although Charlie could have spent another willpower to resist, in addition to the cost of the counter attempt). The exchange ends with Alice in possession of the initiative.

Alice attempts to influence Bob and beats Bob's MDV. Bob chooses not to respond, accepting the influence. Alice still has the initiative, but does not wish to attempt more influence. She passes the initiative to Bob, who passes it to Charlie, who does not with to attempt influence either. The argument is over.

Leaving an Argument

Anyone may leave an argument at any time, simply by declaring a desire to do so. Leaving in this manner is an obvious anti-social move, however. A character who wishes to leave an argument without giving offense must roll (Manipulation + Socialize). The Difficulty of the roll is usually 0, but can rise depending on the formality and importance of the argument.

Arguments and Stunts

Due to the nature of roleplaying, stunts are extremely easy to perform during an argument. Anyone who talks in-character or describes the intent of an influence attempt or counter beyond simply saying "I use Presence" should be awarded with a one-die stunt, at least.

Stunts also help offset the large willpower cost of an argument. Remember, an influence attempt is successful if it beats the target's MDV (even if it is later ignored or countered) and a counter is successful if it beats the influence attempt's threshold successes (even if the counter fails to cause an influence).

Mass Social Influence

Mass social influence is in many ways much simpler than regular social influence. Only one Ability, Performance, is used, regardless of whether the character wishes to create an emotion, illusion, or compulsion. The character simply makes an (Attribute + Performance) roll and everyone present with an MDV less than the success total is subject to a weak mental influence, similar to the one created by a single threshold success on a normal influence roll.

If the character wishes to create a stronger influence, the player must make a second (Attribute + Performance) roll in the same scene, this time against a Difficulty of 2. If the roll succeeds, everyone who was affected by the first roll with an MDV less than the threshold successes is subject to a moderate mental influence, equivalent to the one created by three threshold successes on a normal influence roll.

If the character wishes to create an even stronger influence, the player must make a third (Attribute + Performance) roll in the same scene, this time against a Difficulty of 4. This will create a strong mental influence in any affected by the first two rolls whose MDV is less than the threshold successes.

Each Performance roll takes 20 minutes. Anyone who stays through the full performance may respond by spending a point of willpower to ignore the mental influence, but those who leave in the middle of the performance automatically resist the mental influence without the need to spend willpower.

The main limitation on how many people can be affected by a single Performance-based influence attempt is the size of the venue. But if it comes up, a character's voice can reach a mass-combat unit with a Magnitude equal to the character's (Stamina + Performance)/2 static value. For instruments powered by their own internal acoustics (as opposed to the character's lungs), they can reach a unit of Magnitude 3-6, depending on design. Performance modes that rely on vision can extend to a Magnitude 10 unit.

The character may make a Performance influence attempt using any artistic mode desired, but certain especially abstract ones (interpretive dance) may impose a penalty based on their obscurity and the audience's familiarity with the mode.

Debate

When two characters compete to sway an audience, it is called a *debate*, and the process is similar to an argument. In a debate, only Performance is used, the participants may only counter and never ignore, and countering never costs willpower. In a debate, the MDV of all participants should be considered 2, for the purposes of determining the Difficulty of counters.

Instead, the debate ends when a counter attempt fails or when one participant yields by declining to attempt a counter. The audience of the debate is then subject to a Performance influence attempt equal to the success total of the last successful influence attempt or counter.

A debate takes 10 minutes per counter. At the end of that time, any who stayed for the whole debate may spend a point of willpower to ignore the influence. Those who leave in the middle of the debate ignore the mental influence without the need to spend willpower.

Written Influence

Creating a mental influence through the power of the written word uses Linguistics. A single written work can contain multiple social influences, which may be emotions, illusions, or compulsions, at the character's discretion.

Each individual influence is called a *thesis*. To create a thesis the character rolls (Intuition + Linguistics). Every two successes add one to the thesis' rating. Anyone who reads an entire thesis compares their MDV to the thesis rating. If the rating is higher, the reader is subject to a mental influence equivalent to one created by normal mental influence that had achieved threshold successes equal to (the thesis rating – the reader's MDV). Virtues and intimacies provide their normal bonuses or penalties to MDV applied to written social influence.

Written social influence tends to be weaker than normal, but because it only affects those who take the effort to read them in their entirety, it costs 3 willpower to resist.

A thesis normally takes up one written page per point of rating. The player can cut the necessary number of pages in half by increasing the Difficulty by 1, and into a quarter by raising the Difficulty by 3. The player may decide to economize pages after the roll is made. Only threshold successes contribute to a work's thesis rating.

A character may write one page per day. If a thesis is mechanically reproduced, it retains its potency, but only if it is reproduced exactly. The storyteller should decide the loss of thesis rating that results from poor copies.

At the storyteller's discretion, characters may substitute other artistic Abilities, such as Forgecraft or Geomancy to create "sculptural" or "architectural" influence. The storyteller might decide to impose a Difficulty on such rolls, depending on the abstraction of the medium.

Chapter 6: Warfare

Characters in Exalted are often at the center of great historical events. Sadly for the Second Age, those events are most often the violent clash of armies. The following chapter gives rules for leading a unit in mass combat, creating strategies for allied units to follow, training troops, and feeding and quartering mass combat units between battles.

Units

Exalted treats large groups of identical characters as a single creature, called a *unit*. Like characters, units have traits. For the most part, the traits of a unit are equal to the average traits of individual members. A unit that wanted to make an attack with a volley of arrows would use Dexterity + Archery, for instance.

However, units also have three traits that individual characters lack. The most important trait is *Magnitude*. Magnitude represents the size of the unit, and determines the damage the unit does in combat as well as how difficult it is to damage in turn. *Command* represents the skill of the unit's leadership, which can affect the unit's attack and defense. Finally, *Drill* represents the unit's ability to work together, and will affect how the unit responds to unexpected situations.

Magnitude

Magnitude is based on the unit's size. Compare the total number of soldiers to the following chart to determine a unit's Magnitude.

Magnitude	Number of Troops
0	1
1	2 – 9 (typically 5)
2	10 – 75 (typically 25)
3	76 – 150 (typically 125)
4	151 – 300 (typically 250)
5	301 – 650 (typically 500)
6	651 – 1250 (typically 1000)
7	1251 – 2500 (typically 2000)
8	2501 – 5000 (typically 4000)
9	5001 – 10000 (typically 8000)

Each Magnitude past 9 adds 10000 to the maximum number of troops. The typical number of troops is halfway between the maximum and the minimum.

A unit adds a number of automatic levels of damage equal to its Magnitude whenever it makes an attack. If a unit is attacked, the attacker applies its Magnitude as a Difficulty to damage rolls.

The Magnitude a unit possesses at the beginning of a battle is called its *Original Magnitude*. The Original Magnitude of a unit is important in determining how a unit responds to damage. Certain actions can lower a unit's Original Magnitude, making it harder for the unit to recover from damage.

Command

A unit's Command rating depends on the skill of its unit commander. The Command rating is equal to the commander's (Charisma + War)/2 static value. Commanders must actually be in the thick of battle with their units in order for the unit to have a Command rating greater than 0. Units add their Command ratings in automatic successes to all attack rolls and apply their Command ratings as a bonus to RDV.

Drill

A unit that is well trained and experienced at actual combat will have a high Drill rating. The particulars of how a unit acquires and maintains a Drill rating are discussed in the training section. A unit's Drill rating determines the tactics and battle patterns it can access, how well it resists rout, and acts as a bonus to rolls made to rally for numbers or rally for fatigue.

Unit Advantages

Though units are modeled as creatures in the rules, they are not actually creatures. Thus, they have a different set of advantages than normal characters. Units possess health levels equal to the health levels of a typical member, but they do not possess willpower, motes, charms, spells, or intimacies.

Instead, units have three new advantages: *fatigue*, which represents a unit's ability to keep fighting over extended periods of time, *special characters* which represent certain exceptional members of the unit who may provide the unit with special benefits, and *tactics* which are actions and special techniques the unit may call upon.

Fatigue

Some mass combat actions have a *fatigue* cost. The fatigue cost of an action is deducted from the unit's fatigue points. When a unit's fatigue points are depleted, the unit may take no action that has a fatigue cost greater than 0 until an appropriate special character rallies for fatigue.

A unit has a maximum number of fatigue points equal to the Stamina + Resistance + Valor of a typical unit member.

Special Characters

Special characters are those members of the unit that stand head and shoulders above the rest. They are those exceptional talents that have the potential to make a legion the stuff of legend. A unit may have a number of special characters equal to twice its Magnitude.

There are three types of special character:

Unit Commanders are the most important. Every unit has precisely one unit commander. It is the unit commander who determines the unit's command rating, and who decides which actions the unit takes. Without a commander, a unit will disperse or suffer rout.

Heroes Are those characters with exceptional combat skill, powerful magic, or tactical insight. A hero may become a unit commander if the unit commander dies or take actions at the unit commander's behest. For most purposes, a unit commander automatically counts as a hero.

Relays Relays are essential to the communications of a unit. By signaling messages to disparate parts of a unit (or to other units entirely), relays can enable certain tactics and actions.

Tactics

Tactics are like charms for units. They are special techniques that allow a unit to push past its normal limits and attempt extraordinary feats. The number of tactics a unit possesses depends on a variety of factors. Skilled training, exemplary battle patterns, and a commander's personal skill are all possible sources of tactics.

A unit may use one tactic per action. Tactics come in three types: Simple, Reflexive, and Supplemental. A Simple tactic requires a simple action to access. A Reflexive tactic requires a reflexive action to activate. A supplemental tactic does not require any action at all and may improve any simple, reflexive, or basic action, provided that action is not a tactic activation.

Solo Units

A character fighting alone is a *solo unit*. Solo units are units for all effects that target units, but they possess unit traits of 0 and no unit advantages. On the plus side, a solo unit moves as a reflexive action and does not require tactics to use charms or sorcery.

Mass Combat

Mass Combat is functionally the same as normal, one-on-one combat, with a few important differences. First, combat actions are modified by unit traits and tactics. Secondly, ticks in mass combat usually represent minutes, instead of seconds. Only if the units involved are especially small (a solo character fighting a Magnitude 1 unit, for example) should ticks be shorter than that. If the units are especially large, the ticks might represent a longer period of time.

Thirdly, the list of actions is different. Generally speaking, simple actions in mass combat represent those taken by the unit as a whole, and reflexive actions represent those taken by special characters. Solo units have access to actions that are similar, but not necessarily identical, to those they can take in regular combat.

Other than that, the timing of Mass Combat is the same. Units take a single simple action on the tick on which they begin their turns and up to one reflexive action per tick. Simple actions still have speed values of 2 or higher and reflexive actions still have a speed of 0 or 1. A turn in mass combat lasts for a number of ticks equal to the sum of the speed values of the actions taken on that turn.

Solo Units and Actions

A solo unit may take most actions without modification. Solo units may not coordinate the attacks of mass combat units as a simple action, nor may they attempt to reestablish surprise. However, because mass combat ticks are usually longer than normal ticks, the range of valid miscellaneous actions is greatly increased. Jumping is still a valid mass combat action for solo units, but the maximum distance a jump can clear is not increased (no matter how much longer the ticks are).

Readying a weapon is considered a basic action in Mass Combat and it is important to multiply move and dash distances by the appropriate amount (usually 50 or so), but no other reflexive actions are modified.

Unit Defense

Infantry units always use RDV, and never ADV. Furthermore, without the influence of tactics, a unit's defensive state is always normal. Solo units may choose between ADV and RDV, as normal, but their defensive states are also subject to the normal fluctuation.

A unit's Command rating is added to its RDV. Under most circumstances, solo units have a Command rating of 0.

Mounted units have the option of using an ADV equal to their (Wits + Conveyance)/2, penalized by their mounts' Control rating, if that rating would prove more favorable. A mounted unit adds its Command rating to ADV as normal. Like infantry units, a mounted unit's defensive state is normal, absent the influence of tactics.

Simple Actions

Simple actions in mass combat are similar to those in regular combat, but in addition to speed values, they may have one or more of the following limitations:

Fatigue Cost: This action saps a unit's reserve of strength. When a unit takes this action, deduct one or more points from the unit's fatigue point total.

Drill Minimum: A unit may not perform this action if the unit's Drill rating is lower than the listed value.

Relay Minimum: A unit may nor perform this action if the unit lacks the appropriate number of relays. A unit's Magnitude subtracts from the total number of relays for the purposes of determining relay minimums. A relay minimum may be a negative value.

Attack (Variable Speed)
Fatigue Cost: 1
Relay Minimum: -3

An attack in Mass Combat is resolved just as a normal attack, but modified by a unit's traits. A number of successes equal to the attacking unit's Command rating is added to the attack roll, before Difficulty is applied.

If the attack roll is successful, a number of levels of damage (of a type appropriate to the attack) equal to the attacking unit's Magnitude are added to the success total of the damage roll. Any damage roll made against a unit in mass combat has a Difficulty equal to the target unit's Magnitude.

The speed of a Mass Combat attack is equal to the speed value of the unit's weapon.

Move (Speed 2)
Fatigue Cost: 1
Relay Minimum: - 5

Moving a unit takes serious effort and coordination. With a successful (Charisma + War) roll on the part of the unit commander, adding the unit's Drill as a dice pool bonus, the unit can one of the following: move up to its (Dexterity) x 100 yards in the direction it is facing; change its facing up to 90 degrees and move (Dexterity) x 50 yards; turn 180 degrees.

Move rolls are made against a Difficulty equal to the unit's (Magnitude)/2. If the roll fails, the unit fails to move and loses a point of fatigue, but suffers no other ill effects. Units cannot change the direction they face without taking a move action.

Rest (Speed 3)

By taking no other action, the unit regains a point of spent fatigue.

Rally for Fatigue (Speed 6)
Relay Minimum: 0
Drill Minimum: 3

The unit commander may inspire the troops to greatness. So long as the unit has a number of relays equal to or greater than the unit's Magnitude, the unit may take a double-length rest action. When the unit takes this action, the unit commander rolls (Charisma + War), adding the unit's Drill as a dice pool bonus. If the roll succeeds, the unit regains a number of points of fatigue equal to the roll's success total.

Disperse Unit (Speed 5)
Fatigue Cost: 1
Relay Minimum: -5
Drill Minimum: 1

If an enemy unit is currently suffering rout, a unit may still attack the lost and leaderless soldiers. Doing so requires a (Dexterity + Ability) roll on the part of the unit, adding the unit's Command rating in automatic successes. The Difficulty of the roll is equal to the (Original Magnitude)/2 of the target unit. If the roll succeeds, it reduces the target unit's Original Magnitude by 1.

This action may be taken by solo units.

Activate Simple Tactic (Variable Speed)
Fatigue Cost: Variable
Relay Minimum: Variable
Drill Minimum: Variable

If a unit knows a simple tactic, or if a simple tactic is part of a unit's battle pattern, the unit may take a simple action to use that tactic. The speed, fatigue cost, relay minimum, and drill minimum of a tactic are listed in the tactic description.

Reflexive Actions

Reflexive actions in mass combat are generally those actions taken by special characters. A given unit may take one reflexive action per tick, but a given special character may take only a single action per turn.

Like Simple actions, reflexive actions have a speed value, fatigue cost, relay minimum, and drill minimum, but reflexive actions also have an additional descriptor – the *character type*. An action with a given character type can only be performed by that type of special character. Unless otherwise specified, unit commanders count as heroes, and can perform any action with the character type: hero descriptor.

If an action lacks a character type descriptor, it is assumed to be an action taken by the unit as a whole.

Activate Reflexive Tactic (Variable Speed)
Character Type: variable
Fatigue Cost: variable
Relay Minimum: variable
Drill Minimum: variable

If a unit knows a reflexive tactic, or if a reflexive tactic is part of a unit's battle pattern, the unit may take a reflexive action to activate that tactic. The speed value, character type, fatigue cost, relay minimum, and drill minimum of a tactic will be listed in a tactic's description.

Attack Special Character (Speed 0)
Character Type: Hero

A hero special character may make a single attack against any of an enemy unit's special characters. This is treated like a normal personal combat attack, and the targeted special character may respond accordingly.

A hero may take an Attack Special Character action in response to the Attack Special Character action of another unit's hero. The target of the original attack need not be the one to make the counterattack.

A solo unit may attack a special character only as part of a simple action.

Defend Special Character (Speed 1)
Fatigue Cost: 1
Drill Minimum: 2

A unit may take this action in response to an attack on a special character. Members of the unit may move into block access to the special character. The hero attacks the unit (as if the hero were a solo unit) instead.

Bolster Morale (Speed 0)
Character Type: Relay, Unit Commander

If the unit must roll Valor or Integrity to resist an effect, a relay or unit commander may take a reflexive action in order to add their (Charisma + War)/2 static value as a bonus to the dice pool.

Promote to Relay (Speed 0)
Character Type: Unit Commander
　　　　By taking reflexive action, a unit commander may convert one ordinary soldier into a relay. Under no circumstances may a unit have more special characters than its (Magnitude x 2)

Take Command (Speed 1)
Character Type: Hero
Relay Minimum: 0
Drill Minimum: 1
　　　　If a unit commander, for any reason, dies or becomes incapable of command, a hero may rise from the ranks to take over. Doing so requires a (Charisma + War) roll, with the unit's Drill applied as a bonus to the dice pool. The Difficulty of the roll is equal to the unit's (Magnitude)/2. If the roll fails, the unit immediately enters route. If the roll succeeds, the character seamlessly takes over as unit commander.
　　　　A unit must have a number of relays equal to its Magnitude in order to reform under a new command. If a unit lacks sufficient relays, the character takes command of unit whose Magnitude equals the number of relays available.
　　　　The reformed unit may later attempt to Rally for Numbers, in order to reclaim some of the routed troops, but it will never again be larger than its (Original Magnitude) − 1.

Activate Power (Speed 0)
Character Type: Hero
　　　　If a hero or unit leader possesses charms or sorcery that would be useful in mass combat, or if a unit possesses special weapons or artifacts that fall under the control of a single hero, the hero may take a reflexive action in order to activate that power. Though this action type is Reflexive, due to the slower pace of Mass-Combat time, special characters may take a single Simple action, if desired.

Rally for Numbers (Speed 1)
Character Type: Unit Commander
Drill Minimum: 1
　　　　If a unit suffers rout (see: **Damaging Mass Combat Units**, later in this chapter), the unit leader may attempt a (Charisma + War) roll, adding the unit's Drill as a dice pool bonus, against a Difficulty equal to the unit's (Original Magnitude)/2. If the roll succeeds, the unit recovers from the rout, reforming as a unit with a Magnitude equal to the threshold successes. The maximum Magnitude attainable by rallying for numbers is one lower than the unit's Original Magnitude.
　　　　A unit commander may attempt to rally for numbers as many times in a single battle as desired, but each attempt after the first increases the Difficulty by one. If a routed unit has been successfully dispersed, the Difficulty of the Rally for Numbers roll is reduced to (new Original Magnitude)/2 (reseting the increases to Difficulty).
　　　　A unit which recovers from rout by rallying for numbers has full health levels.
　　　　If a unit is not currently suffering from rout, a a successful rally for numbers roll will increase its Magnitude by 1, up to a maximum of one Magnitude less than the unit's Original Magnitude. This also heals one level of the unit's damage.

Damaging Units

Units take damage in Mass Combat in much the same way that characters do. Health levels are marked off of boxes until there aren't any left. But unlike a character, a unit with no remaining health levels is not dying. It is *routed* instead.

A routed unit has no direction and no leadership. It can take no actions except the "rest" action and is vulnerable to being dispersed. A routed unit still occupies space, however, and some ruthless generals have been known to use large, poorly led units as a way to block the movement of elite enemy troops.

At the beginning of every turn, the unit rolls Valor + Drill against a Difficulty equal to the unit's Original Magnitude. A unit commander or relay may take a Bolster Morale action to enhance this roll. If the roll fails, the unit's Original Magnitude decreases by one, as fleeing soldiers leave the field entirely. If the roll succeeds, the unit remains routed, but does not lose Original Magnitude.

Units will reform only if a unit commander succeeds at rallying for numbers. If a routed unit loses all of its Original Magnitude (whether through failing Valor + Drill rolls or through being dispersed), it is defeated.

If a unit loses its unit commander, it automatically enters rout, and can only exit rout if a hero successfully Takes Command.

It is important to keep track of the number of times a unit is routed over the course of a single battle, as that information will play an important role in determining how long the unit takes to recover from the battle.

Since most units are comprised totally from extras, the typical unit has 3 health levels. If a unit is comprised mostly of heroic mortals, exalts, or monsters, it might have more than three.

After the Battle

Most of the "damage" a unit suffers in mass combat is due to desertions and minor wounds – things that are easy to repair. A significant fraction, however, is due to serious injuries and fatalities.

After a battle, a unit reforms into a single mass combat unit with a Magnitude equal to the unit's first, unpenalized Original Magnitude. This is a process that takes a number of hours equal to the number of times the unit has been dispersed (equal to the unit's initial Original Magnitude – the unit's final Original Magnitude).

For each time, during the previous battle, that the unit was routed it takes one level of lethal damage. If this is sufficient to fill all of a unit's health levels, the unit loses a point of Magnitude. Further damage continues to fill in health levels, possibly resulting in the loss of more points of Magnitude. The actual number of surviving soldiers is equal to the minimum number of troops for that point of Magnitude.

The proportion of deserters to severely wounded soldiers among the lost soldiers depends on the training and devotion of the individual soldiers, but it is usually about 50%-50%.

Healing damage dealt to a unit is a time consuming process. A character in a leadership position may make a single (Intelligence + Administration) roll each week, adding a dice pool bonus equal to the unit's Drill. The Difficulty of the roll is equal to the unit's (Magnitude)/2. The unit heals one health level per threshold success.

If the unit ever gains enough recruits to raise its Magnitude by at least one point, all of its current health levels are automatically healed.

Training Units

Keeping a mass combat unit in fit fighting condition is a constant battle against time. Long periods of peace rob veterans of their fighting edge, deaths in battle put skilled warriors out of commission, and new, untrained recruits dilute the talent pool. Over time, what was once a crack squad of elite shock troops can become an obsolete relic. The only way to combat this is through constant training.

The training system allows characters who command armies to maintain and improve their mass combat units. This is done by making monthly *training rolls*. A training roll is a (Charisma + War) roll, made against a Difficulty equal to the mass combat unit's Magnitude. In order to make a training roll, the character, as well as the individual soldiers, must train for at least 6 hours a day for at least 20 days out of the month.

If the training roll succeeds, the unit gains a number of *training points* equal to the threshold successes. If it fails, it loses a number of training points equal to its Magnitude. Training points can be spent to improve a unit's traits, but a unit may only gain a single trait point in a given month.

Units do not require training if they've fought a battle in the previous month. If a unit has not fought a battle in the previous month, or if it goes a month without training, it loses a number of training points equal to its Magnitude.

Training points do not accumulate from month to month. When a unit loses training points, it must exchange traits for points until the debt is paid off.

Trait Type	Cost
Attribute	8
Ability	4
Virtue	6
Intimacy	3
Specialty	2
Tactic	3
Drill	4

It is usually only possible to train units in conventionally military traits – the physical Attributes, Archery, Brawl, Unarmed, Weaponry, War, Resistance, Survival, Athletics, Stealth, Integrity, Conveyance, Valor, Conviction, and associated specialties and intimacies. Training in other traits requires a stunt, and substitutes Administration for War.

Strictly speaking, the traits gained from training do not reflect the traits of any particular character in the unit. Some individuals might be higher, others might be lower. It is best to assume that all extras have traits identical to the unit's, but that any heroic characters do not. Heroic characters never directly benefit from training. They must still spend experience points as normal. However, training with a Mass Combat unit is always sufficient justification for spending experience points on a trait.

Tactics and Drill are unit traits, not character traits. They are usually the first to be traded in for training points, should a unit not receive proper training.

Sergeants

It is usually neither practical nor wise to train a large unit as a single group. Because the Difficulty is so high, it is better to split a large unit into smaller units to facilitate training. If a unit's Magnitude is less than the trainer's (Charisma + War)/2 static value, it is possible to forgo the monthly training roll and simply assume that a unit neither gains nor loses training points during the month.

Characters who train units on another's behalf are called *sergeants*, and their traits are tracked separately from the main unit's. This is done for three reasons. First, they often need higher Charisma and War ratings than the unit at large. Secondly, they make good candidates for hero special characters and secondary unit commanders. Thirdly, sergeants are usually heroic mortals, rather than extras.

Merging Units

When a poorly trained unit joins with a highly trained unit, the unit's performance is likely to suffer. In order to merge to units, compare their relative Magnitudes. The one with the larger Magnitude is the *target unit.* The one with the lower Magnitude is the *source unit.*

If the target unit and the source unit are the same Magnitude, simply average the traits of the two units. If the target unit is one Magnitude level higher, compare each of the target unit's traits to its corresponding source unit trait. If the target unit's trait is higher, decrease it by one point. If the target unit's trait is lower, increase it by one point. If there are two or more levels of difference between the Magnitudes of the two units, the newcomers do not meaningfully alter the unit's traits.

Merging units takes a number of days equal to the sum of the two units' Magnitudes.

Merging two units costs 5 training points, regardless of their relative sizes. These training points are usually paid by reducing the unit's Drill rating or removing the unit's tactics, but if the new recruits are especially unskilled in a particular Ability, the cost may be paid from that Ability, if desired.

Supplying a Unit

Warfare is about more than just the clash of arms. An army has to eat. Under ideal circumstances, but without skilled leadership, a unit consumes its (Magnitude) x 2 money per month. Under less than ideal circumstances, this cost increases. Being more than a month's travel from a "home base" increases the cost by the unit's Magnitude. Being in difficult, impassable terrain increases the cost by the unit's Magnitude again. Lacking the money to maintain a unit deals one point of damage and imposes a -1 dice pool penalty per point of shortfall.

A skilled administrator can reduce the money cost of maintaining a unit. The administrator can roll (Intelligence + Administration) against a Difficulty equal the unit's (Magnitude)/2. Each threshold success reduces the maintenance cost by 1, to an absolute minimum of (Magnitude) money per month. Most of a unit's base maintenance cost is due to corruption and graft, but, even with the most efficient organization imaginable, soldiers still have to eat.

Doing the administrative work necessary to reduce a unit's maintenance is a job that requires at least four hours of work a day.

Quartermasters

The work of administrating a unit may be delegated to a lesser authority, who is responsible for making sure supplies reach their proper destinations with the utmost expediency. These characters are called *quartermasters*, and a unit may have at most one quartermaster attached to it.

When a unit is administered by a quartermaster, subtract the unit's (Magnitude)/2 from the quartermaster's (Intelligence + Administration)/2 static value. This difference will automatically reduce the unit's maintenance cost, to an absolute minimum of (Magnitude) money per month.

This reduction is in addition to any reduced maintenance costs from a dedicated administration roll, but quartermasters do not have the time to make the roll, and an administration roll can, in no event, reduce a unit's maintenance below the minimum.

A skilled quartermaster corps can be a valuable addition to an army, but given the second age's general decline in education, those with the proper skills can be hard to find and even harder to replace – making them a favored target for assassination attempts.

Direct Supplies

Characters may bypass a unit's abstract maintenance cost by finding the necessary supplies directly. A unit's minimum maintenance requires (Magnitude)/2 [round down] money for weapons and equipment repair and (Magnitude)/2 [round up] money for food. These minimums represent the necessary value of the goods that will sustain a unit. There is no rule stating how much the characters must actually pay for these goods.

Supplying units in this way is hard on troop morale, however. For each month that passes where a unit receives only subsistence maintenance without extraordinary plunder or direct pay, the unit suffers a -1 penalty to its Command rating. Skilled leadership, in the form of a (Manipulation + War) roll against a Difficulty equal to the unit's (Magnitude)/2, will avert that penalty. Apply a unit's Drill rating as a bonus to the roll, and characters may buy automatic successes for the roll at the cost of one money each.

Raiding

Armies can take what they want from the land, rather than go through the normal process of maintenance. Assume that a typical peasant farm has one money's worth of supplies, under favorable circumstances. Large and/or prosperous farms may have more, and small, poor farms may have no appreciable value. It is generally impossible to raid for supplies in the winter or in areas stricken by famine.

If a target of raiding is part of a Dominion (**See Chapter 7: Statecraft**), the unit may completely destroy the target in order to get an amount of money equal to the Dominion's Resources rating. If the characters wish to preserve the target as a viable Fief (in order to incorporate it into their own Dominions), they must roll (Intelligence + Administration), gaining one money per success, up to a maximum of one half the Dominion's Resources rating.

Battle Patterns

A well thought out strategy can allow an out-classed unit to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. If a character, skilled in War, has time to examine a battlefield, that character can design a plan to enhance the performance of the units that take part in the battle. Designing a battle pattern takes a number of hours equal to the Magnitude of the largest unit to benefit from the pattern, plus one hour for each additional unit.

When creating a battle pattern, the character rolls (Intuition + War). Each success gives the character one training point that can be spent either on tactics or specialties, chosen by the character when the plan is made (the character may assign the points differently for different units). The maximum number of training points a unit may benefit from is equal to its (Drill) x 2. The tactics and specialties purchased as part of a battle pattern last for only a single battle.

Battle patterns are powerful, but they can be difficult to use. In order for a unit to successfully implement a battle pattern, the unit commander must succeed at a (Charisma + War) roll, against a Difficulty equal to the number of tactics and/or specialties the battle pattern adds to that unit. The unit adds its Drill rating as a bonus to the dice pool. This roll is made at the beginning of the battle, before the join battle roll is made.

Example: A unit has a drill rating of 2, allowing access to battle patterns that use 4 training points or less. Tactics cost 3 training points, specialties cost 1 training point. If the battle pattern contained only a single tactic, the Difficulty to implement it would be 1. Likewise if it contained only a level-3 specialty. If it contained two level-2 specialties, the Difficulty would be 2. If it contained 4 level-1 specialties, the Difficulty would 4.

Moving Units

Moving a mass combat unit is similar to moving individual characters. If there is no particular need to rush, the storyteller should simply assume that the unit moves at about 5 miles per day. If moving an army is the point of the story, the storyteller should treat the movement as a travel roll, using the leader's (Wits + War) for short distances and (Intelligence + Administration) for long distances.

Regardless of which ability is used, add the unit's Drill rating as a bonus to the roll. The Difficulty to move a unit is equal to its (Magnitude)/2. Hostile terrain conditions can increase this Difficulty, but because armies usually carry their own supplies, the Difficulty increase for traveling through the wilderness is usually not as great.

If the army is surviving by raiding and/or living off the land, however, the storyteller should be brutal with Difficulty increases. Hunger has destroyed more armies than all of history's battles combined.

The other great impediment to moving armies long distances is disease. If a unit passes through an area that is likely to contain disease, the character responsible for the unit's health and hygiene must roll (Intelligence + Medicine), against a Difficulty equal to the disease Virulence + the unit's (Magnitude)/2. If the roll succeeds, the unit takes a number of levels of lethal damage equal to the disease's Treated Morbidity. If the roll fails, the unit takes damage equal to the disease's Untreated Morbidity. A unit need check against disease only once per week.

Siegecraft

The default mass combat rules assume two or more units are fighting in a relatively open space, using only soldiers armed with personal scale weapons. Often, this will not be the case. The skilled use of fortifications and artillery is a key component to battlefield victory.

Fortifications

Taking cover in a sufficiently fortified structure can make a unit all but invincible. Unless the attackers have the tactical knowledge necessary to breach the structure, they can not make mass combat attacks against a fortified unit. And if an attacking unit does have the proper tactics, it is still nonetheless at a serious disadvantage.

Fortifications have three traits. *Profile* represents how well the fortification limits attackers' access to defenders. A fortification's *Impediment* rating represents how much of an obstacle it provides to attacking units. Finally, its *Hardness* rating represents the durability of the fortification's structure - how well it resists being directly attacked.

Profile

A fortification's Profile limits the amount of Magnitude an attacking unit can bring to bear offensively. A unit's Magnitude normally adds successes to the unit's damage rolls in mass combat. When attacking a fortification, a unit may add no more than the fortification's Profile rating in successes to damage rolls, regardless of its Magnitude.

Fortifications with a low Profile are usually better than those with a high Profile, but there is a downside to this protection. A defending unit's Magnitude can be no larger than the fortification's Profile rating. There is simply not enough room for a larger unit to make use of the fortification. Excess soldiers may, however, be organized into smaller units in order to act as relief for the defenders, provided the structure has room for their numbers.

Narrow choke-points, short walls, and broken terrain are key features of fortifications with a low Profile.

Impediment

A fortification with a high Impediment rating is difficult to bypass. If a fortification has an Impediment rating of at least one, the unit inside cannot be attacked without special tactics. The defending unit can, however, target units outside the fortification, provided it has ranged weapons.

A fortification's Impediment rating adds to the Difficulty of any roll by attackers to affect those inside the fortification. High walls, moats, and thick, thorny undergrowth are common features of fortifications with a high Impediment rating.

Hardness

A fortification with a high Hardness rating is one of durable construction. Any attack made against the fortification, rather than the people inside, that has a raw damage total less than the fortification's hardness, does no damage at all.

Fortifications with high Hardness ratings typically have thick walls made from a strong material.

Unusual Fortifications

Not every fortification possesses all three traits. For example, a narrow bridge may have a low Profile, but no Impediment rating or Hardness. An enemy can attack, but only a little at a time. By contrast, a high cliff may have a high Impediment rating, but be so wide that its Profile is effectively infinite. If a type of terrain would benefit a unit defensively, it is best treated as a partial fortification. In some scenarios, both sides of a conflict might be able to use the same terrain feature as a fortification.

Structures specifically constructed to be fortresses typically have all three fortification traits, but the structure itself is not the same thing, in game terms, as a fortification. A single castle or fortress can contain more than one fortification. Typically, each wall of a castle will be counted as a separate fortification, each with its own Profile, Impediment, and Harness ratings. An expertly designed fortress might contain even more fortifications (choke-points, interior walls and traps, and exterior towers).

Sieges

Staying inside a fortification does not relieve a unit of its necessary maintenance. If all the exits of a fortification are blocked, the unit can be maintained only from supplies already inside the fortification. Treat this as maintaining a unit with direct supplies (see above).

Artillery

Artillery is a complement to fortifications. Whereas a fortification's primary purpose is to take a large force and condense it into a small one, artillery's purpose is to take a small force and multiply it into a large one. Artillery works much like a normal weapon. In addition to the normal weapon statistics, a weapon with the ability to make artillery attacks has an a*rtillery* rating. When a weapon with an artillery rating targets a unit in mass combat, it is treated as having a magnitude equal to its artillery rating, or equal to the target's magnitude, whichever is smaller.

If enough artillery is assembled that it forms a mass combat unit of its own, the weapon's artillery rating of the weapons will add to the Magnitude of the unit, for purposes of determining the damage of the unit's attacks. A unit must have at least Magnitude 1 in order to benefit from this.

Vehicular Combat

There are two philosophies when it comes to using vehicles in mass combat. The first is that vehicles are individual combatants, and that a few powerful vehicular weapons are turned against the enemy. In this case, a vehicle is treated as a character with its own traits. A unit comprised of vehicles is treated as any other mass combat unit, and has traits equal to the average of the individual vehicles that make it up.

Because vehicles rarely have the ability to parry attacks, they do not have the standard RDV of a normal unit. Instead, they have an ADV equal to the average of their pilots' (Wits + Conveyance + Ship's Crew rating)/2, subtracting a penalty equal to the ship's Handling rating and adding a bonus equal to the unit's Command rating.

The other philosophy of vehicular combat is that vehicles are platforms from which individuals can launch attacks. In this case, the soldiers aboard the ship form a mass combat unit and the vehicle acts as a fortification. Vehicular fortifications often have very low profiles and low hardness ratings. Their impediment ratings tend to vary wildly, depending on the vehicle's design (first age airships tended to have high impediment ratings, contemporary longboats tend to have low impediment ratings). If the vehicle has an especially powerful weapon mounted to it, that weapon is usually controlled by a hero special character, who uses it to take Activate Power actions.

Tactics

The real measure of a mass combat unit's power lies not in its traits, but in its tactics. Tactics are special abilities that allow a unit to make more effective attacks and mount a more effective defense. A unit with good tactics can defeat a unit with much greater skill.

Tactics function much like charms. A unit may activate one tactic per action. Simple and Reflexive tactics are actions in and of themselves. Supplemental tactics can improve simple, reflexive, or basic actions, depending on their descriptions.

Tactics have the following qualities:

Drill Minimum: A unit must possess a Drill rating equal to or greater than a tactic's drill minimum in order to use that tactic. If the unit lowers its Drill rating, it does not forget these tactics, but it cannot use them until its Drill rating improves.

Relay Minimum: A unit must have good communication in order to use certain tactics. Like the relay minimums for actions, a unit's Magnitude is subtracted from its total number of relays when determining whether a unit meets the minimum. Unlike actions, relay minimums for tactics are rarely negative.

Type: A tactic may be simple, reflexive, or supplemental. A simple tactic may only be used as the unit's simple action for the turn. A reflexive tactic may be used once per tick, taking up the unit's reflexive action for that tick. A unit may use a single supplemental tactic to enhance any simple, reflexive, or basic action, provided that action is not a tactic activation. Unless otherwise stated, simple tactics have a speed value of 5 and reflexive tactics have a speed value of 0.

Fatigue Cost: In order to use some tactics, a unit must pay one or more points of fatigue from its fatigue pool. Though tactics bear a close resemblance to charms, points of fatigue are never committed, even if a tactic's effect lingers longer than an instant.

Special Character: Most tactics are performed by a unit as a whole, but if a tactic requires an action by a special character, it will say so.

General Tactics
These tactics are useful in almost any situation, and will form the basis of almost any unit's basic fighting capability.

Use (Charm)
Drill Minimum: 1
Relay Minimum: 0
Type: Varies
Fatigue Cost: 1

If all the characters in a unit know the same charm, they may practice using it in tandem. This requires dedicated training, and a separate tactic, for each charm used, but its effect on the course of a battle can be powerful. Teaching this tactic to a unit imparts knowledge of the associated charm to each non-heroic member of the unit that is able to use the charm and meets its prerequisites. This tactic's type is the same as the type of the charm whose use it enables. The storyteller is free to veto charms that are inappropriate to use as tactics (generally, any charm that provides or enhances an action a mass combat unit cannot normally take – such as a reflexive move).

Because units do not possess motes or willpower, they may not use charms with a mote or willpower cost, including the improved versions of charms that normally lack a cost. Units do, however, have health levels, and may use any charm that has only a health level cost normally.

Join Coordinated Attack
Drill Minimum: 3
Relay Minimum: 0
Type: Reflexive
Fatigue Cost: 1
Character Type: Unit Commander

A unit may, by timing its attack correctly, use its allies' momentum to strike with much greater force. On the first tick of the unit's turn, the unit commander may roll (Charisma + War), adding the unit's Drill as a bonus to the dice pool, against a Difficulty equal to the target unit's Command rating. If the roll succeeds, the unit gains one point of effective Magnitude (for the purposes of calculating attack damage) per threshold success, up to a maximum increase equal to the number of allied units that are attacking on the same tick. This increased Magnitude applies only against the target unit, and only until the end of the current tick.

Flanking Maneuver
Drill Minimum: 1
Relay Minimum: 0
Type: Supplemental
Fatigue Cost: 0

In order to use this tactic, the target unit must not be facing the attacking unit. If the attacking unit's attack is successful (does at least one level of damage), the target's defensive state is lowered by one until the beginning of its next turn. While it is most effective to flank vehicles or calvary that use ADV instead of RDV, multiple flanking maneuvers from multiple units stack with each other, inflicting an RDV penalty on any unit that is successfully flanked from more than two sides.

Phalanx Formation (speed 1)
Drill Minimum: 4
Relay Minimum: (Magnitude)
Type: Reflexive
Fatigue Cost: 2

When activating this tactic, a mass combat unit assumes a tight formation that allows them to combat superior numbers. The unit commander rolls (Charisma + War), adding the unit's Drill as a bonus to the dice pool, against a Difficulty equal to the difference between the unit's magnitude and the magnitude of the largest opposing unit. If the roll succeeds, the unit is treated, until the start of its next turn, as being inside a fortification with a profile equal to its magnitude.

Charge
Drill Minimum: 1
Relay Minimum: 0
Type: Simple
Fatigue Cost: 2

A unit using this tactic hurls itself into another unit with extraordinary force. Charging combines a move action with an attack action. As part of the charge attack, the unit may move up to (Dexterity) x 100 yards (assuming 1 minute ticks). The unit then makes a normal attack, taking a -2 penalty to the attack dice pool in the process. If the unit is wielding a weapon with the Lance tag, it deals extra damage, as appropriate to the weapon.

Repel Charge
Drill Minimum: 3
Relay Minimum: 0
Type: Supplemental
Fatigue Cost: 1

A properly prepared unit can make charging a dangerous proposition. If a unit activates repel charge while applying its RDV against a charge attack, it gains +1 DV and the charging unit lowers its defensive state by one until the beginning of its next turn. If the charge attack roll fails, the charging unit lowers its defensive state by two instead.

Melt into (Terrain)
Drill Minimum: 3
Relay Minimum: 2
Type: Reflexive
Fatigue Cost: 0

A unit in its home terrain can be a deadly, elusive foe. By activating this tactic, a unit may use its static (Dexterity + Survival)/2 value as an ADV against any attacks that occur on the tick it's used. The unit's Command rating adds to this value as normal.

This tactic applies only to a very specific terrain, usually (but not necessarily) the area around the unit's main base of operations. If the unit wishes to take advantage of multiple areas, it must learn separate tactics, even if those areas are superficially similar in type (for example, two different areas of a continuous eastern forest).

Siege Tactics
The following tactics are useful primarily in a siege situation. They allow a unit to bypass enemy fortifications or make the most use out of friendly fortifications.

Attack (Fortification)
Type: Simple
Fatigue Cost: 1

Attacking a fortification directly is a risky proposition that can nonetheless pay dividends. To successfully breach a castle wall (or other, similar barrier), the unit must possess an attack with a base damage (before adding in Magnitude or Artillery bonuses) greater than the fortification's hardness. If the unit possesses such an attack (even if it is a singular piece of equipment under the control of a special character), it can attack a fortification.

The unit rolls a dice pool equal to its (Dexterity + Ability), adding a bonus to the dice pool equal to the difference between the attack's base damage and the fortification's hardness. The Difficulty of the roll is equal to the fortification's impediment rating. If the roll succeeds, all future attacks against the fortification gain an additional +1 bonus (this bonus is cumulative). If the roll achieves threshold successes equal to or greater than the target's impediment rating, the target becomes so damaged as to allow relatively unrestricted attacks. Its impediment rating becomes 0 and its profile increases by 1.

The Ability used in the attack depends on the weapon used. It will usually be either Archery, for attacks with catapults and other ranged weapons, War, for attacks with rams, or Geomancy, for sapping attempts. Despite the name of this tactic, attacking a fortification need not be directly destructive. For example, if an enemy is using a river as cover, the unit may "attack" the fortification by building a bridge (such fortifications will have a hardness of "special").

Each type of fortification counts as its own tactic, but usually, given the degenerate state of second age military architecture, Attack Gate is sufficient for most purposes. The best militaries in Creation have dedicated engineering units which specialize in opposing fortifications.

Bypass (Fortification)
Drill Minimum: 2
Relay Minimum: 0
Type: Supplemental
Fatigue Cost: 1

When a unit lacks sufficiently powerful weapons to destroy a fortification, it must try instead to go over, around, or through it. In order to use this tactic, a unit must have the proper tools to bypass the fortification (ladders for a wall, sharp blades for a thick undergrowth) or a ranged attack capable of striking those inside the fortification (a volley of arrows), but no other requirements are necessary.

This tactic makes a unit inside a fortification a valid target for attacks. The attacking unit increases the Difficulty of all attack rolls by the fortification's impediment rating, and its effective Magnitude for the purposes of determining damage can be no higher than the fortification's profile rating.

Each type of fortification to be bypassed requires a separate tactic.

Repel Siege
Drill Minimum: 1
Type: Supplemental
Fatigue Cost: 0

Units inside a fortification have an impressive advantage. Activating this tactic allows a unit to add a fortification's Impediment rating as a bonus to attack rolls, provided the unit is in control of the fortification. Normally, a unit inside a fortification can only target an enemy unit with ranged weapons, but if the unit attacks on the same tick the enemy uses a Bypass (Fortification) tactic, it may target the enemy with hand-to-hand attacks.

Vehicular Tactics

      The following tactics are used only by mounted or vehicular units. They offer a powerful advantage in combat, but impose significant expenses on those forces that maintain units capable of using them.

Harass (Speed 1)
Drill Minimum: 1
Type: Reflexive
Fatigue Cost: 1

      One of the main advantages of mounted and vehicular units is their battlefield mobility. So long as the unit has the appropriate transportation, it may move up to its normal movement rate x 50 as a speed 1 reflexive action (assuming 1 minute ticks).

Trample
Drill Minimum: 2
Relay Minimum: 1
Type: Simple
Fatigue Cost: 3

      Often, a unit's mounts and vehicles can be dangerous weapons unto themselves. A unit with this tactic may use its mounts to run over an enemy unit. Doing so requires a (Charisma + Conveyance) roll, against a Difficulty equal to the enemy's RDV + the mount's control rating or the vehicle's handling rating. The unit's Command rating is added as automatic successes. If the roll is successful, it counts as a successful attack with a base damage equal to [(Mount's Strength) + 3]B. Threshold successes add to the base damage and the damage may be soaked as normal (applying the normal Magnitude modifiers for both attacker and defender).

      Regardless of whether the roll was successful or not, the riders may also make an attack of their own. This takes a -3 penalty, but otherwise follows the normal rules for mass combat attacks.

Creating New Tactics

      Inventing a new tactic, never thought of by anybody, is a task of great difficulty. The character must study famous battles, run war games, and perform general thought experiments in a process that takes weeks. Creating the tactic is an extended (Intelligence + War) roll with a Difficulty equal to the tactic's (Minimum Drill) + 2, an interval of one week, and a success cost equal to the tactic's (Minimum Drill) x 5.

      If the roll succeeds, the character may document the tactic, allowing others to learn and use the tactic to whatever degree their leadership and training allows. Needless to say, First Age battle manuals that detail the powerful, esoteric tactics of that fallen time are priceless pieces of military technology.

Chapter 7: Statecraft

As the end of the Second Age approaches, old alliances are tested. The political certainties of the past are being replaced with the expediencies of the moment. Player Characters will often have a chance to influence these political relationships, possibly becoming major forces in their own right.

Dominions

In the Statecraft system, the actions of major political forces are modeled by *Dominions*. What precisely constitutes a Dominion is purposefully left vague. A Dominion can be a criminal gang, a solar-worshiping cult, a bureaucratic agency, or the personal financial empire of a single individual. Nations are generally composed of multiple Dominions, which may or may not share a common goal.

A political force is a Dominion if it plays a discrete roll in the current story. For example, if the game is set in the Realm, and the focus of the story is the struggle for the crown, each individual Dynastic house will have multiple Dominions associated with it as the players struggle to negotiate the incestuous and ever-shifting political tides of the Dynasty. By contrast, if the story is about the constant warfare of the hundred kingdoms region, the entire Realm might be a single Dominion with ludicrously high traits. Dominions are, first and last, tools for telling a story.

Every Dominion has certain traits that determine its ability to influence the world. These traits are divided into two types: *attributes* and *skills*. A Dominion's attributes represent its overall power. A Dominion with a high Influence is well-known and respected. A Dominion with a low Wealth is poor and cash-strapped. A Dominion's skills represent the ways the Dominion can put its power to use. A Dominion with the War skill can change its Followers to soldiers. A Dominion that lacks the Geomancy skill has no ability to build roads, farms, or fortresses.

In addition to traits, Dominions also possess their own unique advantages. Dominion advantages come in three types: *fiefs, policies,* and *resources.* Fiefs are specific areas where the Dominion has power and act much like health levels do for characters. Policies are those goals and beliefs that are most important to a Dominion. They are the specific ideals which define a Dominion. Resources are those things, both tangible and intangible that the Dominion may call upon to achieve specific, short term goals.

Dominion Attributes

Dominions have three attributes: *Followers*, *Influence*, and *Wealth*. The size of a Dominion's attributes determine its power in the world, but this power can come at the expense of nimbleness and adaptability. A Dominion has an upkeep cost, payable in the appropriate resources, equal to its attributes. This cost must be paid at the end of each year.

Followers

A Dominion's Followers rating reflects the masses of people who are willing to directly serve the Dominion. This includes both active employees and potential recruits. They are usually willing to do this with minimal compensation, but even the most loyal follower still needs to eat. At the end of each year, the Dominion must pay a number of personnel points equal to its Followers rating or reduce its Followers rating by one.

Influence

A Dominion's Influence rating reflects the respect it receives from other Dominions and the general public. Influential Dominions can be loved or feared, but they can't be ignored. Regardless of the specifics of its reputation, such a Dominion is always factored into the plans of the great. At the end of each year, the Dominion must pay a number of clout points equal to its Influence rating or reduce its Influence rating by one.

Wealth

A Dominion's Wealth rating reflects its commercial and economic power. This represents not just its ability to make money, but its ability to spend it. Wealthy Dominions have more than just raw cash, they have the contacts to make sure cash is never in short supply. At the end of each year, the Dominion must pay a number of money points equal to its Wealth rating or reduce its Wealth rating by one.

Dominion Skills

Dominion skills represent a Dominion's ability to get things done. The base dice pool for any particular Dominion action is equal to its (Attribute + Skill). Dominion skills share names with character Abilities. This is because characters with a strong connection to a particular Dominion may supplement a Dominion's actions with their own Abilities, adding a bonus to the dice pool equal to their own (Attribute + Ability)/2 static value. The particular character attribute used for Dominion bonuses is noted in the Abilities' descriptions in **Chapter 2: Characters** and the circumstances under which a character may apply a bonus to a Dominion action appear later in the chapter.

Dominion skills do not require maintenance, but they do require fiefs. A skill must have a number of associated fiefs equal to or greater than its rating. If an enemy Dominion destroys or annexes enough fiefs to bring the number below the skill rating, the Dominion runs the risk of losing one or more points of skill rating (see **Losing Fiefs**, below for more details).

Administration

A Dominion's Administration skill reflects those people who work to make sure the Dominion functions efficiently and follows its policies with fervor. A high Administration skill represents a Dominion with skilled clerks, magistrates, quartermasters, and managers. A low Administration skill represents a Dominion suffering from a chronic lack of skilled administrators and literate help.

Suggested Fiefs: Census Bureaus (F), Counting Houses (W), Criminal Courts (F).

Forgecraft

A Dominion's Forgecraft skill reflects its industrial infrastructure, specifically its access to manufactured goods. The Forgecraft skill not only brings in money for the Dominion, it also allows the Dominion to acquire tools, equipment, and even, rarely, artifacts. A high Forgecraft skill represents a Dominion with skilled artisans, rich mines, and vibrant marketplaces. A low Forgecraft skill represents a Dominion that is systematically short on durable goods.

Suggested Fiefs: Foundries (W), Mines (W), Sweatshops (W).

Geomancy

A Dominion's Geomancy skill reflects its ability to shape, control, and profit from the physical environment. This covers the gamut from defensive fortifications and toll roads to demesnes and manses. A high Geomancy skill represents a Dominion with all the blessings of the earth. A low Geomancy skill represents a Dominion with poor physical infrastructure.

Suggested Fiefs: Fortresses (F), Well-Situated Harbors (W), Slave Builders (F)

Investigation

A Dominion's Investigation skill reflects its ability to gather useful information, as well as its ability to get that information into the right hands. A high Investigation skill represents a Dominion with access to a disciplined, reliable, and professional information gathering network. A low Investigation skill represents a Dominion that relies on rumor and innuendo.

Suggested Fiefs: Police Forces (F), Great Libraries (W), Gossipy Fan Clubs (I)

Larceny

A Dominion's Larceny skill represents its ability to both perpetrate and thwart covert operations. This can be either a direct criminal enterprise or a nation's "black ops" program. A high Larceny skill represents a Dominion with extensive contacts in the criminal underworld or an experienced espionage corp. A low Larceny skill represents a Dominion that's too honest, cowardly, or inept to engage in many covert operations.

Suggested Fiefs: Smugglers (W), Spies (F), Legbreakers (F)

Negotiation

A Dominion's Negotiation skill represents the professionalism and skill of its formal diplomacy. This can reflect either a reputation for careful fairness or a hard-bargaining diplomatic culture. A high Negotiation skill represents a Dominion that is accustomed to striking favorable deals with transparent terms. A low Negotiation skill represents a Dominion with a cavalier attitude towards diplomacy.

Suggested Fiefs: Diplomatic Corps (F), Signed Treaties (I), Historical Relationships (I).

Performance

A Dominion's Performance skill reflects its reputation for pageantry and culture. This reputation can be either secular or religious, somber or festive, alluring or militant. A high Performance skill represents a Dominion with a talent for spectacle. A low Performance skill represents a Dominion that is bland and nondescript even on the best of days.

Suggested Fiefs: Colorful Uniforms (I), Devoted Fanbase (I), Pale Imitators (I).

Socialize

A Dominion's Socialize skill reflects the degree to which its culture and membership intermingles with outsiders. These connections allow for the informal exchange of ideas and values. A high Socialize skill represents a Dominion that is slick and likable. A low Socialize skill represents a Dominion with isolationist, foreign-hating tendencies.

Suggested Fiefs: Literary Movement (I), Popular Fashion (I), Celebrity Leader (I).

War

A Dominion's War skill reflects its military preparedness. It is determined by a complex formula that factors in active forces, sources of conscripts, and degree of training. A high War skill represents a Dominion with a militant culture. A low War skill represents a pacifistic, cowardly, or non-martial Dominion.

Suggested Fiefs: Peasant Village (F), Mercenary Company (W), Recruitment Campaign (I).

Dominion Advantages

Dominion traits are only rarely seen by characters. Unless a story focuses on the long-term conflict between Dominions, traits might not even come into play. Advantages are a different story. Dominion Advantages represent those aspects of the Dominion that fluctuate rapidly or are most amenable to change. They are the aspects of the Dominion that are most likely to interest characters on a day to day basis. The three types of advantage are *Fiefs, Policies,* and *Resources.*

Fiefs

A fief is a group of people, location, enterprise, or idea that is controlled by or associated with a specific Dominion. Fiefs represent the health of the Dominion as a whole. By attacking fiefs, one can lower a Dominion's skills. If skills are lowered, the Dominion's resources flow suffers. If the resources flow suffers, the Dominion might have to sacrifice attribute points. If a Dominion's attribute points suffer, it becomes vulnerable to destruction.

Fiefs are associated with Dominion skills. A given skill must have at least as many associated fiefs as it has points of rating (and it's a good idea to have more). If the number falls below the minimum, the Dominion's skill immediately lowers.

There are two approaches to determining a Dominion's fiefs – the generic and the specific. If the story revolves around high-level politics, it might be better to go with the generic approach. In this approach, the only thing that matters about fiefs is how many there are. A merchant's trading empire consists of a number of caravans, but it is not important to know precisely what they look like or where they travel to. The advantage of the generic approach is that it speeds the pace of seasonal play.

If the story focuses more on the day-to-day actions of the characters, the specific approach may be preferable. With the specific approach, each fief has its own (perhaps very perfunctory) backstory and description. A Dominion does not possess a simple "Administration fief," rather the Dominion controls "the Office of Plenary Accounting on the corner of Resplendent Fire Boulevard and Nellens Street in the Imperial City." The advantage to using the specific approach is that it makes the political consequences of the characters' actions easier to understand.

Dominions suffer when fiefs are lost or destroyed, regardless of how the destruction occurs. If the characters duel their arch-enemy on Nellens street and the Office of Plenary Accounting gets leveled by a stray charm, the Dominion to which it belonged suffers precisely the same effects it would if the fief were targeted by a Dominion War action. If a character who controls a Dominion manages to subvert the Office with social influence, it is added to the character's Dominion, just as if the character had annexed it with a Dominion Socialize action.

Fiefs are divided into three types: followers fiefs, influence fiefs, and wealth fiefs. A fief's type indicates its relationship to the Dominion, as well as the sort of force necessary to sever that relationship.

Follower-type: Fiefs of this type indicate a group of people that recognize a Dominion's direct political authority. These people hold a loyalty to the Dominion that cannot be easily severed. It usually takes a direct, physical attack (using the Followers attribute) to destroy a follower-type fief, but they are sometimes vulnerable to especially powerful propaganda (using the Influence Attribute). Mere money (using the Wealth attribute) has no chance of swaying this type of fief.

Influence-type: Fiefs of this type indicate either a group of people with a positive opinion of the Dominion or ideas or policies that are associated with the Dominion, to the Dominion's credit. These fiefs are nearly impossible to target with brute force (using the Followers attribute). Opposing propaganda (the Influence attribute) is most effective, though large and distracting displays of Wealth can also turn people's heads.

Wealth-type: Fiefs of this type represent things the Dominion owns outright. These fiefs are often inanimate, and thus immune to Influence. The most efficient way to deal with Wealth-type fiefs is to simply buy them out (using the Wealth attribute), though destroying them (using the Followers attribute) can be an acceptable desperation tactic.

It is usually pretty obvious what type of fief a particular target should be, but if there is ambiguity (is a religious movement a follower-type or influence-type) the player who controls the Dominion can choose whichever type will be most advantageous.

The limitation on attack vulnerabilities applies only to Dominion actions. For instance, while it is usually ineffectual to suppress an idea by killing those who have it, a sufficiently determined player may well be able to track down and execute every member of a heretical cult without making them into public martyrs.

Recording Fiefs

When using specific fiefs, one must obviously give a name and description to each important fief, but those using the generic fief option have an easier time. When playing with generic fiefs, the only important information about a Fief is its type. When recording Dominion skills, it is usually easiest to follow the skill with the fiefs' one-letter abbreviations. *Example: If a Dominion's rating-3 Geomancy skill were supported by 2 Resources-type fiefs and one Personnel-type fief, it would be recorded as* **Geomancy 3 – (R,R,P).**

Losing Fiefs

All fiefs are associated with Dominion skills. Each dominion skill must have a number of associated fiefs (of any type) equal to its rating. If a Dominion loses a fief (regardless of whether or not the fief is destroyed in the process), it must make a Difficulty 5 (Attribute + Skill) roll. The Attribute used is based on the fief type and the skill used is the one associated with the fief. The Dominion adds one automatic success on this roll per fief in excess of the Dominion's skill rating.

If the roll fails, the Dominion loses another fief. If the roll succeeds, it does not. Regardless of the result, if the number of fiefs drops beneath the Dominion's current skill rating, the skill rating will lower to equal the number of associated fiefs at the end of the current season (the Dominion has until that time to associate new fiefs and, hopefully, save the skill from lowering).

The Dominion does not need to roll a second time if it fails the initial roll and loses a second fief. Without the intervention of magic, a Dominion may lose at most two fiefs from a single incident. Any fief lost by a failed roll of this type is detached, not destroyed, and may be claimed by any Dominion aware of its existence.

Policies

Policies represent the heart of a Dominion. They are those principals and goals so central to the Dominion's identity that going against them would constitute a threat to the very existence of the Dominion itself. Despite this, policies can change over time, as new recruits shape an organization into something its founders would barely recognize.

Policies have two effects. First, any individual who possesses an intimacy towards the Dominion (and Dominions are a common target for intimacies, especially among mortals) automatically treats all of the Dominion's policies as intimacies as well. Thus, someone who is loyal to the Immaculate Order does not need separate intimacies to hate the Solar Exalted or love the Dragon-Blooded – those beliefs are included automatically.

This can make Dominions a very powerful tool for shaping the beliefs and actions of a large number of people, but this power can backfire. If a Dominion develops a policy a particular individual intensely dislikes, that policy can cause the individual to break the intimacy with the Dominion, even if all of the Dominion's other policies are perfectly acceptable. Changing an enemy Dominion's policies can be a subtle, if dangerous, way of destroying that Dominion's popular support.

The second effect of a policy is to make actions that violate the policy more difficult. If one of the Dominion's actions would violate the policy or if an enemy attack would weaken or counter the policy, increase the Difficulty of the roll by 3. Similarly, if an action would support or strengthen a Policy, its Difficulty is reduced by 3.

Resources

Resources are the lifeblood of a Dominion. By spending and gathering resources, an organization can make its will felt across the land. Whether those resources are commodities for sale, political capital, or the sweat equity of a loyal populace, they function in the same way. The three types of resources are *personnel, clout,* and *money* and each one is associated with one of the three Dominion attributes.

Personnel

The personnel resource is associated with the Followers attribute and represents the Dominion's day to day access to a skilled, numerous talent pool. When a Dominion spends personnel points to take an action, the points spent represent people going to work to make the Dominion's goals a reality.

Characters spending Personnel: A character who controls a Dominion can spend the Dominion's banked personnel points to call upon a group of people. The character can call 100 people per point of personnel spent. By default, these people are uneducated, untrained peasants, but a character may spend additional personnel points to call upon trained help. Each personnel point will give the group two training points. Regardless of how many training points are purchased, no trait may be raised above 3 simply by spending personnel points.

The character may spend as many points of personnel on martial traits as the Dominion has points of War (Martial traits: the physical Attributes, Archery, Brawl, Unarmed, Weaponry, War, Resistance, Survival, Athletics, Stealth, Integrity, Conveyance, Valor, Conviction, and associated specialties and intimacies.)

In addition, the character may spend as many points of personnel on scholarly traits as the Dominion has points of Administration (Scholarly traits: the mental Attributes, Administration, Forgecraft, Geomancy, Integrity, Linguistics, Lore, Medicine, Negotiation, Performance, Compassion, Temperance, and associated specialties and intimacies)

The character may also spend as many points of personnel on espionage traits as the Dominion has points of Investigation (Espionage traits: the social Attributes, Awareness, Deception, Integrity, Investigation, Larceny, Presence, Socialize, Stealth, Conviction, Temperance, and associated specialties and intimacies).

Spending personnel points is a time consuming process that takes a number of weeks equal to the total number of points spent. During this time, the character canvasses the Dominion's fiefs, looking for suitable recruits.

Clout

The clout resource is associated with Influence and represents a Dominion's immediate political pull and cultural relevance. When a Dominion spends clout to take an action, the points spent represent the Dominion calling upon old favors, staking its reputation on a particular cause, or agitating a populace to support the action.

Characters spending Clout: Characters who control a Dominion may spend the Dominion's banked clout to grant a bonus to a social roll. The character must be speaking on behalf of the Dominion, and the target of the influence attempt must believe that the character has that authority. This is usually pretty easy – the heads of influential Dominions tend to be famous, but if the character has taken pains to remain obscure, this may require documentation or other proof of the character's status.

When spending clout, the character gains one bonus die per point of clout spent. A character may spend up to the Dominion's Negotiation when attempting a compulsion, up to the Dominion's Performance when attempting an emotion, and up to the Dominion's Socialize when attempting an illusion.

Money

The money resource is associated with the Wealth attribute and represents the Dominions negotiable liquid assets. Money is not necessarily currency, though it can be. Just as often it is a line of credit or goods in transit. When a Dominion spends money to take an action, it represents cash changing hands, contracts being signed, and commodities being bartered.

Characters spending Money: A character who controls a Dominion may spend any and all of its banked money at any time. Banked money is probably simple cash, though it might be a stockpile of a valuable commodity or a letter of credit. One point of money is equal to a talent of silver.

It is not necessary to track all of a character's purchases. If a purchase would fall under the purview of one of the Dominion's skills (Forgecraft for weapons, War for personal protection, Geomancy for real estate, Socialize for clothes, etc) and it costs fewer points of money than the skill's rating, the character may simply acquire the item in question. Either a factory owned by the Dominion builds the object, a flunky provides it gratis, or the organization pays for it out of petty cash.

Dominion skill ratings do not offer a discount on items that exceed the skill rating in cost, nor do they provide items for free if the character's Negotiation Ability reduces the cost below the threshold (provided, of course, it was above the limit to begin with).

Converting Possession to Resources

Sometimes, in the course of the game, the characters may come across one-time boons that they wish to reinvest into their own, personal Dominions. Perhaps they raid an imperial payroll office and make off with a strongbox of jade coins, or a powerful monarch offers them a favor to be named later, or a defeated army pledges loyalty to their cause.

To determine how many points of resources the characters get, the storyteller should estimate the maximum value, under optimum conditions, of the possession in question. This is the value in resource points the possession would merit if exploited to its utmost by an extraordinarily skilled individual (remember – 1 personnel equals 100 peasants, 1 clout equals the sway of a small-time player, and 1 money equals one silver talent). Divide this maximum value by 5 to get the *base value*.

If the base value is less than 1, the characters can get one resource point out of it, provided it's reasonable (a pile of garbage would have an small, but non-zero base value, but that doesn't mean it's worth money).

If the base value is 1 or greater, round it to the nearest whole number. The character then makes an (Attribute + Ability) roll. The rounded base value is multiplied by the success total of this roll to determine how many resource points the item yields. If the yield is implausibly high, that just means the money was invested well, the recruits spread the good word, the monarch repays the favor ten-fold, etc.

Converting a possession takes one day per point of base value. To convert a possession to money, the character rolls (Wits + Negotiation). To convert a possession to Personnel, the character rolls (Charisma + Administration). To convert a possession into Clout, the character rolls (Manipulation + Socialize).

With a proper stunt, any possession may be converted into any resource. Perhaps, instead of investing the coins to gain money, the character throws a party with them, to gain clout. Or, instead of recruiting the defeated soldiers as additional personnel, the character sells them into slavery to gain money. Players must declare, before the roll is made, which resource they wish to acquire.

Dominion Conflicts

Dominions represent large numbers of people acting under the auspices of a single organization or ideology. A single Dominion action is the result of months of effort by potentially hundreds of people. During regular play, this occurs in the background, and while they may inform the decisions of the storyteller, Dominions usually respond so slowly that their relevance is minimal.

This changes during extended periods of downtime. As years pass, the actions of great organizations come to shape history, and the day to day activities of individuals seems small and insignificant. Exalted handles this change of focus with *Dominion Conflicts*.

Dominion Conflicts involve two or more Dominions, acting against each other using Dominion traits. The stakes of a Dominion Conflict are fiefs and resources. The time scale is divided into *seasons* and *years*.

In a Dominion Conflict, a year is the amount of time between upkeep payments. At the end of each year, the Dominion must spend a number of banked personnel points equal to its Followers attribute, a number of banked clout points equal to its Influence attribute, and a number of banked money points equal to its Wealth attribute. If it doesn't, it loses a single attribute point. Each attribute can fall by only one point in a given year, regardless of the size of the shortfall.

A season is the time it takes to complete a single Dominion action. Large Dominions may be able to take multiple actions in a single season, as different parts of the organization pursue different projects (this is based on the amount of resources the Dominion has access to). There are usually five seasons in a given year.

Characters in Dominion Conflicts

Skilled employees are a valuable asset to any Dominion. During a Dominion Conflict, characters may decide to apply any single one of their (Attribute + Ability)/2 static values as a bonus to all Dominion dice pools and static values that are based off the skill that shares a name with the chosen Ability. This represents the character working consistently for the Dominion for the entirety of the season.

Any given character may provide only one bonus per season, but there is no limit to the number of bonuses a Dominion may benefit from. Rather, a dominion may not more than double any given (Attribute + Skill) dice pool or (Attribute + Skill)/2 static value. Characters may change which Skill they assist at the beginning of each season.

There is no default cost for a Dominion to benefit from a character-based bonus, but characters with high (Attribute + Ability) ratings can bargain with the leader of the Dominion for whatever consideration they can get.

Some characters will have charms that can be used in Dominion conflict. Simple charms can be used either in place of a dominion action or during the character stage. A Supplemental charm may only be used to improve a Dominion action if the character provided a bonus to the Skill the charm supplements. Any character associated with a dominion may use one Reflexive charm per pass (a pass is the span of time between Dominion actions). For purposes of mote regeneration, each year is considered a new scene.

The Seasonal Sequence

At the beginning of each year, every Dominion present in the conflict rolls (Influence + Investigation). The success total of this roll determines the order in which the Dominions act. The Dominion with the highest success total acts first, followed by the Dominion with the second highest, and so on. This order remains constant for each season of the current year.

After the action order is decided, the first season begins immediately. Seasons are subdivided into three stages: the *character stage*, the *gathering stage*, and the *action stage*. When every Dominion has completed the character stage, the first Dominion to act begins the gathering stage. When every Dominion has completed the gathering stage, the first Dominion to act begins the action stage. When every Dominion has completed the action stage, the current season ends and the next one begins.

Stage 1: The Character Stage

Before anything else happens, the Dominions, in order, declare the activities of any associated special characters. If a Dominion has more than one special character, it may wait until each Dominion declares at least one character's activities before declaring the activities of a second. If it has a third, it may wait until every Dominion declares at least two, and so on. Alternatively a Dominion may simply declare the activities of all its special characters at once.

Any special character may provide a bonus to one of the Dominion's skills, as described in the **Characters in Dominion Conflicts** section above. Only characters declared in this stage may provide a bonus, although certain supernatural beings have magic that may be activated in later stages. A character who activates a charm during this stage may not provide a bonus unless the magic specifically allows it. A character who uses a charm in this stage is considered associated with the Dominion.

Once every Dominion has declared all of its bonuses stage 1 ends.

Stage 2: The Gathering Stage

Once per season, a Dominion may gather personnel, clout, or money. A Dominion can gather only one resource per season, but it need not make the decision about which resource to gather until its turn comes up in stage 2.

If the Dominion wishes to gather personnel, it may roll either (Followers + Administration), (Followers + War), or (Followers + Investigation) and multiply the success total by the total number of follower-type fiefs associated with the Skill rolled. The Dominion gains personnel points equal to the result.

If the Dominion wishes to gather clout, it may roll either (Influence + Negotiation), (Influence + Performance), or (Influence + Socialize) and multiply the success total by the total number of influence-type fiefs associated with the Skill rolled. The Dominion gains clout points equal to the result.

If the Dominion wishes to gather money, it may roll either (Wealth + Forgecraft), (Wealth + Geomancy) or (Wealth + Larceny) and multiply the success total by the total number of wealth-type fiefs associated with the Skill rolled. The Dominion gains money points equal to the result.

At the end of the season, any resource points gained during this stage that remain unspent fade away. A Dominion may prevent this by *banking* points. Banked points last indefinitely, but they may only be spent on Attribute upkeep, traded to other Dominions as part of a Dominion action, or used by characters during normal play.

A Dominion decides how many resources points to bank after the gathering roll is made, but before the next Dominion makes a gathering roll. A Dominion may bank no more than its (Attribute) x 2 resources points in a single season and no more than (Attribute) x 10 points total.

When every Dominion has made a single gathering roll, stage 2 ends.

Stage 3: The Action Stage

During stage 3, each Dominion takes an action. The effects of Dominion actions are described below, but any Dominion action will always have a resources cost. The resources cost of a Dominion action is paid before any rolls are made. If the roll fails, the resources are nonetheless spent.

Once every Dominion has taken a single action, any Dominions with remaining resources points may take a second action, in order. The time between when the first Dominion acts and when the slowest Dominion acts is called a *pass*. After every eligible Dominion has taken a an action during a pass, a new pass begins. Passes continue until either no Dominion has any remaining resources or no Dominion wishes to take additional actions.

Once every Dominion has taken every action it's going to take, stage 3 ends, and along with it, the season. The next season begins again with stage 1. During the last season of the year, every Dominion pays upkeep on its Attributes before beginning the next year with a new (Influence + Investigation) roll.

Dominion Actions

The following actions represent a complete list of possible Dominion Conflict actions. Under the name of each action, the description will list a cost, dice pool, and difficulty. If there is more than one value for any of those factors, the Dominion initiating the action may choose whichever cost and dice pool is most favorable to it (the cost of a Dominion action must be paid with the resource associated with the dice pool's Attribute, unless otherwise stated), and the target of the action may choose whichever Difficulty is most favorable to it.

The cost of a Dominion action is paid before the roll is made, and any resources expended are lost, regardless of whether the action succeeds or fails.

Do Nothing
Cost: 1 clout or 1 personnel or 1 money
Dice Pool: n/a
Difficulty: n/a

Sometimes doing nothing is the hardest thing to do in politics. When a Dominion does nothing, it remains flexible enough to respond to new developments later in the season, but the inefficiency born of inactivity can be a drain on the Dominion's resources.

Doing Nothing counts as a full Dominion action. While it is likely that a Dominion that chooses this action will have resources enough to act again, it cannot do so until every other Dominion in the conflict has acted at least once.

Detach Followers Fief
Cost: (Target Dominion's Followers) x 2 personnel or (Target Dominion's Followers) x 5 clout (if rolling Influence + Performance)
Dice Pool: (Followers + Administration) or (Influence + Performance)
Difficulty: Target Dominion's (Followers + Skill)/2 static value (the skill used to determine this value is the one associated with the target fief)

When using this action, the Dominion targets another Dominion's followers-type fief. If the roll is successful, that fief is no longer associated with any of the target Dominion's Skills. The fief still exists and is relatively undamaged, although any politically observant member of that fief will be aware of the diminished loyalty of the group. Any Dominion that is aware of the fief may make an Attach Fief action in order to associate this free fief with any of their Skills.

The attacking Dominion must be aware of the target fief in order to take this action.

Detach Influence Fief
Cost: (Target Dominion's Influence) x 2 clout or (Target Dominion's Influence) x 5 wealth (if rolling Wealth + Performance)
Dice Pool: (Influence + Socialize) or (Wealth + Performance)
Difficulty: Target Dominion's (Influence + Skill)/2 static value (the skill used to determine this value is the one associated with the target fief)

When using this action, the Dominion targets another Dominion's influence-type fief. If the roll is successful, that fief is no longer associated with any of the target Dominion's Skills. The fief still exists and is relatively undamaged, though its respect for the old dominion has faded. Any Dominion that is aware of the fief may make an Attach Fief action in order to associate this free fief with any of their Skills.

The attacking Dominion must be aware of the target fief in order to take this action.

Detach Wealth Fief
Cost: (Target Dominion's Wealth) x 2 money or (Target Dominion's Wealth) x 5 personnel (if rolling Followers x Larceny)
Dice Pool: (Wealth + Negotiation) or (Followers + Larceny)
Difficulty: Target Dominion's (Wealth + Skill)/2 static value (the skill used to determine this value is the one associated with the target fief)

When using this action, the Dominion targets another Dominion's wealth-type fief. If the roll is successful, that fief is no longer associated with any of the target Dominion's Skills. The fief still exists and is relatively undamaged, but now functions under independent ownership. Any Dominion that is aware of the fief may make an Attach fief action in order to associate this free fief with any of their Skills.

The attacking Dominion must be aware of the target fief in order to take this action.

Destroy Followers Fief
Cost: (Target Dominion's Followers) personnel or (Target Dominion's Followers) x 2 clout (if rolling Influence + Socialize).
Dice Pool: (Followers + War) or (Influence + Socialize)
Difficulty: Target Dominion's (Followers + War)/2 static value.

When using this action, the Dominion targets another Dominion's followers-type fief. A successful roll destroys the fief. Through aggressive force or propaganda, the fief disperses, its members either killed or irrevocably disillusioned. The attacking Dominion must be aware of the target fief in order to take this action.

Destroy Influence Fief
Cost: (Target Dominion's Influence) clout or (Target Dominion's Influence) x 2 money (if rolling Wealth + Socialize)
Dice Pool: (Influence + Performance) or (Wealth + Socialize)
Difficulty: Target Dominion's (Influence + Socialize)/2 static value

When using this action, the Dominion targets another Dominion's influence-type fief. A successful roll destroys the fief. Through vicious satire or the conspicuous distribution of gifts, the fief disperses, its influence poisoned with fear or mockery or simply forgotten amongst the influx of new material goods. The attacking Dominion must be aware of the target fief in order to take this action.

Destroy Wealth Fief
Cost: (Target Dominion's Wealth) money or (Target Dominion's Wealth) x 2 personnel (if rolling Followers + War)
Dice Pool: (Wealth + Forgecraft), (Wealth + Geomancy) or (Followers + War)
Difficulty: Target Dominion's (Wealth + Skill)/2 static value (the skill used is the one associated with the targeted fief) or (Followers + War)/2 static value (if the attacker uses Followers + War).

When using this action, the Dominion targets another Dominion's wealth-type fief. A successful roll destroys the fief. This may take the form of a superior competitive product undercutting the market, an embargo or protectionist trade policy stifling the fief with red tape, or a simple attack on the fief's employees and holdings. The attacking Dominion must be aware of the target fief to take this action.

Steal Resource
Cost: (Target Dominion's Attribute [associated with the stolen resource]) personnel
Dice Pool: (Followers + Larceny) for money, (Followers + Performance) for personnel, or (Followers + Socialize) for clout
Difficulty: Target's (Influence + Investigation)/2 static value or (Influence + Larceny)/2 static value

To use this action, the Dominion need only spend the required personnel and make a roll. Each threshold success on the roll transfers one point of the desired resource from the target's bank to the attacker's bank – up to a maximum number of points equal to the target's current total. Dominions can steal only banked resources, and never resources that will fade at the end of the current season.
The Dominion need not be aware of the target's current banked resource totals to take this action.

Attach Fief
Cost: 3 (resource associated with the fief type)
Dice Pool: (Influence + Administration)
Difficulty: 0

When using this action, an unaffiliated fief becomes associated with one of the Dominion's skills. This fief can be any free fief of which the Dominion is aware, including one that was detached this season with the Detach Fief action. If the roll to attach a fief fails, the Dominion may try again later the same season, if it still has the necessary resources. If the roll botches, the fief is destroyed, as if it were the target of a destroy fief action.

Assess Situation
Cost: 3 personnel
Dice Pool: (Followers + Investigation)
Difficulty: 0

When using this action, the Dominion simply gathers information, looking for nothing in particular. For each threshold success achieved on this roll, the Dominion gains one of the following pieces of information: A brief description of another Dominion in the current conflict, including its highest Attribute rating; a description of an unaffiliated fief, including its type and how it came to be unaffiliated; the name and description of a single special character that is providing a skill bonus this season, including that character's affiliated Dominion and the skill the character is benefiting.

Investigate Dominion
Cost: 3 personnel
Dice Pool: (Followers + Investigation), (Followers + Administration), or (Followers + Socialize).
Difficulty: Target Dominion's (Influence + Larceny)/2 static value or 0.

When a Dominion uses this action, it targets a Dominion it is aware of. For each threshold success on the roll, the Dominion gains one of the following pieces of information about the target: One of the Dominion's skill ratings; one of the Dominion's attribute ratings, one of the Dominion's policies; the type and associated skill of one of the Dominion's fiefs; the Dominion's current banked amount of one resource.

Ordinarily, the player of the investigating Dominion decides which information is attained with the successes on this roll, but if the target Dominion chooses not to oppose this action, it may choose the order in which its traits are revealed (though it must provide genuinely novel information – no repeating things the investigating Dominion already knows in order to thwart the investigation).

When using this action to discern fiefs, an Investigation roll will reveal only followers-type and wealth-type fiefs, a Socialize roll will reveal only influence-type and followers-type fiefs, and an Administration roll will reveal only wealth-type and influence-type fiefs.

Undermine/Create Policy
Cost: (Target Dominion's Influence) x 5 clout
Dice Pool: (Influence + Socialize) or (Influence + Performance) or (Influence + Negotiation)
Difficulty: Target Dominion's (Influence + Investigation)/2 static value or (Influence + Socialize)/2 static value. (This is often increased by +3, due to violations of existing policies)

If this action's roll succeeds, the target Dominion either gains a new policy or removes an existing policy. The target Dominion may resist this by spending clout equal to the roll's threshold successes. This clout may be spent out of the current season's budget or from the Dominion's banked points. If the target Dominion is unwilling or unable to spend clout, it may reduce its Influence rating by one point to resist any change in policy.

New policies are less likely to be resisted if they resemble old policies. An old policy is less likely to be retained if the Dominion already has other, similar policies. Changing a Dominion's policies subtly requires introducing new policies before removing the old (this also makes the Undermine Policy roll less likely to count as a policy violation for the target).

Trade Resource
Cost: Varies
Dice Pool: (Attribute + Negotiation): the Attribute chosen is the one associated with the Resource to be given up.
Difficulty: Target Dominion's (Attribute + Negotiation)/2 static value. The Attribute used is the one associated with the resource to be acquired.

To use this action, the player of the initiating Dominion must declare a resource the Dominion is willing to give up and a resource the Dominion desires from the target, as well as an amount of those resources to be traded. If the target of the trade is willing, the player makes an (Attribute + Negotiation) roll. The initiating Dominion gains a number of resource points (of the desired type) from the target equal to the agreed upon amount plus the roll's threshold successes. A success total lower than the Difficulty lowers the amount of resources acquired. The minimum number of resources the Dominion can gain is one, while the maximum is twice the agreed upon amount or the target's current total of that resource. The target Dominion loses an equal amount of that resource (the player who controls the target may decide whether those points come from the Dominion's current seasonal budget, the Dominion's banked total, or from any combination of the two).

The cost to take this action is equal to the agreed-upon amount of the resource to be given up. This cost goes directly into the target's bank. The cost for this action must be paid from the Dominion's current seasonal budget.

Example: Nexus has a surplus of money and decides that it could use some extra personnel from one of the mercenary companies that calls the city home. It decides it can afford to trade 5 money for a similar amount of personnel. The Black Iron company decides this sounds like a fair deal.

The player who controls Nexus rolls the City's (Wealth + Negotiation) against the mercenaries' (Followers + Negotiation)/2. Since Nexus is a major trade capital and mercenaries are not known for their great diplomacy, the roll achieves 6 threshold successes. Nexus could receive 11 personnel for their 5 money investment, but the cap is twice the original bargain. Nexus removes 10 personnel points from the Black Iron Company's bank and transfers them to its own. The cost of this is 5 money points, which go into the bank of the Black Iron Company.

If, through bad luck, the success total roll had fallen one point short of the Difficulty, Nexus would have gained only 4 personnel, but still would have had to pay 5 money.

Raise Skill
Cost: (current skill rating) money or (current skill rating) clout or (current skill rating) influence
Dice Pool: (Attribute + Skill). The skill used is the skill to be raised, the attribute used is the attribute associated with the resource cost.
Difficulty: New Skill rating

When using this action, the Dominion makes a roll against the new skill rating, adding one automatic success for every fief associated with skill that shares a type with the Attribute used in the roll. If the roll succeeds, the Dominion loses a number of banked resources equal to twice the current skill rating. One half of this cost must be paid from one of the two types of resources not used to attempt this action. The other half must be paid from the third resource type.

If the roll fails, there is no ill effect, other than losing the resource invested in attempting this action. If the roll botches, the entire cost is paid from the bank, but the skill does not increase.

In order to attempt this action, a fief must have a number of fiefs associated with it equal to or greater than the new skill rating.

Raise Attribute
Cost: (current Followers rating) x 2 personnel or (current Influence rating) x 2 clout or (current Wealth rating) x 2 money: the cost must come from the resource associated with the Attribute to be raised.
Dice Pool: (Attribute + Administration): the Attribute used is the one to be raised.
Difficulty: (New Attribute rating) x 2

In order to use this action, the Dominion's bank must be completely full. If that condition is met, it rolls (Attribute + Administration) against a Difficulty equal to the (new attribute rating) x 2. Automatic successes for this roll may be purchased at a cost of 3 resources each.

If the roll succeeds, the Dominion loses half its current bank and gains one point in the desired attribute. If the roll fails, the cost spent to attempt this action is wasted, but no other ill effect is felt. If the roll botches, the Dominion loses half its bank, but does not gain an attribute point.

Dominions in Games
Often times, characters in Exalted will face powerful opposition from unaccountable political forces. In these scenarios, it is often useful to know the precise effectiveness of these forces. Dominion traits allow storytellers an objective way to measure the progress of NPC organizations. For example, if the characters are being targeted by the Wyld Hunt, an extended (Followers + Investigation) roll can be made to determine how close the Hunt is at any given time. Alternately, if the characters must protect an area long enough for the king to build a fortress, the kingdom's (Wealth + Geomancy) becomes relevant.

What follows are suggested uses for each of the nine Dominion skills, specifically noting how they might either aid or hinder characters, even outside of Dominion-Conflict time scales.

Administration: An Administration roll might represent the speed and efficiency of a trial, the fairness (or lack thereof) of tariffs or fees, the acquisition of a travel papers, or other matters of red tape.

Forgecraft: A Forgecraft roll can represent the availability of rare metalwork in a marketplace, the outfitting of an army, or the ability of a Dominion representative to borrow powerful artifacts.

Geomancy: A Geomancy roll can represent the availability of non-durable goods, the progress of a construction project, the accessibility of roads and waterways, the ownership of a particular piece of land, or other geographical issues.

Investigation: An Investigation roll can be useful in determining precisely what a representative of a Dominion might know, and how quickly it responds to new developments.

Larceny: A Larceny roll is good for determining the availability of black-market goods, resolving off-screen political assassinations, and targeting the characters with thefts and "business opportunities."

Negotiation: A Negotiation roll can represent the progress of a peace treaty, a given market's speculation in a particular commodity (especially currencies), and other delicate political and financial issues.

Performance: A Performance roll can represent any sort of festival or celebration. The opulence of a Dominion's Calibration party, the attendance of a particular religious service, or the number of embarrassing fatalities at a Cynis orgy can all be determined in this way.

Socialize: A Socialize roll can represent the popularity of a new trend, the susceptibility of a given population to propaganda, or the virulence of a particular rumor. It can also represent the availability of fashionable items at a particular marketplace.

War: War rolls are useful for tracking the progress of off-screen battles, but will probably also see frequent use in determining the size and effectiveness of any military response to the characters' actions.

Petitioning a Dominion

A character with the right connections and skill in Administration may be able to call upon the power of a Dominion. To do so, the character must first have standing with that Dominion (though many Dominions, particularly those that represent official government bureaucracies, will hear the petitions of any citizen). If the Dominion will listen to the character's plea, the player makes an extended (Intelligence + Administration) roll. The interval of this roll is one week, the success cost is equal to twice the cost in resources the action would take (for most undefined actions, the cost is 1-3 resource points), and the Difficulty is equal to the Dominion's (Attribute + Skill)/2 static value.

If the requested action would confirm to one of the Dominion's policies (i.e. reporting a Solar Exalt to the Wyld Hunt), the Difficulty is reduced by 3. If it would violate one of the Dominion's policies, the Difficulty increases by 3.

Blocking the petition of another is automatic if the character is in charge of the Dominion. Otherwise, the character must make an (Intelligence + Administration) roll against a Difficulty equal to the Dominion's (Attribute + Skill)/2 static value (modified by policy, if applicable). Threshold successes on this roll add to the success cost of the target petition.

Investigating Dominions and Fiefs

By taking direct action against a Dominion's fiefs, individuals may have an effect on large organizations. The main problem is that of determining what counts as a fief. If a character suspects that something may be part of a specific Dominion, the character may attempt to investigate the fief. The character rolls (Intuition + Ability) against a Difficulty equal to the Dominion's (Followers + Larceny)/2 static value or 5, if the character doesn't have a specific Dominion in mind. The Ability used is Investigation for Followers-type fiefs, Administration for Resources-type fiefs, and Socialize for Influence-type fiefs. Guessing the wrong fief-type raises the Difficulty of the roll by one. If the roll is successful, the character learns whether the fief is associated with the specific Dominion and which Dominion skill it's associated with. Those investigating without a specific Dominion in mind learn the identity of the fief's controlling Dominion, if it has one. Investigating a Dominion takes 1 week, whether the roll is successful or not.

Documents, cooperative witnesses, and other evidence can reduce the Difficulty of this roll. It is not uncommon for fiefs to explicitly declare their allegiance to a specific Dominion, though it is not always wise to take such claims at face value.

Founding a Dominion

Characters may purchase the first point of a Dominion Attribute by *investing* their personal property. If the character owns or has influence over something that could be considered a fief, that character may attempt to invest it into a Dominion. This requires a Difficulty 5 (Intelligence + Administration roll). Add a number of automatic successes equal to the number of fiefs invested. All the invested fiefs must be of the same type as each other, and as the Attribute to be raised

If the roll succeeds, the character's Dominion raises a single rated-0 Attribute (specifically, the one of the same type as the invested fiefs) to 1. In addition, for each threshold success, the character may raise one rated-0 Skill to 1. The maximum number of skill points that can be gained in this way is equal to the number of fiefs invested. If, for whatever reason, the number of Skill points gained is fewer than the number of fiefs invested, the character may distribute the excess fiefs among the Dominion's Skills however he desires. Fiefs can be associated with Rating 0 Skills.

Any Dominion that has at least one Attribute point may take part in Dominion Conflicts, though lacking any Attribute tends to create a dangerous area of vulnerability. Until the new Dominion takes part in its first conflict, it does not need to be maintained. Dominions are assumed to take care of themselves, unless attacked.

Chapter 8: The Three Worthy Disciplines

In Creation, the line between science, magic, and religion is not at all clear. With the proper dedication and effort, a human being may learn to channel essence for extraordinary effects. There are three ways in which mortals can channel essence – by shaping their internal energies with Martial Arts, exploiting the inherent properties of physical matter with Thaumaturgy, or by calling upon the occult shortcuts programmed into the world by the Primordials with Sorcery. Collectively, these ways of channeling essence are called the Three Worthy Disciplines.

Martial Arts

Human bodies (and for that matter, animal and divine bodies) run off of essence. Essence is what brings strength to the muscles and air to the lungs. The health, strength, and integrity of the body depends on a healthy flow of essence.

Most people are blind to their own essence, but it is possible, with diet, exercise, and meditation, for mortals to harness their internal power to perform extraordinary feats. These feats are represented by Martial Arts charms.

Using a Charm

There are five types of charms: simple, reflexive, supplemental, panoply, and permanent. A simple charm requires a simple action to use, a reflexive charm requires a reflexive action to use, and a supplemental charm will improve an action, be it simple, reflexive, or basic. A panoply charm grants a bonus or ability, or maintains an effect, for as long as it is attached to a panoply slot. A permanent charm's effect is always active. If a panoply or permanent charm grants an activated ability, calling upon that ability does not count as a charm use.

Characters may use only one charm at a time. Thus, the actions taken with simple and reflexive charms cannot ordinarily benefit from supplemental charms – though they can benefit from any enhancements to the character's body or mind provided by panoply or permanent charms.

Activating a Panoply type charm is usually a basic action that takes about five minutes, but if a character under duress wishes to add an effect to her panoply, she may spend a mote to do so as a speed 5 simple action. If the character's Panoply is currently full, she decides which effect to end. This rule applies to the emergency attunement of artifacts as well.

Some charms will have a willpower, health level, or mote cost. Any cost of a charm must be paid when the charm is used, and is considered spent, even if the action associated with the charm fails. Some charms will have an optional increased cost. The player must decide whether to pay any optional costs when activating the charm.

Unless otherwise stated, if a charm has a health level cost, it does one level of lethal damage to the character. This damage ignores soak. If an effect would prevent or defend against this damage, the charm's effect does not take place (a player always has the option to accept the health level cost of a charm, even if the character is otherwise immune to lethal damage).

Most charms have one or more minimum traits. If an effect would lower a character's traits to below the listed minimum, the character cannot use the charm. The character still retains knowledge of the charm, however, and immediately regains access to it if the appropriate traits are ever restored to their original ratings. Charms with the stunt-# keyword are an exception to this rule. Characters may activate these charms as part of a stunt, even if they lack the necessary minimum traits.

When pronouns are used in charm descriptions "she" and "her" refer to the *user* of the charm and "he" and "his" refer to the *target* of a charm.

Keywords

Charm keywords remove ambiguity from the interaction between charms. Charm keywords are also used to reference rules that are frequently repeated among a variety of charms.

Combo-Ok: This charm may be in a combo. A combo allows a character to use more than one charm on the same action. A combo is formed from at most a single simple or reflexive charm and one or more supplemental charms that could benefit the same action. A combo does not need to contain a simple or reflexive charm, and may contain only supplemental charms. Activating a combo costs a single point of willpower and a single mote, in addition to any costs associated with individual charms.

If a character's mote pool is not large enough to pay the full cost of a combo, the character may not learn the combo. Mortals may learn combos, but they may never purchase a combo with a mote cost greater than one.

Compulsion: Using this charm results in the target taking a particular action. For purposes of charms that reference this keyword, nonmagical compulsion effects created with a social influence attempt are considered to have the compulsion keyword. Unless otherwise stated, the mental influence created by charms with this keyword can be resisted with a single point of willpower.

Counterattack: This charm allows the character to take an action in response to a particular event. Counterattack charms are always reflexive, but the actions they grant are basic actions. If a character activates a counterattack charm in response to an attack, the action granted by the charm is resolved in step nine of the attack, unless otherwise noted (even if the charm itself is activated during a different stage of the attack).

Crippling: Any damage or penalty imposed by this charm is considered to be a crippling effect. For purposes of magic that references this keyword, all injuries that are not diseases, even those not created by magic, are considered to have the crippling keyword.

Emotion: Using this charm results in the target feeling a particular emotion. For purposes of charms that reference this keyword, nonmagical emotion effects created with a social influence attempt are considered to have the emotion keyword. Unless otherwise stated, the mental influence created by charms with this keyword can be resisted with a single point of willpower.

Environmental: Any damage or penalty created by this charm is not considered an attack, and thus a character may not apply a defense against the effect, even if the character possesses a defense which states it works against unavoidable attacks. Any resistance the character possesses is still applicable, however, as are charms that specifically state they work against effects with the environmental keyword.

Extra Action: These charms, which are always simple, allow the character to perform multiple tasks as part of the same simple action. Each dice roll associated with an extra action charm is considered its own, separate "virtual action." Without a combo, this is meaningless, because each of these virtual actions is considered to be enhanced by the simple charm that granted them. But if the character puts a charm with this keyword into a combo, the character must apply every supplemental charm in the combo to every "action" it could legally enhance.

Form-Type: The charm is considered a martial arts form. A character may only have a single form-type charm active at any given time. Form-type charms cannot be activated outside of battle and "saved" for a later time. Activating a form-type charm outside of combat is an obvious show of martial readiness and will provoke an immediate join battle roll from any nearby characters who have reason to suspect they will be attacked.

Grapple: A charm with the grapple keyword may be activated while the character is in a grapple. A grapple is a condition initiated by certain charms. A grapple has a *controller* and a *victim*. While in a grapple, both controller and victim reduce their defensive states by two and may only take wait actions or activate charms with the grapple keyword. At any time, as a reflexive speed 0 action, the controller of a grapple may release the victim.

Some charms with the grapple keyword may only be used by the controller of a grapple. Other charms may only be used by the victim of a grapple.

Illusion: Using this charm results in the target acquiring a particular belief (whether that belief is true or false). For purposes of charms that reference this keyword, nonmagical illusion effects created with a social influence attempt are considered to have the illusion keyword. Unless otherwise stated, the mental influence created by charms with this keyword can be resisted with a single point of willpower.

Knockback: Charms with this keyword forcibly move the target. The exact distance varies with the charm in question, but knockback charms always threaten to make the target fall *prone*. Prone characters lower their defensive state by one and suffer a -3 penalty to all physical actions. Rising from the prone position is a speed 1 reflexive action.

Resisting falling prone requires a (Stamina + Athletics) roll. The exact difficulty of this roll depends on the charm used.

Mind Control: Charms with the mind control keyword create a matrix of essence that directly influences the thoughts of the target. This can manifest as either a compulsion, emotion, or illusion, and charms with this keyword will also have one of those three keywords as well. Charms that lack the mind control keyword are not considered mind control, even if they influence a target's behavior, feelings, or beliefs.

Obvious: Charms with this keyword are clearly magical, and onlookers will know, even if they are not skilled in Lore, that something supernatural has taken place. Obvious charms are also the ones most likely to be documented and preserved for prosperity. The necessary minimum (Intelligence + Lore)/2 static value to identify an obvious charm is reduced by two.

Poison: Any damage or penalty imposed by this charm is considered to be poison. For purposes of magic that references this keyword, all poisons, even those not created by magic, are considered to have the poison keyword.

Shaping: The charm creates an effect that magically alters the target on a fundamental level. The changes wrought upon a person by the Wyld are considered shaping effects. Inside Creation proper, naturally occurring shaping effects are thankfully rare.

Sickness: Any damage or penalty imposed by this charm is considered to be a sickness effect. For purposes of magic that references this keyword, all diseases, even those not created by magic, are considered to have the sickness keyword.

Stackable: Multiple activations of this charm are cumulative.

Stunt-#: If the player describes a stunt with an equal or higher level than the number of the keyword, the character may use the charm without it counting as a charm activation. This can allow the character to use a second charm to benefit the action without having to activate a combo. Only a single stunt-# keyword charm can be used for free at any given time.

Characters may use stunt-# keyword charms even if the character doesn't know the charm or lacks the prerequisites or trait minimums. If the charm has an optional cost, only those that know the charm may access the optional effect.

If a charm with a stunt-# keyword is part of a martial arts style with weapons restrictions, it may be used with any weapon, provided it is accompanied by an appropriate stunt.

Touch: The charm requires the user to touch the target. Touching an unwilling target requires a (Dexterity + Unarmed) attack. If the charm's type is supplemental or reflexive, it may be used when the character makes a successful punch attack. If the charm's type is simple, the charm description will state the circumstances in which it can be used.

Charm Duration and Committed Motes

The shortest possible duration for a charm is "instant." The charm's magic lasts just long enough for the effect to take place, and then fades away. If a charm with an instant duration creates an effect, that effect lasts until character actions or surrounding circumstances would cause it to fade away. Wounds last until they are healed, and enemy is prone until he stands up, an intimacy endures until it is broken, etc.

If a charm has a duration of 1 turn, its effect ends at the end of the user's current turn.

If a charm with a greater than instant duration has a mote cost (including an optional mote cost), any motes spent on the charm remain *committed*. While a mote is committed, it cannot be regained by any means. Characters may release any and all committed motes as a reflexive, speed 0, action, but doing so instantly ends the effects of any charms powered by those motes.

Very few charms have a duration greater than one scene. Longer effects are usually the province of panoply-type charms. On those occasions when a simple, reflexive, or supplemental charm has a duration longer than one scene, the character may, at the end of the scene in which the charm is used, transfer the maintenance of the charm to a panoply slot instead.

Sorcery never requires the commitment of motes, even when it has a duration longer than instant.

Maximum Dice Bonus

No combination of charms may add more dice to a character's pool than that character's permanent Essence rating. However, if a single charm provides a bonus greater than this limit, the character may still benefit from the charm's entire bonus. This maximum does not apply to static values or damage dice pools. In addition, charms which add automatic successes may add any number of successes without limit.

The Exalted, as magical beings, often have a higher dice pool limit. Like mortals, they may add dice up to their enhanced limit or benefit from the entire bonus of a single charm. The specific limits of each Exalted type will be listed along with their charms.

Charm Prerequisites and Minimums

In order to learn a charm, a character must already know the charm's prerequisites. If some effect later causes the character to forget or lose access to a charm's prerequisites, the character can still use the charm without penalty.

By contrast, if an effect would reduce a character's Ability or Essence below the minimum necessary to learn the charm, the character retains knowledge of the charm, but cannot use it until the necessary minimums are restored. The exception to this is, of course, charms with the stunt-# keyword, which may always be used with an accompanying stunt.

Martial Arts Styles

Mortals may not invent individual charms. That level of flexibility is reserved for those for whom essence manipulation is a natural, intuitive function. For mortals to use charms, they must rigorously reshape their own essence, in accordance with certain natural magical principles. Those principles, the subject of much speculation among the wise, are known to most mortals by their most prominent application – the Martial Arts.

Every Martial Arts charm is part of a *style*. A style is a collection of thematically related charms that together represent a single, unified approach to combat. In Creation, there is an overabundance of Martial Arts styles, some of which are indistinguishable from each other to all but the most skilled of experts. While mortals cannot simply design whatever charms they please, chances are that whatever a character's combat needs, a style exists to satisfy them.

The Martial Arts styles in this chapter are suggestions. If a player is interested in charms from multiple styles, it is permissible for a player to create a custom style. There are so many regional variants of superficially similar styles, that the only limitations are player imagination and the reasonable constraint that no one style should exclusively consist of powerful charms.

When designing a custom style, it is important to remember that charms with the same name are the same charm. For example, if a character knows Fierce Blow as a result of studying Shameless Dirty Fighter style, that character need not learn it again when trying to master Soldier's Basic Training style, even though the two styles are based off of different Abilities.

Use the following guidelines when designing new charms, or when copying charms from one Ability to another. Though these suggestions are important to keep in mind, the relative difference in power levels between charms is usually narrow enough that one can be forgiving of minor missteps.

Archery: An Archery charm must consider the limitations of the weapon. A style that includes an extra-action keyword charm should not allow the use of single-shot weapons like firewands, unless it includes a way to load firewands rapidly enough to fire in quick succession. Likewise, the difference between strength-powered techniques and techniques that can enhance a mechanical weapon like a crossbow is an important one to keep in mind. Terrestrial Martial Arts rarely, if ever, provides techniques that can be used with artillery.

Brawl: Brawl is especially good with powers that rely on attacks from unexpected quarters. Because Brawl weapons are inferior to those used with Archery or Weaponry, some Brawl charms may be too strong to adapt directly to those Abilities. Storytellers should use their best judgment in allowing conversions.

Unarmed: Unarmed is the weakest combat Ability, but it is also the most versatile. Unarmed charms may be used anywhere, at any time. The versatility of Unarmed combat is paid for with power. Charms of this Ability should be roughly as powerful as those of other Abilities, but have a harder time inflicting or protecting against lethal damage.

Weaponry: The most powerful personal weapons are used with the Weaponry Ability. As a result, charms of this type tend to be weaker than their counterparts of other Abilities.

The first four Martial Arts styles in the following section represent basic, no-frills combat techniques, and are the weakest, most general charms the characters are likely to encounter. More powerful, overtly supernatural, styles exist, but they tend to have specific *style weapons:* if a charm provides or supplements an attack, the charm can only be used when the character is wielding an appropriate weapon. Some styles also have *armor limitations*: characters who wear a forbidden type of armor cannot use charms of that style. One such style, **Harmonious Fencer Style**, is presented here.

There are three levels of Martial Arts, of increasing abstraction, sophistication, and power. *Terrestrial Martial Arts* are the direct combat techniques practiced by mortals and the Terrestrial Exalted. *Celestial Martial Arts* imitate concrete, iconic principles, and are used primarily by the Celestial Exalted, though Dragon-Blooded can learn to use them, with great effort. *Sidereal Martial Arts* emulate esoteric principles, shaping the user's essence into something both bizarre and sublime. They can be used only by the Sidereal Exalted and certain rare prodigies among the most powerful supernatural beings.

Most Martial Arts are based off of the Archery, Brawl, Unarmed, or Weaponry Abilities. Some Terrestrial Martial Arts are based off of physical Abilities like Conveyance or Athletics. Some Celestial Martial Arts are based off of Abilities with less direct combat function, like Awareness or War. Sidereal Martial Arts can be based off of any Ability, though they are always primarily martial in function.

Some styles, particularly at the Celestial and Sidereal level, have style weapons which do not conform to their base Ability. In these cases, the character may use the charms of that style to supplement or provide an attack with the style weapons, but the dice pool is calculated with the Ability appropriate to the weapon. Charms from different martial arts which can affect the same weapon may be placed in a combo with each other, even if they are based off of different Abilities.

Example: The Celestial Martial Art Fire Dragon Style *is based off of the Weaponry Ability, but its style weapons are short-swords and barehanded attacks. A character may combine a supplemental charm from this style with charms from Solid Wrestler style when making barehanded attacks. Those combos use Unarmed to calculate their dice pools.*

Practiced Bowman's Style

This Martial Art, favored by both tribal hunters and special forces units, focuses on the tactical use of ranged weapons, particularly the bow. Most of its charms cannot be adapted to the use of mechanical weapons, though certain First Age weapons could theoretically benefit from these charms.

Style Weapons: Any muscle powered bow.
Armor Limitations: May be used in any armor.

Long Shot
Cost: - **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

The character can multiply the range of a bow attack by up to her (Strength). Apply a penalty to the attack roll equal to twice the range modifier. A character cannot make an attack if her dice pool is reduced below 1.

Quick Attack
Cost: - **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

Reduce the speed value of the character's attack by 1. Apply a -2 penalty to the attack. The character may use Intuition instead of Dexterity to determine the attack's dice pool.

Suppressive Fire
Cost: - **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: 1 turn
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-2
Prerequisites: Quick Attack

The character makes a (Dexterity + Archery) attack. If the attack is successful, it does no damage. Instead, the target's defensive state is lowered by one for the duration of the charm.

Cover Fire
Cost: - **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 1 **Type:** Reflexive (speed 1)
Duration: 1 tick
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-2
Prerequisites: Suppressive Fire

The character targets an ally and makes a (Dexterity + Archery) roll, adding a bonus to the roll equal to the weapon's accuracy rating. The Difficulty of the roll is the target's ADV. If the roll is successful, the target's defensive state increases by one for the current tick. If the roll botches, the target's defensive state lowers by one for the current tick.

Piercing Attack
Cost: - **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 1 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-2
Prerequisites: None

The character's attack gains the piercing tag and suffers a -5 penalty.

Practiced Bowman's Form
Cost: 1m **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2 **Type:** Simple
Duration: 1 scene
Keywords: Form-type
Prerequisites: Long Shot, Cover Fire, Piercing Attack

Until the end of the scene, the character adds a bonus equal to her Intuition rating to her raw damage when making bow attacks. He may also use Intuition instead of Dexterity for Archery dice pools.

Deadly Arrow Attack
Cost: - **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok
Prerequisites: Practiced Bowman's Form

If successful, the character's attack adds one success to the damage roll.
Spend 1m: If the attack is successful, the target's defensive state is lowered by one until the end of the target's current turn.

Shameless Dirty Fighter Style

This brutal style sacrifices safety for power, allowing the martial artist to push the advantage and destroy the enemy at his moment of greatest vulnerability.

Style Weapons: Any Brawl weapon, including improvised weapons.

Armor Limitations: May be used in any armor.

Knockdown Attack
Cost: - **Mins:** Brawl 2, Essence 1 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Knockback, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

If the character's post-soak damage dice pool is more than twice the target's Stamina, the target must make a (Stamina + Athletics) roll against a Difficulty equal to the successes on the damage roll. If the roll fails, the target is knocked prone.

Feint Attack
Cost: - **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Extra Action, Illusion, Stunt-2
Prerequisites: None

The character makes a (Manipulation + Brawl) roll with a -4 penalty against a Difficulty equal to the target's MDV, and a standard Brawl attack with a -4 penalty. If the (Manipulation + Brawl) succeeds, the Brawl attack is unexpected. The character's defensive state is reduced by one until the end of her current turn.

Fierce Attack
Cost: - **Mins:** Brawl 2, Essence 1 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

The character makes an attack that suffers a -2 penalty to the dice pool. If the attack succeeds, it receives a +3 bonus to raw damage. The character may substitute Strength for Dexterity when determining the attack's dice pool.

Twist the Knife
Cost: - **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 1 **Type:** Reflexive (speed 1, stage 6)
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: Fierce Attack

This charm is activated after a successful attack roll. The attack's raw damage receives a +2 bonus.

Berserk Onslaught
Cost: - **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 1 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-2
Prerequisites: Knockdown Attack

The target of the character's attack reduces his defensive state by two against the character's attack. The character's defensive state is reduced by two until the end of her current turn.

Shameless Dirty Fighter Form
Cost: - **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: 1 scene
Keywords: Form-type
Prerequisites: Berserk Onslaught, Twist the Knife, Feint Attack

Until the end of the scene, the gains a +3 bonus to attack rolls made against opponents suffering from 3 or more levels of lethal damage.

Joint Twisting Blow
Cost: - **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 2 **Type:** Reflexive (speed 1)
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Knockback
Prerequisites: Shameless Dirty Fighter Form

The character activates this charm when an opponent within weapon range takes a Dash action. The character makes a (Dexterity + Brawl) attack against the opponent. If the attack succeeds, the target must make a (Stamina + Athletics) roll against a Difficulty equal to the threshold successes. If the roll fails, the target falls prone.
Spend 1m: If the attack is successful, it also does its normal damage.

Solid Wrestler Style

Practitioners of this style learn to use their strength to its greatest advantage. The strikes and holds of Solid Wrestler Style can render a weak opponent helpless against the Martial Artist's might.

Style Weapons: This style may be used with any Unarmed-enhancing weapon, though only grapple-enhancers are likely to provide any benefit.

Armor Limitations: May be used in any armor.

Two-Handed Push
Cost: - **Mins:** Unarmed 2, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Knockback, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

The character makes a standard unarmed attack. The target's defensive state is lowered by one against this attack. If the attack succeeds, it does no damage. Instead, the target rolls (Stamina + Athletics) against a Difficulty equal to the attack's success total. If the roll fails, the target is knocked prone.

Shoulder Throw
Cost: - **Mins:** Unarmed 3, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Grapple, Knockback, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: Two-Handed Push

The character makes a standard unarmed attack. If the attack succeeds, the target is thrown (Strength) yards. Instead of the attack's normal damage, the target suffers one die of damage for each yard he flies, plus 3 dice of damage if strikes an object along the way. If the object the target strikes is sharp (or otherwise deadly), he suffers lethal damage instead.

The character may use this charm, even if not currently in a grapple. If the character is in a grapple, she must be the controller in order to use Shoulder Throw.

Grab and Hold
Cost: - **Mins:** Unarmed 2, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Until broken
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Grapple, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

The character makes a standard unarmed attack. If the attack succeeds, the target enters a grapple with the character. The character is the controller of the grapple and the target is the victim of the grapple.

This charm has the grapple keyword, but it may not be used if the character is already in a grapple.

Control Grapple
Cost: - Mins: Unarmed 2, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Until broken
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Grapple, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

This charm is used by the victim of the grapple. She makes a standard unarmed attack against the controller's unarmed DV (the controller may decide to use ADV or RDV, whichever is more advantageous.) If the attack succeeds, the character becomes the controller of the grapple.

Foe-Shifting Charge
Cost: - Mins: Unarmed 3, Essence 1 **Type:** Reflexive (speed 1)
Duration: 1 tick
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Grapple, Stunt-2
Prerequisites: Grab and Hold

As long as the character's opponent weighs less than the limit imposed by her (Strength + Athletics)/2 static value, she may use this charm to move up to (Dexterity) - 1 yards (minimum 1 yard). Mobility penalties from armor and equipment further reduce the distance moved with this charm.

If the victim of a grapple uses this charm on the same tick as the controller of the grapple, the victim must roll (Strength + Unarmed) roll against a Difficulty equal to the controller's Unarmed RDV + 3.

If the roll succeeds, the character becomes the controller of the grapple and decides the movement for that tick. If the roll fails, the character's opponent remains the controller, decides the movement for the tick, and gains a +3 bonus to the next action taken in the current grapple, provided it has the character as a target.

Crush Attack
Cost: - Mins: Unarmed 3, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Grapple, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: Control Grapple

The character must be the controller of a grapple to use this charm. She makes a standard Unarmed attack against the victim of the grapple. If the attack is successful, it does the victim's normal Unarmed damage +2 dice.

Solid Wrestler's Form
Cost: 1m **Mins:** Unarmed 4, Essence 2 **Type:** Simple
Duration: 1 scene
Keywords: Form-type
Prerequisites: Crush Attack, Foe-Bearing Charge, Shoulder Throw

Until the end of the scene, the character's defensive state is reduced by one instead of two if she is the controller of a grapple and any unarmed attacks she makes (including attacks provided by charms) with the grapple or knockback keywords gain the piercing tag.

Hold Evasion Technique
Cost: - **Mins:** Unarmed 5, Essence 2 **Type:** Reflexive (step 5)
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Grapple (optional: Counterattack, Knockdown)
Prerequisite: Solid Wrestler Form

The character gains +1 to RDV against attacks with the grapple keyword.
Spend 1m: If the attack this charm was used against fails, the character may counter with the charm Two-Handed Push as a basic action.

Soldier's Basic Training Style
This style, in various regional variants, is taught to military units across Creation. Though few master its most advanced techniques, the early charms of this style form the backbone of many nations' military strategy.
Style Weapons: Any Weaponry weapon.
Armor Limitations: May be used with any armor.

Onslaught Attack
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 2, Essence 1 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

The target of the character's attack lowers his defensive state by one against the attack supplemented by this charm. The character's defensive state is lowered by one until the end of her current turn.

Twin Strike
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 3, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Extra Action, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

The character can make two weaponry attacks as a single simple action. Each attack suffers a 3-die penalty. These attacks need not target the same enemy.

Offensive Flurry
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 4, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Extra Action, Stunt-2
Prerequisites: Twin Strike

The character may make up to (Stamina) attacks against one or more targets as part of the same simple action. Each attack suffers a dice pool penalty equal to twice the total number of attacks. The character may not make an attack if her dice pool is lowered below 1.
The character's defensive state is lowered by one until the end of her current turn.

Fierce Attack
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 2, Essence 1 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

The character makes an attack that suffers a -2 penalty to the dice pool. If the attack succeeds, it receives a +3 bonus to raw damage. The character may substitute Strength for Dexterity when determining the attack's dice pool.

Left-Handed Block
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 4, Essence 1 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-2
Prerequisites: None

The character must be wielding an off-hand weapon in order to use this charm. Left-Handed Block improves the character's block action. Instead of the normal one threshold success removed, the character removes a number of threshold success equal to her off-hand weapon's defense rating.

Soldier's Basic Training Form
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 4, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: 1 scene
Keywords: Form-type
Prerequisites: Onslaught Attack, Offensive Flurry, Fierce Attack, Left-Handed Block

Until the end of the scene, whenever the character participates in a coordinated attack, she adds a bonus to the attack roll equal to one half the War rating of the person initiating the coordinated attack.

Glorious Charge Technique
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 4, Essence 2 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: 1 tick
Keywords: Combo-Ok
Prerequisites: Soldier's Basic Training Form

This charm can only be used on the tick on which the character acts. It supplements a Dash action. The speed of the Dash action is 0 instead of 1.
Spend 1m: If the character makes a Weaponry attack on the tick this charm is used, the character may add a bonus equal to the weapon's damage rating to the raw damage of the attack. If the weapon has the Lance tag, the bonus provided by this charm is doubled.

Harmonious Fencer Style

This style represents a dedicated spiritual discipline as well as a deadly martial art. Practitioners of Harmonious Fencer Style seek to become one with their blades, existing only in the moment, killing without hesitation or regret. While many practitioners claim to have attained a higher mystical wisdom, there are those who suspect they may be nothing more than simple killers.
Style Weapons: One-handed swords.
Armor Limitations: Charms of this style may only be used in light armor.

Cunning Disarm
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 3, Essence 1 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-1
Prerequisites: None

With a flourish of her blade, the character directs an attack at her opponent's weapon. The attack suffers a -2 penalty. If it succeeds, it does no damage. Instead, the target must roll (Wits + Ability), where the Ability rolled is the one associated with his weapon. The Difficulty of the roll is equal to the attack's threshold successes. If the roll fails, the target is disarmed. Using this charm lowers the character's defensive state by one until the end of her current turn.

Cunning Parry
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 3, Essence 1 **Type:** Reflexive (step 5)
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Stunt-2

This charm may only be used when the character has already applied her RDV against an attack. It subtracts two successes from the attack's threshold successes. If this reduces the attack's threshold successes to zero or below, the attack fails to hit.

Instinctive Strike
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 4, Essence 2 **Type:** Supplemental
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok
Prerequisites: Cunning Disarm, Cunning Parry

The character strikes without thought. By holding nothing back, she can land a blow of extraordinary power. The character may use Intuition instead of Dexterity to make an attack. The attack adds (Intuition)/2 dice to its base damage.

Defensive Concentration
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 4, Essence 2 **Type:** Reflexive (speed 1)
Duration: 1 turn
Keywords: None
Prerequisites: Cunning Disarm, Cunning Parry

The character adopts a posture of readiness. Until the end of her current turn, she adds a +1 bonus to her RDV. Because this charm lacks the stackable keyword, the character may not activate it multiple times on the same turn.

Harmonious Fencer Form
Cost: 1m **Mins:** Weaponry 4, Essence 2 **Type:** Simple
Duration: 1 scene
Keywords: Form-Type
Prerequisites: Instinctive Strike, Defensive Concentration

The character's awareness expands, embracing the battlefield as an extension of the self. Until the end of the scene, she may use Intuition instead of Dexterity to figure her attack dice pools and instead of Strength to calculate her RDV, if such substitutions would be an improvement. In addition, she adds a +2 bonus to all sword attacks and +1 to her RDV.

Triple Strike
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 4, Essence 3 **Type:** Simple
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Extra Action
Prerequisites: Harmonious Fencer Form

Acting with astonishing speed, the character makes 3 sword attacks. Each of these attacks suffers a -3 dice pool penalty. These attacks must be directed at the same target. The character's defensive state is lowered by 1 until the end of her current turn.
Spend 1m: The attacks are not penalized, and the character's defensive state is not reduced.

Sudden Cut
Cost: - **Mins:** Weaponry 5, Essence 3 **Type:** Reflexive (step 2)
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Counterattack
Prerequisites: Triple Strike

The character responds to an attack with a well-practiced suddenness. This charm may only be used if the character applies RDV to an attack. If the attack misses, the character may make a (Wits + Weaponry) counterattack. The attack's base damage is 1L. Threshold successes add to the attack's raw damage as normal.

Spend 1m: The character may counter even a successful attack, and the counterattack's base damage is equal to her sword's damage modifier (strength still does not add to the base damage).

Disarming Feint
Cost: 1m **Mins:** Weaponry 5, Essence 3 **Type:** Reflexive (speed 1, step 2)
Duration: Instant
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Counterattack
Prerequisites: Sudden Cut

The fencer responds to an attack with finesse, disarming her opponents in the blink of an eye. A character may only use Disarming Feint if she has applied RDV to a close combat attack. Regardless of whether an attack succeeds or fails, this charm allows her to make a counterattack in step 9 (the charm's use is declared in step 2, however).

If the counterattack succeeds, it does no damage. Instead, the original attacker must make a (Wits + Ability) roll against a Difficulty equal to the counterattack's threshold successes. The Ability used in this roll is the one associated with the attacker's weapon. If the roll fails, the attacker is disarmed.

Using this charm lowers the character's defensive state by 1 until the end of her current turn. This penalty does not take effect until after the counterattack is resolved.

Sorcery

Essence flows through the world according to the laws of spirit and matter. Most of Creation's inhabitants are indifferent to these laws, content to obey and exploit them without the slightest thought to why they exist. The sorcerer is different. By studying the laws of Essence, he gains the power to work miracles.

The magic provided by sorcery is fundamentally different than that of charms. Charms harness internal energies, enhancing the natural flow of essence through the body, mind, and soul. Sorcery harnesses the essence of the world, creating effects external to the user. As a result, all but the most basic sorcery requires special initiation.

Sorcerous initiation is an intensely personal spiritual journey in which the potential sorcerer confronts his limitations and prejudices. When all is said and done, the sorcerer emerges with new insight into himself and the world, insight that allows him to harness forces most cannot imagine.

There are three levels of sorcerous initiation. Each level of initiation requires its own set of trials and tests. It is a subject of much debate among the Exalted as to whether this means there are three levels of sorcery as well. While it is a subject of much academic interest, ultimately, it does not matter. Initiation places a hard limit on the spells a sorcerer may use.

All spells have a mote cost. The weakest spells cost only a single mote. The greatest sorcerers among the Solar Exalted have yet to discover an upper limit. Anyone who is willing to put in the effort may learn and cast those spells costing between 1 and 3 motes. Larger costs require subsequent levels of initiation.

Emerald Initiation allows characters to cast Emerald Circle Spells, i.e. spells which cost between 4 and 10 motes. This level of initiation is often called the Terrestrial Circle, because it is the highest level attainable by mortals and the Terrestrial Exalted.

Sapphire Initiation allows characters to cast Sapphire Circle Spells, those which cost between 11 and 25 motes. The Sapphire Circle is often called the Celestial Circle, because it is the highest level attainable by gods and the Celestial Exalted.

Adamant Initiation allows characters to cast Adamant Circle Spells, those which cost 26 motes or more. It is also called the Solar Circle, because aside from the Primordial creators of the world, the only ones with the power to wield it have been the Solar Exalted.

The Process of Initiation

Though the higher reaches of sorcery require greater dedication and knowledge than the lower, the process of initiation is surprisingly similar throughout the three circles. Initiation into a new circle of sorcery requires a character to travel through each of the *five stations,* spiritual tests which can only be passed by those with the commitment, willpower, and seriousness necessary to wield the arts of sorcery. These tests are remarkably similar across the three circles of sorcery. While the stakes are much higher for Adamant initiation than for Emerald, the tests themselves are not much different.

There is no particular order in which the stations must be confronted, although the station of Sacrifice always comes last.

Station of Tutelage: To use sorcery, one must have a clear understanding of the world and his place in it. In order to complete this station, the would-be sorcerer must seek out another to teach him. To initiate into terrestrial sorcery, the sorcerer must learn something minor, like a new hobby. To learn solar sorcery, the sorcerer must study for many years, so that no major gaps remain in his knowledge. The Station of Tutelage is associated with the element of air, the Zenith caste, the Maiden of Secrets, and the Art of the Soul.

Station of Humility: Casting spells involves harnessing the fundamental forces of creation, forces that could destroy even the strongest of wills. In order to complete this station, the sorcerer must swallow his pride and acknowledge the existence of powers greater than himself. This test is the one that varies the least among the tiers. If it becomes more difficult, it is only a testament to the sorcerer's growing power. The Station of Tutelage is associated with the element of wood, the Dawn caste, the Maiden of Serenity, and the Art of Nature.

Station of Journeys: The laws of nature are the same, regardless of where one stands. Life is richer and more complex than what can be found in books. In order to complete this test, the sorcerer must journey to an unfamiliar place and experience life from a new perspective. The length and complexity of the journey increases with the level of initiation. The Station of Journeys is associated with the element of water, the Twilight caste, the Maiden of Journeys, and the Art of Summoning.

Station of Fear: If a spell goes wrong, terrible things can happen. A sorcerer must be able to face these terrors without hesitation. In order to complete this test, the prospective initiate must face and overcome some powerful threat. This need not be physical, but can be spiritual or psychological. As the circle of initiation increases, so does the necessary strength of the threat. The Station of Fear is associated with the element of earth, the Night caste, the Maiden of Battles, and the Art of Creation.

Station of Sacrifice: Power is not without its price. Understanding and accepting this fact is a necessary prerequisite to the development of sorcery. In order to pass through this station, the sorcerer must give up something important. The depth of the sacrifice increases with the Circle of initiation. The Station of Sacrifice is associated with the element of fire, the Eclipse Caste, the Maiden of Endings, and the Art of Cleansing.

Arts and Abilities

Sorcery is divided into five arts. These arts represent broad categories of spells, expressions of Creation's most fundamental laws. A spell's art determines which Ability is rolled during casting. In addition, each art is explicitly narrow enough to count as an Ability Specialty. Spells do not have Ability prerequisites. A sorcerer may learn individual spells without understanding the broader theory that connects them (although such a deficiency is exactly the sort of the thing that makes for a good Station of Tutelage). The only knowledge strictly necessary for the use of sorcery is the spiritual enlightenment that comes with Essence and Initiation.

The Art descriptions below outline broad tendencies. In actuality, Sorcery can do practically anything. If a spell does not appear to fall into any of the Arts, it is simply assigned to whichever Art fits best. In the course of developing new spells, sorcerers throughout the ages have stretched the Arts to the straining point.

Art of the Soul: This art can detect the hidden and invisible, and manipulate subtle and refined phenomena. Spells that reveal dematerialized spirits, translate foreign tongues, and control the mind and perceptions are part of the Art of the Soul. Spells of this Art use Awareness.

Art of Cleansing: The spells of this art restore things to the way they're supposed to be. Though its purview is narrow, its power is indispensable. A sorcerer without countermagic is a sorcerer at the mercy of his rivals. The Art of Cleansing uses the Lore Ability.

Art of Creation: The broadest and most versatile Art, the Art of Creation transforms raw essence into matter and energy. The vast majority of useful spells fall into this Art. It uses the Lore Ability.

Art of Summoning: Blurring the line between magic and religion, spells of this art communicate with, summon, and bind immaterial beings. Many of this art's greatest practitioners are priests who know no other spells. The Art of Summoning uses the Performance Ability.

Art of Nature: This art manipulates patterns in nature. Its most famous spells allow for control over the weather or the calling of herd animals, but it can do much more. At the Solar level, it can control time itself. The Art of Nature uses the Survival Ability.

Shaping Actions

In order to cast a spell, a sorcerer must take one or more *shaping actions*. The amount of time it takes to make a single shaping action varies by spell. Most are basic actions that take significant amounts of time. A few combat utility spells allow for a fast shaping action. If used in combat, sorcery penalizes a character's defensive state by 3 levels.

Without initiation, a character may only take a single shaping action, limiting the spells cast to the size of the character's mote pool. Initiation charms grant the character additional motes, at the cost of requiring lengthy shaping actions.

In order to use an initiation charm, a character must have an emptied her mote pool with a prior shaping action. She then spends a single point of willpower to take another shaping action of the same type and speed as the original shaping action. Doing so adds a number of motes to the character's pool equal to the Ability associated with the spell's Art. Appropriate specialties add to this amount.

All of the bonus motes granted by the initiation charm must be spent on the current spell. Any excess are lost. The total number of shaping actions a character may take is limited by the character's highest initiation charm.

A sorcerer may only take an initial shaping action if she has access to at least one mote, but she does not need to have a full mote pool. The initial mote spent on the first shaping action primes the effect, but once it is primed, the effect will assemble itself out of the substrate of reality – provided the sorcerer has the willpower and enlightenment to shape it as it goes along.

Example: A mortal with an Essence of 3 and a Lore of 5 possesses the Emerald Circle Initiation charm, which allows a sorcerer to take a single extra shaping action. Assuming she has a full mote pool, she can cast a 3m spell as a single shaping action.

Alternatively, if she wishes to cast a 5m Creation spell, she must spend 3m on the first shaping action (emptying her pool). Then she may spend a point of willpower to take a second shaping action. This grants her an additional 5m. She then spends two of those to cast the spell, and the remainder are lost.

If she had spent 2m previously in the scene, and wished to cast a 5m spell, she could spend 1m on the initial shaping action (emptying her pool). Then she may spend a willpower point to take a second shaping action, granting her 5 additional motes. She can spend 4 of those motes to cast the spell, wasting 1. If the spell had cost 7m or more, she could not have cast it.

Because she can take only one extra shaping action, spells that cost 9m or more are impossible for her to cast.

Initiation Charms

The following charms may only be learned by people who have completed the five stations of initiation. A single sorcerer must repeat the initiation process for each such charm she wishes to learn. Because of the power levels involved, the tests become more extreme the deeper into sorcery a person delves. Any character may learn spells costing 3m or less without any initiation at all.

Terrestrial Circle Initiation
Cost: - **Mins:** Essence 3 **Type:** Permanent
Duration: Permanent
Keywords: None
Prerequisites: None

The character has completed the five stations and is initiated into the arts of sorcery. She may now learn and cast spells costing between 4 and 10 motes. In addition, she may spend a willpower point to take a single additional shaping action (for a total of 2).

Celestial Circle Initiation
Cost: - **Mins:** Essence 4 **Type:** Permanent
Duration: Permanent
Keywords: None
Prerequisites: Terrestrial Circle Initiation

The character has faced another, more stringent initiation, confronting more difficult tests of character and making even greater sacrifices. She may now learn and cast spells costing between 11 and 25 motes. In addition, by spending 1 willpower point per action, she may take up to 3 additional shaping actions beyond what she could with Terrestrial Initiation (for a total of 5).

This charm may only be learned by the Celestial Exalted, the greater gods, and other beings of similarly overwhelming power.

Solar Circle Initiation
Cost: - **Mins:** Essence 5 **Type:** Permanent
Duration: Permanent
Keywords: None
Prerequisites: Celestial Circle Initiation

The character has braced with trials and sacrifices of the sort epics are written about. She may now learn and cast spells that cost 26 motes or more. In addition, so long as she spends 1 willpower point per action, there is no limit to the number of additional shaping actions she may take.

This charm may only be learned by Primordials, Solar Exalted, and creatures of singularly transcendent power.

Creating New Spells

A character may invent new spells, provided their mote cost falls within the range that she may cast, given her level of initiation. Doing so is an extended action. Regardless of the Art, the character rolls (Intelligence + Lore), but is able to add Art specialties from other Abilities. The Difficulty is 3 for Terrestrial Spells (those costing between 1-10 motes), 4 for Celestial Spells (those costing between 11-25 motes), and 5 for Solar Spells (those costing 26 motes or more). The Interval is one month. The success cost is equal to the total mote cost of the spell.

All new spells fall into one of the five Arts. Though the Arts may seem narrow, sorcery can do practically anything. If a spell does not appear to belong to one of the Arts, it is assigned to whichever Art is closest.

Ritual Casting

Characters do not need high Abilities to learn spells. Even those of the higher Circles don't require specific knowledge so much as general spiritual enlightenment. Without Abilities, a sorcerer learns the specific spells by rote. This is especially likely among mortals who learn pre-initiate spells. Folklore and tradition preserve the techniques, but the theory is a matter for lost sciences.

In these cases, sorcerers may replace motes with certain ritual behaviors. Any number of motes may be replaced, even up into the hundreds required for the greatest Solar Circle Spells, though the grand rituals required are hugely difficult to arrange.

The general principle behind ritual casting is that even unenlightened mortals possess a single mote of essence, though they do not know how to access it. The techniques of ritual casting exist to liberate those motes. This makes them especially popular among priests, who use them to bring communities closer to their god.

There are three main types of ritual casting:

Blood Sacrifice: Essence is life and life is essence. By spilling blood, the sorcerer may make use of the essence of life. Killing any sort of animal liberates a single mote. Inflicting a single health level of lethal damage to a human is enough to grant a single mote. Killing a human liberates three motes. Though it is possible to carefully harvest essence from multiple people, those who favor blood sacrifice do not always understand the mathematics of the transaction. Some communities rely on human sacrifice beyond what is strictly necessary.

Ecstatic Worship: An individual who lacks access to her own essence pool may spend a willpower point to make a (Charisma + Integrity) roll against a Difficulty of 4 to spend their mote. Doing so causes the individual to lose consciousness. Very few mortals can attempt this without channeling a virtue. When leading a large group of minor characters in an ecstatic ritual, subtract 4 from the average (Charisma + Integrity)/2 static value, add in the highest average Virtue, and multiply by the group's magnitude. (The formula: Magnitude x [{Charisma + Integrity}/2 + Virtue − 4]) This is the number of motes the sorcerer gets with each shaping action. If the result is 0 or less, the sorcerer gains a number of motes equal to the Magnitude/2 with each shaping action, but leaves her followers utterly drained of willpower.

Group Casting: If the sorcerer has the aid of other sorcerers who know the same spell, each sorcerer beyond the first adds one mote per level of initiation (minimum of 1) to the amount gained from each shaping roll.

Pre-Initiate Spells

These spells, costing between 1 and 3 motes, are used by mystics, shamans, and priests throughout Creation. They include practical effects, such as perceiving immaterial spirits and calling herd animals, as well as more ephemeral abilities, such as communicating with the gods through prayer. Though they are not glamorous, they form the backbone of many of Creation's civilizations.

Reveal Dematerialized
Cost: 1m **Art:** Soul
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: 5 minutes

By circling an area, up to (Essence) x 10 yards in diameter, the sorcerer creates an energy which glows in the presence of dematerialized spirits. The player rolls (Intelligence + Awareness), adding a number of successes equal to her Essence score. Any immaterial creature with a (Charisma + Stealth)/2 static value less than the success total is revealed, so long as it is in the area. This field of energy lasts until the end of the scene.

Essence Sight
Cost: 1m **Art:** Soul
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: 5 minutes

The sorcerer paces an area up to (Essence) x 10 yards in diameter. All magical effects, including artifacts and permanent charms, are revealed by a soft, glowing light. The character rolls (Intelligence + Awareness), adding a number of successes equal to her Essence score. If another effect opposes this one, the originator applies the success total as a Difficulty on the roll. Essence Sight lasts for a single scene.

Follow the Dragon Lines
Cost: 1m **Art:** Soul
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: 1 minute

The character can empower a jade needle, making it point towards sources of essence. The character rolls (Intelligence + Awareness), detecting Demesnes at a number of miles equal to the motes they provide, plus the roll's success total, and Manses at (motes provided + success total) x 50 yards. In addition, the character can always know the direction towards any of the elemental poles.

Dream Bridge
Cost: 3m **Art:** Soul
Keywords: Illusion, Mind Control, Obvious
Shaping Action: 1 hour

By weaving the threads of connection between one soul and another, the sorcerer may enter a victim's dreams. To do so, she must roll (Manipulation + Awareness), adding a number of successes equal to her permanent Essence, applying the target's MDV as a penalty. If the roll succeeds, the sorcerer may alter the target's dreams.

Doing so allows her to make one influence attempt that completely bypasses the target's MDV. This attempt uses Presence, Negotiation, or Deception as normal. If the attempt creates a compulsion or emotion, this spell gains the appropriate keyword.

Because the victim is not aware of the source of the influence, it takes a deeper hold than usual. It costs two willpower points to resist. The victim may only spend these points when the influence actually comes into play.

To use Dream Bridge, the sorcerer must stand over the sleeping body of the victim. If she possesses an arcane link to the target (usually in the form of a separated body part or emotionally meaningful possession), the range extends to (Essence) miles.

Commune with the Divine
Cost: 2m **Art:** Summoning
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: 30 minutes

Through the act of formalized prayer, the character may send a message to a god, elemental, or demon. The specific entity to be contacted must be named as the spell is cast. The character rolls (Charisma + Performance) against a Difficulty equal to the target's Essence + 3. If the character is a priest of the spirit in question, the Difficulty is reduced by 1.

If the roll succeeds, the sorcerer may speak to the spirit for up to five minutes. This is a long enough time to make a single influence attempt. If the sorcerer attempts a compulsion, emotion, or illusion, this spell gains the appropriate keyword. This communication is usually one way.

Many spirits have magic that allow them to return communication, manifest charms at the sorcerer's location, or even allow them to possess the sorcerer. The particularly devout often caste this spell explicitly for this reason.

Versions of this spell exist which can communicate with only a single specific entity. A spell of this sort adds (essence) successes to the activation roll. Even aside from this benefit, specific versions of Commune with the Divine can bypass the machinery of the Celestial Bureaucracy. Prayers made with the general spell towards important gods are often heard and answered by those gods' subordinates.

Call the Spirit
Cost: 3m **Art:** Summoning
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: 1 hour
The sorcerer casts out a thread of essence, opening a connection between herself and a god, elemental, or demon. The character makes an (Intuition + Performance) against a Difficulty equal to the target's Essence + 5. If the character is a priest of the spirit in question, the Difficulty is one less.
If the roll succeeds, the target gets an intuitive sense of who the sorcerer is and why its presence is desired. If it wishes to travel to the sorcerer's location, it may spend a single mote to be instantly transported via Elsewhere – even if it has no movement powers of its own. If it does not wish to travel to the sorcerer, this spell immediately ends.
Versions of this spell exist which target specific entities. These versions of the spell add the sorcerer's (Essence) in successes to the activation roll.

Call to the Herd
Cost: 2m **Art:** Nature
Keywords: Compulsion, Mind Control, Obvious
Shaping Action: 30 minutes

This spell is favored by those who make their living from hunting, though it is also used as a dread curse by sorcerers out for revenge. Through its power, the sorcerer may call to the wild animals, drawing them to a single location.
When this spell is cast, the sorcerer chooses a species of animal and rolls (Charisma + Survival). Every animal of the appropriate type within (Essence) miles, up to the success total of the roll x 10 (the storyteller may adjust this number for larger or smaller species), is compelled to travel to the character's location to the best of its ability. Because animals are not sentient, they never resist this compulsion with willpower.
Versions of this spell exist which only call to a single, specific species. These versions have an area of effect twice as large as the general version, and add the sorcerer's permanent essence in automatic successes to the activation roll.

Command Animal
Cost: 1m **Art:** Nature
Keywords: Compulsion, Mind Control, Obvious
Shaping Action: Speed 5 simple action (five seconds)

The sorcerer issues a single telepathic command to any one nonsentient animal. If she makes a (Charisma + Survival) roll against a Difficulty equal to the animal's command rating, the command will be obeyed. The animal need not understand the meaning of the command, but it should not be too complex. It should be able to be completed in no more than one simple action per threshold success.

Versions of this spell exist which only affect a single, specific species. These versions add the sorcerer's permanent essence as automatic successes to the activation roll.

Sagacious Forecast
Cost: 1m **Art:** Nature
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: 1 minute

The character looks into the patterns of atmospheric essence and rolls (Intelligence + Survival). She learns the planned weather for a number of days in advance equal to the success total of the activation roll.

Shape Weather
Cost: 3m **Art:** Nature
Keywords: Obvious, Shaping
Shaping Action: 30 minutes

The Primordials, when they forged Creation, incorporated into it certain maintenance procedures, the better to allow the gods to keep order without disturbing their masters. This spell taps into some of those procedures, giving the sorcerer the power to manipulate the weather.

When casting this spell, the sorcerer rolls (Intelligence + Survival). The success total of the roll determines how much the weather changes. One success allows for minor changes: still air becomes a light breeze, small clouds can be banished, temperature changes by a few degrees.

Three successes allow for significant changes. Rain can be summoned from a cloudless sky. A gale can be be stifled into stillness. A small snowfall can become a blizzard.

Five successes allow for major changes. The only limitation is that the sorcerer cannot create weather out of season. The sorcerer can create the most extreme snowstorm or heatwave possible, but may not create a snowstorm in summer or a heatwave in winter. Disaster scale weather can be created in the appropriate season, but such major changes tend to draw objections from the terrestrial gods.

Using this spell theoretically allows the sorcerer to contradict the plans of the Bureau of Seasons, but for important projects, the Bureau tends to back up its wishes with sorcery of its own. The required success total to shape the weather might, in some circumstances, be higher or lower than the default. Given their innate authority, gods of the bureau and the celestial exalted always use the default number of successes.

Exorcism
Cost: 2m **Art:** Cleansing
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: 1 hour

Some spirits have the power to usurp and inhabit another's body. This spell can eject them. At the end of the shaping action, the sorcerer makes a (Charisma + Lore) roll, against a Difficulty equal to the possessing spirit's permanent Essence. If the roll succeeds, the spirit is forced to leave the stolen body. The spirit may resist this by spending a number of willpower points equal to the roll's threshold successes. Some powerful spirits have charms which can alter this cost, or even inflict a retaliatory penalty on the sorcerer. Such are the dangers of being an exorcist.

Versions of this spell exist which only affect specific types of spirit. These versions add the caster's Essence in automatic successes to the activation roll.

Ghostlight Halo
Cost: 1m **Art:** Creation
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: Speed 5 Simple Action

This simple little ritual may not be glamorous, but many sorcerers find it useful When cast, it creates between 2 and 5 fist-sized orbs of light, which orbit lazily around the sorcerer's head. They illuminate an area (Essence x 10) yards in radius with the equivalent of bright torchlight. The orbs endure for one scene.

Terrestrial Circle Spells

These spells, costing between 4 and 10 motes, can only be used by those who have completed the rites of initiation. Because of the incredible power of this magic, those who wield it tend to achieve high rank and great temporal power.

Emerald Countermagic
Cost: Up to 5m **Art:** Cleansing
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: Speed 1 Reflexive Action

The arts of sorcery offer incredible power to change the world, but the changes wrought by sorcerers are not always for the better. With this spell, a sorcerer may end any currently active sorcery effect with a mote cost of 10 or less. This is a normal spell and does not require a roll.

Emerald Countermagic may also protect the sorcerer herself from spells of the Terrestrial circle or lower. Doing so costs 5 motes, or the entirety of her current mote pool, whichever is less. Like all sorcery, this has a minimum cost of 1m. A sorcerer so protected nullifies every spell costing 10m or less that would either target her or include her in an area of effect until the beginning of her next turn.

Spells nullified by Emerald Countermagic do not necessarily fizzle away harmlessly. Instead, they produce a backlash of power proportional to their mote cost. One mote spells my be entirely snuffed out, but the mightiest Emerald spells are capable of causing burns, temporary blindness, and nausea, even after their primary effects have been suppressed.

Death of Obsidian Butterflies
Cost: 4m **Art:** Creation
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: Speed 5 Simple Action

This spell creates a massive swarm of razor-edged obsidian butterflies. Upon completion of the final shaping action, they burst forth from the sorcerer's hands in a mass 30 yards across, 10 yards high, and 100 yards deep. The player rolls (Intuition + Lore), adding Essence automatic successes to the roll. The success total of the roll is applied as an attack against everyone in within the area. The base damage of this attack is 8L, with threshold successes adding to the raw damage as normal.

Used in war, this spell has the Artillery-3 tag.

Impenetrable Frost Barrier
Cost: 5m **Art:** Creation
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: Speed 5 Simple Action

       The caster is surrounded by a cold, grayish mist which extends out to about (essence) x 5 yards. The mist clings to any sort of rapidly moving object, slowing it considerably. Ranged attacks which pass through the mist increase their Difficulty by twice the caster's (Essence). Hand to hand attacks increase their Difficulty by the caster's (Essence). Anyone taking a Dash action through the mist lowers their speed by the caster's (Essence).
       Ultimately though, the mist is fairly weak. It does not penalize ranged attacks with the Artillery tag or characters with a strength of 6 or greater. The mist lasts for an entire scene (about 20 minutes).

Invulnerable Skin of Bronze
Cost: 5m **Art:** Creation
Keywords: Obvious, Shaping
Shaping Action: Speed 5 Simple Action

       This spell transforms the caster's skin, giving it the strength of hardened bronze without sacrificing any of its inherent flexibility. Until the next dawn or dusk (whichever comes first), increase the character's soak by 6B/6L. In addition, the character gains 6 hardness against all attacks which do not do aggravated damage. This spell does not impede the character's movement, but it does increase her weight by 100 lbs.

Infallible Messenger
Cost: 4m **Art:** Summoning
Keywords: Obvious
Shaping Action: 1 minute

       This spell summons a minor messenger spirit. The character may name a target anywhere within the same reality (Creation, Yu Shan, the Underworld, Malfeas), the spirit summoned by this spell will take a message up to five minutes in length to the target, provided the target's location is not magically obscured. The spirit travels at roughly 1000 miles per hour, and will deliver the message in the caster's voice, if desired. It will then wait for a response, up to five minutes in length, and return to the caster with a similar speed.
       The exact appearance of the messenger will vary, depending upon the reality in which it is summoned, but it will always be a small, winged humanoid, no more than two feet tall. Some sorcerers have developed alternate versions of this spell, which shape the messenger into a particular form, unique to the sorcerer. These versions cost an additional mote to cast.

Summon Demon of the First Circle
Cost: 5m, 0+ willpower **Art:** Summoning
Keywords: Compulsion, Mind Control, Obvious
Shaping Action: 2 hours

This dark magic is one of the spoils of the Primordial War. Starting at least 2 hours before midnight, the character begins weaving a matrix of essence, opening a dread portal to the city of Malfeas. As midnight falls, a first circle demon of the character's choosing appears before the sorcerer. Due to the oaths of surrender made at the end of that war, the demon is bound to serve the Exalted – if the sorcerer has the strength of will to dominate it.

Once the demon appears, the character begins an extended (Composure + Performance) roll, adding her Essence as a bonus to the dice pool. The Interval of the roll is 1 hour, the Difficulty is the Demon's MDV, and the success cost is 5. If the success cost rises to above 10, or if it is not completed by dawn (after 5 rolls), the demon is unbound, free to take whatever revenge it feels capable of. If the sorcerer is powerful enough, it might still make a deal for inscrutable reasons of its own.

After the final shaping action, the sorcerer may spend one or more points of willpower. Each willpower point spent reduces the Difficulty of the extend action by one.

If the extended roll succeeds, the demon's mind is dominated. It suffers a compulsion to either serve the sorcerer faithfully for a year and a day or to complete one task of the sorcerer's choosing, regardless of how long it might take. The demon may not spend willpower to resist this compulsion.

Only the Exalted and certain Celestial deities may cast this spell. This is not a matter of power, but of the oaths sworn at the defeat of the primordials. More potent versions of this spell exist in the Celestial and Solar circles, which can summon the souls of the Yozis themselves.

Summon Elemental
Cost: 4m, 0+ willpower **Art:** Summoning
Keywords: Obvious, Compulsion, Mind Control
Shaping Action: 2 hours

Elementals were created to serve the gods. This charm is one manifestation of this subservient role. Summon Elemental may be cast by any god or Exalt, and no one else.

Mechanically, this spell works very similarly to Demon of the First Circle. Unlike that spell, it may be cast at any time of day, (and thus only fails if the success cost rises to 10) – the elemental will arrive once the final shaping action is complete. Furthermore, the elemental will serve the caster for only one lunar month, or carry out any task that can be completed in less than a year and a day.

Powerful elementals (Essence 6+) have the authority to substitute a subordinate instead of answering this summons. If a powerful elemental decides to answer a summons nonetheless, it gains no special immunity to the compulsion effect.

Stormwind Rider
Cost: 5m **Art:** Nature
Keyword: Obvious, Shaping
Shaping Action: 5 minutes

This particularly clever bit of weather manipulation creates a small, personalized whirlwind, roughly 30 feet tall, and 50 feet across. This whirlwind is strong enough to pick up the sorcerer and up to (Essence x 200) pounds worth of passengers and equipment, but gentle enough to traverse the landscape without causing serious damage.

The whirlwind created by this spell travels at 100 miles per hour (or roughly 45 yards per tick). Controlling it in combat is a speed 1 reflexive action. The whirlwind lasts until the sorcerer steps foot upon the ground.

Passengers can see out of the whirlwind, but it is not a clear view. The noise is even worse. Penalize vision and hearing-based Awareness static values by 2. Furthermore, all attacks passing into or out of the whirlwind suffer a 2-point dice pool penalty. This penalty is doubled for ranged attacks.

Thaumaturgy

The third of the Worthy Disciplines is Thaumaturgy. Thaumaturgy is the science of aligning the essence within physical matter, bringing it into harmony with itself and the world around it. Unlike Martial Arts and Sorcery, which are studies of essence in motion, Thaumaturgy is the study of essence at rest. The miracles it creates are objects of wonder, whose powers rest in their amazing physical and spiritual properties.

In Creation, the line between magical and non-magical is practically nonexistent. The village blacksmith who hammers out a blunt iron sword is practicing a Thaumaturgical ritual every bit as much as the might Solar Exalted who painstakingly assembles an airship from orichalcum clockwork and slain demons. The magic of Thaumaturgy is that of folding essence into matter.

The Sciences of Thaumaturgy

There are three Thaumaturgical Sciences, each focused on the creation of a different type of physical wonder. *Enchanting* is the science of creating useful tools – clothes, weapons, vehicles, etc. It primarily uses the Forgecraft Ability, but will sometimes use the Survival Ability. Use Forgecraft when enchanting durable materials like metal, wood, and stone. Use Survival when enchanting soft material like fabric or animal hide.

Alchemy is the science of creating useful medicines and drugs. It always uses the Medicine Ability.

Architecture is the science of manipulating essence flows in large-scale construction and landscaping. Its most potent application is in the creation of magical buildings called Manses, but a skilled Architect can design a building that carries with it good luck, wards against unwanted spiritual visitors, or inspires awe in those who visit it. It always uses the Geomancy Ability.

Like Martial Arts and Sorcery, Thaumaturgy is divided into three levels: Terrestrial, Celestial, and Solar. Every science has an equivalent at each of the three levels. Terrestrial Thaumaturgy, usable by mortals and the Dragon-Blooded, creates mostly mundane objects, things which can greatly enhance the effectiveness of the user, but which do not add dramatically new capabilities.

Celestial Thaumaturgy, usable by gods and the Celestial Exalted, can create wonders of incredible power. These items do more than simply enhance a person's capabilities, they have the power to grant a person new capabilities, or to generate their own magical effects. The main limit on Celestial Thaumaturgy is one of scope. Items created with it can only affect a limited area or a small number of people.

Solar Thaumaturgy is usable only by the Solar Exalted, and creatures of similarly extraordinary power. It has no known theoretical limits. A typical product of Solar Thaumaturgy can shape the destiny of nations.

Item Ratings

Each level of Thaumaturgy is further subdivided. Every object that can be created at a particular level is assigned a *rating* between one and five. A rating exists to differentiate between the relative power levels of artifacts within a particular level of Thaumaturgy. This will help determine how difficult it is to invent and build a particular item.

Formulas and Crafting

For any particular thing a character might wish to build with Thaumaturgy, there exists a *Formula*. A formula is a series of instructions and procedures that the Thaumaturge must follow to create an item. Formulas have several mechanical aspects. The *Rating* of a formula is based on how powerful the item is. It is mostly irrelevant, but becomes important if a character wishes to create new formulas.

The *Ability Minimum* of a formula is the minimum Ability a thaumaturge must possess in order to learn the formula. For terrestrial Thaumaturgy, this is usually, but not always, the same as the formula's rating. Different formulas exist which produce identical objects, but have different Ability minimums. These are the result of deliberate attempts throughout history to simplify the instructions of a particular formula so as to make it accessible to the less skilled. As an exception to the general rule, specialties will increase a character's effective Ability for purposes of learning a formula, but only if the final product falls under the specialty's purview. Specialties never aid in the learning of general formulas.

The *Base Time* of a formula is how long it typically takes to build the object. The actual time it takes will vary depending on the threshold successes of the crafting roll.

The *Difficulty* of a formula is the Difficulty of the crafting roll. The Difficulty of a formula is related to, but not dependent on, the formula's rating. Often, a formula will have a higher Difficulty in order to offset a lower Ability Minimum or Base Time.

The *Time Adjustment* is the interval that is added to or subtracted from the base time, depending on the roll's threshold successes. Each positive threshold success subtracts the Time Adjustment from the Base Time. Each negative threshold success adds the Time Adjustment. The total amount of time it takes to build an item is determined by a single crafting roll.

Cost: A formula's cost is represented by a cost per time interval. The longer it takes to build the object, the more resources are spent on creating the object. The cost of most Terrestrial Thaumaturgy is negligible, but Celestial Thaumaturgy can cost many talents worth of magical materials, and Solar Thaumaturgy can cost an untold amount of exotic ingredients.

Crafting Rolls

If a character knows a formula, and wishes to make an object of Thaumaturgy, she may make a *crafting roll.* A player makes only a single crafting roll per object. Crafting rolls are usually (Dexterity + Ability) for Enchanting, and (Intelligence + Ability) for Alchemy and Architecture. Equipment is a common bonus to crafting rolls.

When a crafting roll is made, subtract the formula's Difficulty from its success total. If there is a positive success threshold leftover, then multiply the success threshold by the formula's Time Adjustment and *subtract* from the formula's base time. That is how long it takes to build the object. If the threshold successes would reduce the total time to zero, the crafting takes an amount of time equal to half the formula's Time Adjustment (some formulas may have an alternate minimum time, in which case, follow the text of the formula).

If the crafting roll fails to beat the formula's Difficulty, but achieves a success total of at least one, then the character may still make the the object, but complications have forced the crafting to take longer than usual. Subtract the success total from the formula's Difficulty to determine the negative threshold successes. Multiply that amount by the formula's Time Adjustment and *add* the result to the formula's Base Time. That is how long it takes to make the object.

To determine the cost of making an object, multiply the formula's cost by the time it takes to finish. If the character lacks the ability to pay the entire cost, the crafting roll is considered *interrupted* at the point at which the money runs out. Rules for what happens with an interrupted crafting roll are found in the next section. Regardless of how long it takes, the minimum cost to make an object is the cost over one interval (costs are always expressed as a cost per interval.)

Ordinarily, simply knowing the formula is enough to succeed eventually. However, if a crafting roll achieves a success total of 0, or 10 or more negative threshold successes (possible only for formulas with a Difficulty of 11 or more), the character is simply unable to complete the object. She wastes time and money appropriate to the formula's Base Time before she realizes this.

Example: Maiden Tea is a rating-3 formula of Terrestrial Alchemy. It has a Base Time of 6 hours, a Difficulty of 3, and a Time Adjustment of 1 hour. Normally, its cost is negligible, but for purposes of this illustration, it has cost measured in "leaves." For each hour the crafting takes, the thaumaturge uses one leaf from a rare plant. So the cost is 1 leaf/hour.

If the character rolled 3 successes on the (Intelligence + Medicine) roll, she would have a threshold success of 0, and thus no time adjustment. She would spend 6 hours (the base time) and 6 leaves (at 1 leaf per hour) to get 1 dose of maiden tea.

If the thaumaturge had rolled really well and achieved 5 successes, her threshold successes would have been 2. Thus, she would have reduced the base time by twice the Time Adjustment (2 x 1 hour = 2 hours). She would then spend 4 hours and 4 leaves to get one dose of maiden tea.

Had the thaumaturge rolled poorly, and only achieved 1 success, she would have had a negative success total of 2. Thus, she would have increased the base time by twice the Time Adjustment. She would spend 8 hours and 8 leaves to get one dose of maiden tea.

Had the thaumaturge rolled impossibly well, and achieved 9 successes, she would have had 6 threshold successes. Theoretically, this would mean that she creates the tea in no time at all, but actually, when the base time would be reduced to 0, the crafting takes half of a single Time Adjustment interval. Similarly, the minimum cost is always the cost of one full interval. Thus, she spends one half-hour and one leaf to get one dose of maiden tea.

Had the thaumaturge rolled especially poorly, and achieved 0 successes, she would have failed to make anything at all. She would have spent 6 hours (the base time) and 6 leaves (the cost for the base time) and gotten no maiden tea at all.

Interrupted Crafting

If the thaumaturge must stop work, for whatever reason, she must pay the cost appropriate to the amount of time that has passed (if the character would run out of money, work automatically stops). Make a note of the time remaining. If the character wishes to continue work at a later point, she must make a new crafting roll, at the original Difficulty + 1 for each prior interruption, treating the remaining time as the formula's base time. If the crafting is interrupted before one Time Adjustment interval has passed, she must still pay the minimum cost.

Tools

To perform any form of Thaumaturgy, a character needs the proper tools. Without at least improvised tools, the character cannot attempt a crafting roll at all. Improper tools impose a penalty, based on how deficient they are. This penalty is usually equal to the (Rating + 3) for Terrestrial Thaumaturgy. Celestial and Solar Thaumaturgy have much harsher penalties. Tools appropriate to the task remove this penalty. Some even add a bonus.

Terrestrial Thaumaturgy requires basic tools, made with a rating 1 Enchanting ritual. Celestial Thaumaturgy requires perfect tools, made with rating 4 Enchanting. Solar Thaumaturgy requires tools which are themselves potent Celestial wonders.

Black Boxes

A character does not need to know a formula to use it. If she finds a recorded formula (whether written in a book, on a telepathic essence broadcaster, or carved in the side of a mountain), she may use that formula, provided her appropriate Ability is at least 1 point higher than the formula's Ability minimum. Doing so doubles the formula's Difficulty and cost.

The March of Progress

Earlier, it was stated that mortals and Dragon-Blooded could not build Celestial or Solar artifacts. That is not strictly true. While they lack the intuitive awareness of essence that makes those levels of Thaumaturgy instinctive, it is nonetheless the case that all Thaumaturgy is technology, and technology tends to be additive.

Provided they have the proper formulas, mortals may make a rating 1 celestial artifact by combining 5 rating 5 terrestrial artifacts. And they may make a rating 2 celestial artifact by combining 5 rating 1 celestial artifacts. This pattern may continue up into the highest levels of Thaumaturgy. By assembling 5 artifacts of the previous level, anyone may make an artifact of any level. Theoretically, this means that mortals, working on their own, could make a rating 5 solar artifact – provided they have the 9,765, 625 unique rating 5 terrestrial formulas to make it work.

The process for inventing a new Celestial or Solar formula is the same as inventing a rating 5 terrestrial formula, except the Difficulty increases by 1 for each rating by which the final desired artifact exceeds the character's normal limit (celestial artifacts are considered rating 6-10 terrestrial artifacts, and solar artifacts are considered rating 11-15 terrestrial artifacts). The character must invent one unique terrestrial formula for each necessary artifact.

Celestial thaumaturges may use this same process to invent and create solar formulas. They may create unique rating 5 celestial formulas, if desired. In addition, any higher level thaumaturge may, if desired, limit herself to creating formulas in this way. Usually, this is done when a powerful Exalt wishes to create technology that can be built and maintained by underlings.

Creating New Formulas

Creating a new formula is an extended roll. If the character is improving or reverse engineering an existing design, she rolls (Intelligence + Ability). If she is attempting to boldly forge into unexplored territory and create something genuinely new, she rolls (Intuition + Ability). The Difficulty of this roll is 1 for Terrestrial Thaumaturgy, 3 for Celestial Thaumaturgy, and 5 for Solar Thaumaturgy. The success cost is (Rating) for Terrestrial Thaumaturgy, (Rating x 5) for Celestial Thaumaturgy, and (Rating x 25) for Solar Thaumaturgy. The interval is 1 week for Terrestrial Thaumaturgy, 1 month for Celestial Thaumaturgy, and 1 year for Solar Thaumaturgy.

The particular characteristics of a given formula are not necessarily set in stone. Assume the base characteristics appropriate to the formula's rating. Characters may reduce the formula's Difficulty or Ability Rating by increasing the design roll's Difficulty by 2 per level of adjustment. Increasing the Difficulty of the design roll by 3 can halve the cost, but that can only be done once.

Similarly, the character can decrease the Difficulty of the design roll by doubling the formula's base time or cost. Each doubling decreases the Difficulty of the design roll by one. Doubling a negligible cost increases it to 1 money/day.

Once the extended roll is complete, the character has a written record of the formula, but does not know it. If the formula's Ability minimum is at least one less than the character's Ability, she may use it according to the normal rules (double the formula's Difficulty and cost). Otherwise, she may not use the formula until she spends the experience points necessary to learn it.

Generic Terrestrial Alchemy Formulas

Rating	Medicine Minimum	Difficulty	Base Time	Time Adjustment	Cost
1	1	6	60 minutes	10 minutes	negligible
2	2	6	120 minutes	20 minutes	negligible
3	3	6	6 hours	1 hour	negligible
4	4	6	24 hours	2 hours	negligible
5	5	6	72 hours	6 hours	1 money / 24 hours

Generic Terrestrial Architecture Formulas

Rating	Minimum Geomancy	Difficulty	Base Time	Time Adjustment	Cost
1	1	6	7 days	1 day	1 money/week
2	2	6	14 days	2 days	1 money/week
3	3	6	6 weeks	1 week	1 money/week
4	4	6	6 months	1 month	5 money/month
5	5	6	15 months	2 months	10 money/month

Generic Terrestrial Enchanting Formulas

Rating	Minimum Forgecraft	Difficulty	Base Time	Time Adjustment	Cost
1	1	6	6 hours	1 hour	negligible
2	2	6	12 hours	2 hours	negligible
3	3	6	6 days	1 day	1 money/ 5 days
4	4	6	12 days	2 days	1 money/ 3 days
5	5	6	6 weeks	1 week	5 money/ week

For Celestial Thaumaturgy, the Minimum Ability is equal to the (rating + 3), the base Difficulty is 9, and the Base Time and Time Adjustment, are doubled. For Solar Thaumaturgy, the Minimum Ability is equal to the (rating + 5), the base Difficulty is 12, and the Base Time and Time Adjustment are multiplied by 5. The costs of Celestial and Solar Thaumaturgy are often multiple talents of magical materials or exotic components shaped from the wyld.

Group Research

Additional researchers can help develop thaumaturgical formulas. When working in a group, declare one character the *Lead Researcher*. The design roll uses the Lead Researcher's traits as a base. The other people working on the research are called *assistants*. A give lead researcher may benefit from a number of assistants equal to his (Composure + Administration)/2 static value. Each assistant who possesses an Ability equal to the design roll's Ability minimum provides 2 bonus dice. Each assistant who possesses an Abilty rating no less than half the design roll's Ability minimum provides 1 bonus die.

Sample Thaumaturgical Formulas

The following formulas do not necessarily adhere to the generic formula rules. They have been refined over the centuries, designed by thaumaturges and exalts for ease of use, the adaption of local materials, and consistency of effect.

Alchemy

Alchemy covers the creation of poisons, drugs, medicines, and other useful consumable substances. The potency of a particular substance determines the rating of the formula to make it.

Rating 1: Formulas of this level create substances with minor effects. They are the sort of things that apprentices first learn to make on their journey to master the craft. Mediocre alcohol, mild headache medicine, and various perfumes, make-ups, and lotions can be produced at this level of Alchemy.

Rating 2: Formulas of this level create moderate effects. Mild poisons, high-quality alcohol, and weak medicines are possible at this level of Alchemy.

Rating 3: Formulas of this level create very significant effects. Strong poisons, potent drugs, and efficacious medicines are all possible.

Rating 4: Alchemy at this level is capable of enhancing human abilities beyond the normal baseline, as are strong medicines, and incredibly deadly poisons.

Rating 5: Alchemy at this level is capable of feats which border on the miraculous. Rating 5 medicines can extend a mortal's lifespan. Rating 5 poisons can threaten even the exalted.

Mild Analgesic
Rating/Ability Min: 1
Base Time: 30 minutes **Time Adjustment:** 5 minutes
Difficulty: 3 **Cost:** -

The character brews an extremely minor painkiller. Anyone who takes a single dose of this reduces penalties leveled by wounds or disease by one point for about 6 hours. Multiple doses do not stack, but if a character takes more than three doses, he must make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll against a Difficulty equal to the number of doses taken, or become violently ill (imposing a -2 penalty to all actions for a scene, as the character vomits up the excess medicine).

Bootlegger's Liquor
Rating/Ability Min: 1/0
Base Time: 24 hours **Time Adjustment:** 1 hour
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** -

The character distills a throat-burning liquor, good enough to get someone drunk, but lacking in taste. This is, of course, a matter of opinion, but generally, high-quality liquor requires more sophisticated formulas.

Stinging Venom
Rating/Ability Min: 1
Base Time: 60 mintues **Time Adjustment:** 10 minutes
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** -

This formula creates a dose of "Stinging Venom." Stinging venom is a quick poison with a Deadliness of 3. Its effect imposes a -1 penalty to all physical dice pools until the end of the scene. Multiple doses of stinging venom do not stack.

Disease-Fighting Elixir
Rating/Ability Min: 2
Base Time: 120 minutes **Time Adjustment:** 20 minutes
Difficulty: 3 **Cost:** -

This medicine, while generally weak, has nonetheless improved the odds of survival for many throughout creation. A single dose adds 1 die to a single Resistance roll to overcome a disease. Versions of this formula exist which function only for a single specific disease. They add 3 dice to a Resistance roll. Multiple doses do not stack, but they generally do not have a negative overdose effect.

This elixir cannot aid in resisting diseases with an untreated morbidity greater than 6.

Comforting Fog
Rating/Ability Min: 2
Base Time: 120 minutes **Time Adjustment:** 20 minutes
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** -

This potent drug dulls the character's perception of pain. A single dose will remove up to 3 points of penalties from wounds or disease for up to an hour. Unfortunately, it dulls the character's senses, and puts him into a foggy, dream-like state – imposing a -3 penalty on all mental dice pools and static values. Multiple doses of this drug do not stack. Instead, the character must roll (Stamina + Resistance) against a Difficulty of 3 or fall unconscious.

Tiger's Heart Elixir
Rating/Ability Min: 2
Base Time: 12 hours **Time Adjustment:** 2 hours
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** -

This blood-red drink bolsters a user's courage. It increases his Valor by 1 for a scene (to a maximum of 5).

Maiden Tea
Rating/Ability Min: 3
Base Time: 6 hours **Time Adjustment:** 1 hour
Difficulty: 3 **Cost:** -

This contraceptive tea renders a woman infertile for one month and a man infertile for 1 week. Taking more than one dose deals one level of bashing damage per extra dose. This damage ignores soak. Three doses will abort an existing pregnancy. Six doses will render a person permanently sterile.

Beneficient Remedy
Rating/Ability Min: 3
Base Time: 12 hours **Time Adjustment:** 1 hour
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** -

A single dose of this medicine will allow a character to make a single resistence roll against poison or disease at the Treated Morbidity. Each disease has a specific formula, which must be purchased or developed separately. First Age medical libraries often have extensive collections of Beneficient Remedies, often with the Ability Minimum reduced to 1 or 2. Unfortunately, no version of this formula exists which can affect diseases with an Untreated Morbidity of 6 or greater.

Burning Venom
Rating/Ability Min: 3
Base Time: 6 hours **Time Adjustment:** 1 hour
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** -

This formula creates a single dose of "burning venom." This is a quick poison with a Deadliness of 4. Its effect adds 3 dice to an attack's damage roll, after soak is applied.

Heroic Frenzy Infusion
Rating/Ability Min: 4
Base Time: 24 hours **Time Adjustment:** 2 hours
Difficulty: 8 **Cost:** 1 money/ 24 hours

This terrifying brew fills a character with berserk anger, adding 1 to his strength, dexterity, and stamina for the duration of the scene. In addition, the character must make a Difficulty 4 (Composure + Integrity) roll in order to stop fighting. If the roll is not made, the character will continue to attack until he runs out of targets. The rage provided by this formula does not distinguish between friend and foe.
After the scene ends, the user loses one point of permanent stamina. Multiple applications of this drug stack with each other. A character reduced to 0 Stamina dies after a single scene.

Bright Morning
Rating/Ability Min: 4
Base Time: 12 hours **Time Adjustment:** 1 hour
Difficulty: 3 **Cost:** -

A character who takes this drug suffers a -2 penalty to all mental dice pools and awareness static values until the end of the scene. As compensation, he gains the ability to perceive immaterial spirits during that time.

Age Staving Cordial
Rating/Ability Min: 5
Base Time: 6 days **Time Adjustment:** 1 day
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/day

This potent medicine, made from the rarest alchemical substances, will increase a mortal or Dragon-Blooded's lifespan by 25 percent, provided the character imbibes at least one dose a month. Additional doses add no additional benefit, but do no harm, other than waste money.

Mountain's Blood
Rating/Ability Min: 5
Base Time: 72 hours **Time Adjustment:** 6 hours
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/48 hours

This formula creates a single dose of the infamous Mountain's Blood poison. Though it must be ingested to be effective, Mountain's Blood tastes pleasantly like an earthy salt. Only those with an (Intuition + Medicine)/2 static value of 4 or greater can detect it, and then only if they have reason to believe they are being poisoned. Mountain's Blood has the following statistics:

Treatment Difficulty: 3
Untreated Morbidity: 5 **Treated Morbidity:** 3
Interval: 3 hours
Success Cost: 8 **Maximum Successes:** 15
Suffering Effect: A sluggish feeling that imposes a -1 penalty to all physical dice pools.
Failure Effect: Death. More specifically, Mountain's Blood causes a victim to burst into flame, inflicting environmental damage equivalent to a Bonfire until extinguished. By the time this happens, it is too late to save the victim, but Mountain's Blood is popular among assassins who wish to kill spouses and friends of the victim as well.

Architecture

Architecture covers the creation of stable, permanent buildings. Temples, fortresses, and occasionally, normal houses are all within its purview. At its highest levels, it is capable of creating *Manses*, magical buildings which improve an essence wielder's mote pool.

Rating 1: Architecture at this level can create more or less normal structures, with no particular special properties.

Rating 2: Architecture at this level can create fortifications, and buildings which inspire mental influence through an architectural thesis.

Rating 3: Architecture at this level can create geomantically harmonious buildings, which grant small dice pool bonuses to those inside.

Rating 4: Architecture at this level can create an extremely weak manse.

Rating 5: Architecture at this level can create a minor manse.

It is common for architects to incorporate more than one effect into a building. For example, most manses are also geomantically harmonious fortifications which express an architectural thesis. Building a structure of such complexity requires 1 formula and one crafting roll for each effect. The highest rated formula is applied first, followed by lower rated formulas, in descending order.

Unlike other thaumaturgical sciences, Architecture requires labor beyond what a single person can accomplish. A particular formula requires (Rating x 5) workers to complete. For each worker that is lacking, increase the Base Time by 1 Time Adjustment interval and the Difficulty by 1.

For Example: The formula for a Typical House has a Base Time of 7 days, a Time Adjustment of 1 day, and a Difficulty of 6. Because it is a rating 1 formula, it requires 5 workers. If a husband and wife wanted to build their own house, they would be 3 people short. Thus, the new base time is 10 days (7 days + 3 x 1 day) and the new Difficulty is 9 (6 + 3).

When designing an Architectural formula, the player may double the number of workers necessary in order to decrease the Difficulty of the design roll by 1. Similarly, the player may increase the design roll's Difficulty by 2 in order to cut the number of necessary workers in half.

Celestial Architecture requires twice as many workers as Terrestrial Architecture. Solar Architecture requires five times as many workers.

Manses and Demesnes

Architecture's most potent ability is the ability to create manses. A manse is a magical building which grants its owner access to incredible magical power. By meditating in the central chamber, the heart-room, of a manse for 5 hours, any being able to access its own essence can become a manse's *owner*. While within the bounds of a manse, the owner's mote pool increases in size.

If the manse already has an owner, claiming it will require a battle of wills. At the end of the meditation period, the usurper must spend a willpower point and roll (Composure + Integrity) against a Difficulty equal to the current owner's MDV. If the roll is successful, the character becomes the new owner. Regardless of whether the roll succeeds, the current owner of the manse becomes aware of the attempt the instant the willpower point is spent.

In addition to serving as a refuge and place of power, all manses produce a *hearthstone*. While in possession of a hearthstone, a character gains a minor magical ability (determined by the design of the manse) and additional panoply slots.

Manses cannot be built just anywhere. The land must be geomantically primed to accept the structure. Locations suitable to the building of a manse are called *demesnes*. Because of the essence flowing through a demesne, there tend to be weird supernatural events associated with them. The more powerful a demesne, the stranger and more dangerous these phenomena become. Indeed, eliminating the bizarre mutations and strange monster that emerge from a demesne is often the primary motive for building a manse.

Characters can claim ownership of a demesne in much the same way as they claim ownership of a manse. Doing so increases the size of the owner's mote pool while she is within the bounds of the demesne. Because of their wild and untamed nature, demesnes tend to grant more motes than manses, but demesnes never produce hearthstones. In addition, claiming ownership of a previously owned demesne never requires a battle of wills. Whoever is the last person to claim ownership automatically becomes the owner.

Because of their great utility and inherent scarcity, both manses and demesnes tend to attract the attention of the powerful. Most of the most potent of these places of power have been claimed by gods, demons, and the Exalted.

Typical House
Rating/Ability Min: 1
Base Time: 7 days **Time Adjustment:** 1 day
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/2 weeks

This formula creates a simple house, suitable for a single, moderately well-off family.

Quick Fortification
Rating/Ability Min: 1
Base Time: 24 hours **Time Adjustment:** 2 hours
Difficulty: 3 **Cost:** 1 money/2 days

This formula creates an improvised fortification under battlefield conditions. The fortification's Impediment rating is 1, and its Hardness rating is 7. Its profile rating is equal to the size of the unit it can protect. This formula requires a special number of workers. The number of workers required to create a quick fortification is equal to the size of a mass combat unit with a Magnitude one less than the Magnitude the fortification will protect.

Basic Fortification
Rating/Ability Min: 2
Base Time: 14 days **Time Adjustment:** 2 days
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/week

This formula creates a moderately well-defended fortress, with a Profile of 5, an Impediment of 2, and a Hardness of 10. More potent fortifications are possible with higher rated versions of this formula. For each rating above 2, add 3 points which can be distributed among the three Fortification aspects. It costs 1 point to raise or lower the profile by 1 (to a minimum of 1). It costs 2 points to raise the Impediment by 1. And it costs 1 point to raise the Hardness by 1.

Alternate versions of this Formula exist which exchange points of Impediment or Hardness for other fortification aspects, but they must be developed and purchased separately.

Inspiring Building
Rating/Ability Min: 2
Base Time: 14 days **Time Adjustment:** 2 days
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/week

The character creates a building that inspires some emotion in those who look upon it. The particular emotion and the strength of the effect depend on the particular formula used. Each combination of emotion and thesis rating is its own formula.

The thaumaturge decides which emotion to inspire when designing this formula. Once the design roll is complete, the player rolls (Charisma + Geomancy). The thesis rating of the design is equal to one half the threshold successes. That particular thesis rating is a permanent part of the resulting formula. Anyone who follows the plans as written will create a building which inspires the desired emotion at the achieved strength.

Higher rated versions of this formula exist. They grant a bonus equal to their Rating to the (Charisma + Geomancy) roll.

Harmonious Facility
Rating/Ability Min: 3
Base Time: 6 weeks **Time Adjustment:** 1 week
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/week

The thaumaturge creates a building ideally suited for a particular purpose. When this formula is designed, the architect chooses a single activity, as wide in scope as an Ability Specialty. Whenever someone attempts a task related to that activity within the bounds of the building, their dice pool receives a +1 bonus.

Each particular activity requires its own formula. To create a new type of Harmonious Facility, the character must possess an (Ability + Specialty) equal to the formula's rating (where the Ability and Specialty required are those improved by the final building). As a result, different architectural schools have arisen throughout Creation, each specializing in different sorts of Harmonious Facilities.

Higher rated versions of this formula exist. Rating 4 formulas grant a +2 dice pool bonus. Rating 5 formulas grant a +3 dice pool bonus.

Trifling Manse
Rating/Ability Min: 4
Base Time: 6 months **Time Adjustment:** 1 month
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 5 money/month

Despite the formula's name, there is nothing trifling about even the least of manses. A manse built with this formula improves its owner's mote pool by 1. The hearthstone produced by this building grants a single extra panoply slot.

Because of the idiosyncratic nature of geomancy, each individual manse requires its own formula to build. Even those which provide identical bonuses must be designed separately, taking into account the unique geomantic footprint of the build site.

The magical ability granted by a trifling hearthstone can provide a 1-die bonus to an Ability, a 2-die bonus to a Specialty, or a magical ability of modest utility, but unimpressive power. Some examples:

Physician's Heart: Grants +2 dice to any insight or research roll to diagnose a disease or poison.

Dowsing Stone: Automatically detects the presence of hidden or underground water within 25 yards.

Stone of Clarity: Improves the possessor's MDV by 1 when confronted with any sort of illusion.

Forge-Blackened Rock: Add a +1 bonus to all Forgecraft dice pools.

Common Manse
Rating/Ability Min: 5
Base Time: 15 months **Time Adjustment:** 2 months
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 10 money/month

This formula creates a more or less typical manse. A large proportion of Creation's demesnes simply cannot support a more powerful manse than this. A common manse increases its owner's mote pool by 2 while she is within its boundaries, and its associated hearthstone grants its possessor 2 additional Panoply slots.

The magic of a common hearthstone can grant 2 bonus dice to an Ability, or 3 dice to a Specialty. Miscellaneous magical powers are very useful, but compare poorly to the powers of gods and the Exalted. Some examples:

Stone of Might: Increases the bearer's (Strength + Athletics)/2 static value by 2 points for purposes of determining feats of strength.

Strategist's Eye: Grants a +2 bonus to all War dice pools.

Stone of Lucid Dreaming: The character remembers his dreams with perfect clarity, and can control them to a strong degree. He gains +3 to all dice pools and static values relating to changing his own dreams, or resisting changes made to his dreams against his will. This bonus explicitly applies to resisting magical attacks and social influence attempts made through the medium of dreams.

Enchanting

Enchanting covers the creation of weapons, armor, tools, and vehicles. Unlike the other thaumaturgical sciences, it is governed by two Abilities – Forgecraft and Survival. Formulas based off Forgecraft allow for the working of durable materials – iron, stone and wood. Formulas based off Survival allow for the working of perishable materials – cloth, hide, and fibers. Though many formulas could conceivably apply to both, the character must choose one or the other when purchasing or developing a formula.

Rating 1: Basic tools, things which allow a task to be attempted without penalty. Weapons and armor created at this level are of inferior quality.

Rating 2: Useful tools, which provide a bonus to a task. Weapons and armor at this level are of average quality.

Rating 3: Tools and weapons of extraordinary quality. This level of enchanting can also create ships and carriages. Ordinary seeming items can be given minor magical abilities.

Rating 4: Tools and weapons of this level seem almost magical. They receive incredible bonuses. The magical trinkets created at this level have great utility.

Rating 5: Working with the five magical materials is finally possible, allowing the thaumaturge to create items which resonate with a character's panoply.

Apprentice's Weapon
Rating/Ability Min: 1/0
Base Time: 6 hours **Time Adjustment:** 1 hour
Difficulty: 2 **Cost:** -

The character creates an inferior weapon. Subtract 1 point from any two of its accuracy, damage, or defense statistics. Alternatively, increase its speed by one. This formula can create any type of weapon. A version exists which can only create a single specific weapon. Such versions only subtract a single point from a single statistic.

Apprentice's Armor
Rating/Ability Min: 1/0
Base Time: 6 hours **Time Adjustment:** 1 hour
Difficulty: 2 **Cost:** -

The character creates inferior armor. Add one each to its mobility and fatigue statistics. This formula can create any light or medium armor. Versions of this formula exist which create only a single specific type of armor. Those formulas only subtract one from either mobility or fatigue, or they allow the thaumaturge to craft a specific heavy armor which suffers the full penalty.

Basic Tool
Rating/Ability Min: 1
Base Time: 6 hours **Time Adjustment:** 1 hour
Difficulty: 3 **Cost:** -

The character makes a useful, but basically unimpressive tool. This tool is sufficient to remove any penalties from an action associated with lacking the proper tools. This formula allows the character to make any tool. Versions of this formula exist which allow the character to make a single specific tool. Those versions create a tool which provides a +1 dice pool bonus.

Basic Weapon
Rating/Ability Min: 2
Base Time: 12 hours **Time Adjustment:** 2 hours
Difficulty: 3 **Cost:** -

The character makes a weapon with standard statistics. This formula can create most sorts of nonmagical weapons, though extraordinary weapons like crossbows or firewands require their own unique formulas. Versions of this formula exist which create a single specific weapon. Such weapons are of fine quality, and add +1 to either accuracy or damage.

Basic Armor
Rating/Ability Min: 2
Base Time: 12 hours **Time Adjustment:** 2 hours
Difficulty: 3 **Cost:** -

The character makes a set of armor with standard statistics. This formula can create all light and medium armors, but each type of heavy armor requires its own specific formula. Versions of this formula exist which can only create a single specific light or medium armor. Those armors are of fine quality and add +1 to their soak values.

Fine Tool
Rating/Ability Min: 2
Base Time: 12 hours **Time Adjustment:** 2 hours
Difficulty: 3 **Cost:** -

This formula creates a tool which provides a +2 dice pool bonus. Each tool is its own formula. Higher rated versions of this formula exist which provide a dice pool bonus equal to their rating. Rating 3 tools are called extraordinary tools. Rating 4 tools are called perfect tools. Rating 5 tools can only be made of the five magical materials, require a panoply slot to use, and are called Artifact tools.

Extraordinary Weapon
Rating/Ability Min: 3
Base Time: 6 days **Time Adjustment:** 1 day
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/ 5 days

This formula can create only one specific type of weapon, but the weapon it creates is of extraordinary quality. It can either add one point each to accuracy and damage, or it may add a point to defense.

Extraordinary Armor
Rating/Ability Min: 3
Base Time: 6 days **Time Adjustment:** 1 day
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/ 5 days

This formula can create only one specific type of armor, but the armor it creates is of extraordinary quality. It adds one point to soak, and subtracts one point from either mobility or fatigue.

Craft Vessel
Rating/Ability Min: 3
Base Time: 6 days **Time Adjustment:** 1 day
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/5 days

This formula can create a ship. Ships have Crew, Handling, and Speed ratings. In addition, they have a Size rating. The first three statistics are discussed in **Chapter 3: The Abilities.** A ship's Size rating is the maximum mass combat unit it can hold, if they were transported as cargo. Generally, military vessels will transport soldiers equal to 2 Magnitude less than their Size. Cargo vessels carry even fewer people.
 The default ship statistics are Crew 1, Handling 3, Speed 1, and Size 3. If used as a fortification, it has a Profile equal to its (Size − 1), an Impediment of 1, and a Hardness of 5. When designing a ship, the character has 5 points to distribute. These points can improve the Crew or Speed at a rate of one per point, lower the Handling at the cost of 2 points. The Ship's size can be raised at a cost of 3 points. Raising a Ship's Size automatically increases its Handling by 1. Alternately, they may be spent to improve the ship's fortification stats at a cost of 2 points for a single increase to Impediment or 1 point per point of Hardness.
 Ships of the second age are sail-powered. Essence engines are a separate, Celestial-Level Artifact.
 Each ship design is its own separate formula. Higher level versions of this formula exist. Rating 4 ships provide 10 points to distribute. Rating 5 ships provide 15.
 Building a ship requires labor equivalent to an Architecture project.

Walkaway Trinket
Rating/Ability Min: 3
Base Time: 6 days **Time Adjustment:** 1 day
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/5 days

This little magical protective talisman has saved countless lives. So long as the bearer keeps it against her skin, she gains 2 bonus dice to all Resistance rolls made while Dying. More powerful versions of this formula exist. The Rating 4 version adds 4 dice. The Rating 5 version adds 6 dice. Multiple Walkaway Trinkets do not stack.

Perfect Weapon
Rating/Ability Min: 4
Base Time: 12 days **Time Adjustment:** 2 days
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/3 days

This formula creates a potent magical weapon, of the sort wielded by mortal kings and their most trusted knights. The weapon gets a +2 bonus and a +1 bonus. One of the bonuses goes to accuracy and the other goes to damage. In addition, it may either increase its defense by 1 or decrease its speed by 1. Each perfect weapon requires its own formula.

Perfect Armor
Rating/Ability Min: 4
Base Time: 12 days **Time Adjustment:** 2 days
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 1 money/3 days

This formula creates perfect armor. Perfect Armor increases its soak by two, and lowers its Mobility and Fatigue ratings by 1 each. Each type of perfect armor requires a separate formula.

Artifact Armaments
Rating/Ability Min: 5
Base Time: 6 weeks **Time Adjustment:** 1 week
Difficulty: 6 **Cost:** 5 money/week

This formula creates a weapon or set of armor out of one of the five magical materials. This equipment has the same statistics as equivalent perfect equipment, but it is indestructible without specially inimical magic. In addition, Artifact armor provides aggravated soak equal to its lethal soak. Artifact weapons and armor are heavier than normal, and require attunement to the character's panoply to be wielded at all. For those with the proper spiritual properties, attuning an Artifact grants an additional bonus, based on the magical material used.

Orichalcum: Attuned by the Solar Exalted, Orichalcum melee weapons add +2 accuracy and +1 defense. Orichalcum ranged weapons increase their accuracy by +2 and their range by 25%. Orichalcum armor adds +2 to its bashing, lethal, and aggravated soak.

Moonsilver: Attuned by the Lunar Exalted, Moonsilver melee weapons add +2 to defense. Moonsilver ranged weapons add +3 to accuracy. Moonsilver armor has no mobility penalty.

Starmetal: Attuned by the Sidereal Exalted, Starmetal melee weapons add +1 to accuracy and +3 to damage. Starmetal ranged weapons add +3 to damage. Starmetal armor imposes a Difficulty of 1 on damage rolls directed towards the character.

Jade: Attuned by the Terrestrial Exalted, Jade weapons, both melee and ranged modify their speed by -1. If the jade bonus would reduce a weapon's speed below 3, increase its accuracy by 1 instead. Jade armor has no fatigue penalty.

Soulsteel: Attuned by the Abyssal Exalted, Soulsteel weapons, both melee and ranged add +1 to accuracy and steal one willpower point from the target and add it to the character's pool for each hit scored. Soulsteel armor adds +2 to its bashing, lethal, and aggravated soak.

Any character with access to her mote pool may attune any Artifact. If the artifact's type does not naturally resonate with her anima, she may spend one slot to attune the artifact without the magical materials bonus or two slots to attune the artifact with the bonus.

Weapons and Armor

Weapons have four statistics, *accuracy, damage, defense,* and *speed.* A weapon's accuracy adds to attack rolls as a dice pool bonus. Accuracy adds to the dice pools of simple charms if they say the character makes an attack, otherwise, the charm must explicitly add the weapon's accuracy bonus. A weapon's damage statistic determines the base damage of the character's attack. If the damage statistic is followed by a "B," attacks with the weapon deal bashing damage. If the damage statistic is followed by an "L," attacks made with the weapon deal lethal damage. Weapons with a damage statistic preceded by a "+" or "-" factor strength into base damage. Damage statistics lacking those symbols have a fixed base damage. A weapon's defense statistic adds to the character's RDV as a bonus to the static value. A weapon's speed sets the speed value of simple actions taken with the weapon.

Armor has four statistics. *Bashing soak* applies a penalty to the raw damage of a bashing attack. *Lethal soak* applies a penalty to the raw damage of a lethal attack. *Mobility* applies a penalty to movement rate, jumping distance, and to all physical dice pools related to flexibility, movement, and stealth.

Finally, *fatigue* represents how tiring the armor is to wear. At the end of any scene in which an armor-wearing character has engaged in strenuous physical activity (including any scene in which combat takes place), that character must make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll against a Difficulty equal to the armor's Fatigue rating. If the roll fails, the character's dice pools are penalized by -1 until he has a chance to rest. If the character engages in another active scene before then, he must make another Resistance roll. Penalties from Fatigue are cumulative. Sleeping 8 hours removes (Stamina + Resistance)/ 2 points of Fatigue penalties.

In addition, Artifact armor has *aggravated soak*, which applies a penalty to the raw damage of aggravated attacks, and *hardness*. If an attack's raw damage is less than the armor's hardness, it does not deal minimum damage.

Some weapons have *tags*. Tags are like charm keywords. They denote special rules that apply to the weapon.

Artillery-# (A-#): This weapon can make attacks in mass combat. It is treated as having a magnitude equal to the tag number or equal to the target unit's, whichever is lower.

Lance (L): This weapon doubles its damage modifier if the character's mount has taken a dash action on the same tick as the attack.

Single Shot (SS): This weapon takes a speed 1 reflexive action to reload.

Piercing (P): Soak from armor applies only half the normal penalty to the weapon's raw damage.

Overwhelming-# (O-#): Attacks made with the weapon deal more than one die of minimum damage. The minimum damage of attacks made with this weapon is equal to the tag's number.

Thrown (T): This weapon can be thrown. A thrown weapon will have a range value next to the tag.

Two-Handed (2): This weapon requires two hands to wield.

Reach (R): Reach weapons may ignore up to two points of penalties associated with distance and differences in elevation. Reach weapons explicitly ignore the penalties associated with attacking a mounted opponent.

Exotic (X): This weapon is of superior quality, and requires its own thaumaturgical formula.

Grapple (G): These weapons provide their bonuses when the character is engaged in a grapple. Normally, a weapon does not.

Archery Weapons

These weapons use the Archery Ability. Archery weapons do not have a defense statistic. Instead, they often have two additional statistics. Bows have a *maximum strength*, given their tension reliant design. When making an attack with a bow, calculate the base damage with either the character's strength, or the bow's maximum strength, whichever is less. Archery weapons also have a *range* statistic. A weapon's range is the maximum distance away the weapon can target accurately. Some charms enhance range, allowing the character to exceed this distance.

The weapons that follow are assumed to use standard ammunition – broadhead arrows for bows, typical bolts for crossbows, etc. The damage of the ammunition is therefor factored into the damage of the weapon. Some creative sorts have invented special ammunition over the years (arrows that pierce armor, bolts which deal bashing damage). How these special ammunitions affect the weapon's damage depends on the level of Enchanting used to make them.

Archery Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Max Strength	Range	Notes and Tags
Short Bow	5	+1	+1L	3	50	2
Long Bow	5	+1	+3L	4	75	2
Composite Bow	5	+1	+3L	5	75	2, X
Crossbow	4	+2	3L	-	50	X, P, SS, for range-enhancing charms, treat this weapon as having 3 strength
Flame Piece	4	+0	6L	-	10	X, SS, this weapon may not exceed its range
Firewand	5	+1	9L	-	15	X, SS, this weapon may not exceed its range

Artifact Archery Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Range	Notes and Tags
Short Powerbow	5	+2	+3L	75	2
Long Powerbow	5	+2	+5L	125	2

Brawl Weapons

The following weapons are governed by the Brawl Ability. Brawl weapons tend to be inferior to the weapons of other Abilities. This is compensated for by the superior power of Brawl charms. In addition to formal weapons, the chart below contains entries for five types of *improvised weapons*. The statistics of these weapons provide a rough guideline for those occasions when the character grabs a part of the scenery to bludgeon his enemies. In those situations, the storyteller should simply choose whichever category best suits the object the character is trying to wield.

Brawl Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Notes and Tags
Knife	4	+1	+0L	-1	T(15)
Whip	5	-1	1L	-2	R, G
Chain	6	-1	+2B	-1	R. G
Light Improvised (Broken Bottle)	4	+0	+0B or +0L	-2	T(10)
Med. Improvised (Club)	5	+0	+2B or +1L	-1	T(10)
Long Improvised (Broom)	5	+0	+3B or +1L	+1	T(5)
Heavy Improvised (Chair)	5	-1	+4B or +2L	+0	T(5), R
Super Heavy Improvised (Unattuned Daiklave)	6	-3	+6B or +4L	-2	T(3), 2

Artifact Brawl Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Notes and Tags
Switchklaive	3	+3	+1L	-1	T(10)
Dire Chain	5	+0	+4B	-1	R, G

Unarmed Weapons

Though it seems like a bit of an oxymoron, it is possible to have a weapon that uses the Unarmed Ability. Weapons that attach to the hands or feet, but do not significantly change the mechanics of punching or kicking use the Unarmed ability.

Unarmed Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Notes and Tags
Normal Punch	5	+1	+0B	-1	
Gauntlet	5	+0	+1B	+0	
Cestus	5	+0	+1L	-1	
Iron Boot	5	+0	+2B	-3	
Razor Harness	5	+2	+2L	n/a	G, X, this weapon can only be used in a grapple

Artifact Unarmed Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Tags and Notes
Smashfist	5	+1	+3B	+1	
God-Kicking Boot	4	+2	+3B	-3	

Weaponry Weapons

The following weapons use the Weaponry Ability. Because they are designed explicitly to be used as weapons, they tend to be more powerful than the weapons associated with other Abilities.

Weaponry Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Notes and Tags
Slashing Sword	4	+1	+2L	+0	L
Straight Sword	5	+1	+3L	+1	
Great Sword	6	+0	+5L	-1	2
Light Spear	5	+2	+2L	+1	R, T(10)
Heavy Spear	5	+1	+3L	+2	2, R, L
Mace	5	+1	+3B	+0	P
Axe	5	+0	+4L	-1	

Artifact Weaponry Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Notes and Tags
Daiklave	5	+2	+5L	+2	
Reaper Daiklave	4	+3	+3L	+1	L
Dire Lance	5	+2	+5L	+2	2, L, R
Grimcleaver	4	+1	+6L	-1	2

Armor

Armor is divided into three types: light, medium, and heavy. Celestial enchanting can make superheavy armor, but in the second age, such armor is extremely rare.

Armor

Name	Type	Soak	Mobility	Fatigue	Notes
Breastplate	Light	+2B/+1L	-0	1	Can be hidden under a cloak
Chain Shirt	Light	+1B/+2L	-0	1	Can be hidden under clothes
Buff Jacket	Med	+3B/+2L	-1	2	Can be hidden under a cloak
Mail Shirt	Med	+3B/+3L	-2	2	
Reinforced Breastplate	Heavy	+3B/+5L	-2	3	
Articulated Plate	Heavy	+4B/+6L	-2	4	

Artifact Armor

Name	Type	Soak	Mobility	Fatigue	Notes
Breastplate	L	+4B/+3L/+3A	-0	0	Can be hidden under a cloak 2 hardness
Mail Shirt	M	+5B/+5L/+5A	-1	1	3 hardness
Articulated Plate	H	+6B/+8L/+8A	-1	3	4 hardness

Chapter 9: Character Creation and Advancement

This chapter will explain how one goes about creating a heroic mortal character. Future volumes will present rules for creating Terrestrial and Celestial Exalted.

The character creation process is actually quite simple. Beginners will want to follow these steps in order, but once you've made a couple of characters, you can feel free to skip around however you like.

Step One: Character Concept

The first step to creating a character is to decide what sort of character you want to create. You don't have to be very specific at this stage, and you are not required to stick to your original concept, but it is useful to have a vague idea of what sort of character you want to play. Do you want a badass fighter? A cunning strategist? A nerdy thaumaturge? If you can express what you want in no more than three or four words, you can make better decisions later on in the character creation process.

Example: In the examples that follow, I will be creating a wandering warrior. More specifically, he is a vassal soldier who failed to protect his liege, and now travels Creation in disgrace.

Step Two: Choose Attributes

Attributes determine your character's raw potential, his or her natural, untrained capabilities. There are three attribute categories: physical, social, and mental. Decide which category is most important to your character. This is your *primary* attribute category. The category that is second-most important to your character is your *secondary* attribute category. The remaining category is your *tertiary* attribute category.

All attributes start with one free point. A character with a 0 in an attribute is crippled in some way. The highest attribute a human can attain without becoming something fundamentally inhuman is 5. A rating of 2 is considered average. Distribute 6 attribute points among the three attributes of your primary category, 4 among the attributes of your secondary category, and 3 among the attributes of your tertiary category.

Example: The Disgraced Vassal is a warrior by trade. Therefor physical attributes are most important. After that, I've decided that he's more a leader of men than the intellectual type, so I put social attributes as his secondary category. That leaves mental as the tertiary.

Distributing 6 points to the physical attributes, I decide I want my warrior to be well-balanced. Thus I put 2 points each into Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina. Since I get one point of each attribute free, that means the Disgraced Vassal has a Strength of 3, a Dexterity of 3, and a Stamina of 3.

After that, I assign 4 points to the social attributes. The Disgraced Vassal is probably one of those tactless, but likable types, so I decide to put 2 points each into Charisma and Composure. Thus, my character has a Charisma of 3, a Manipulation of 1, and a Composure of 3.

Finally, with mental attributes, I think the Disgraced Vassal will be an average intellect, with no great strengths or weaknesses. I put one point in each of the mental attributes, giving my character an Intuition, Intelligence, and Wits of 2 each.

Step Three: Assign Abilities

    Abilities are a character's learned skills. When assigning Abilities to a new character, consider the process to be like writing an abbreviated history of your character. The Ability points on your character sheet reflect what your character learned before the game started.

    Characters start with 25 points to distribute among their Abilities. No starting Ability may be higher than 3.

    Example: The Disgraced Vassal was a career soldier in another life, so I give him a Weaponry and War rating of 3 each. That costs 6 points, leaving me with 19. Of course, there are other Abilities that are useful to a soldier, so I will give him two points each in Archery, Awareness, Athletics, Conveyance, Resistance, Survival, and Unarmed. That cost 14 points, leaving me with 5. I'll give him a point in Forgecraft, to represent his experience maintaining his weapons, a point of Lore to represent his basic education, a point of Medicine to represent battle field first aid. That cost 3 points, leaving me with 2. I could use these 2 points to improve any of my rating 1 or 2 Abilities, but I decide to put both of them into Integrity, to represent the Disgraced Vassal's heroic willpower.

Step Four: Choose Virtues and Intimacies

    Most humans have four points of virtues. Heroic characters are a cut above the rest, and possess 5. Virtues have a minimum rating of 0 and a maximum rating of 5. A character may not have a starting virtue greater than 3. Those motivated by such terrible passions are few and far between.

    Along with Virtues, starting characters may possess Intimacies. Intimacies are optional, but can be extremely useful. They can improve a character's MDV, provide bonus dice, and offer additional ways of regaining willpower.

    Each intimacy is tied to one of the four Virtues. A character may have a maximum number of Intimacies associated with a single Virtue equal to that Virtue's rating. Starting characters do not need to have that many, but it is recommended that a player choose at least one Intimacy per Virtue rated 2 or higher.

    Compassion Intimacies are people your character loves, or thing which arouse your character's pity or regret.

    Conviction Intimacies are organizations or ideals to which your character feels loyalty.

    Temperance Intimacies are ethical values or specific tasks which your character feels are important.

    Valor Intimacies are things your character hates or things that make your character angry.

    Example: The Disgraced Vassal has lost faith in his beliefs, so he has a Conviction of 0, but he's still pretty brave, so I'll put 2 points into Valor. He's generally well-disposed to people, but he's also a hardened killer, so I'll only put 1 point into Compassion. That leaves 2 points for Temperance, which means that the Disgraced Vassal has a pretty strong code of honor. Because Virtues do not *get free starting points, my character's Virtues are: Compassion 1, Conviction 0, Temperance 2, and Valor 2.*

    In addition to his Virtues, the Disgraced Vassal will have 2 intimacies, one associated with Temperance and one associated with Valor. I've decided that the Temperance Intimacy will be "regaining his honor" and the Valor Intimacy will be "Revenge on the prince who exiled him."

Step Five: Calculate Advantages

Mortal characters have a starting Essence of 1. They have a number of motes and panoply slots equal to their starting Essence. They have a number of willpower points equal to the sum of their Virtues. They do not start with any charms, spells, or formulas unless they purchase them with experience points. All heroic mortal characters start with 9 health levels – 3 which impose no wound penalty, 3 which impose a moderate wound penalty, and 3 which impose a severe wound penalty.

Example: The Disgraced Vassal has a starting Essence of 1, which gives him 1 mote and 1 panoply slot. He has 5 willpower points - equal to the sum of his Virtues. He has the standard nine health levels.

Step Six: Spend Experience Points

This step is optional. Depending on the game's power level, the storyteller may give you a certain amount of experience points to spend on your character. Unless otherwise stated, these experience points can be spent on any trait or advantage that may ordinarily be purchased with experience points. This includes raising Abilities and Virtues to greater than 3. In addition, at character creation only, a character may spend experience points to purchase equipment. One experience point will purchase a single item created by Rating 4 Terrestrial Thaumaturgy. Two experience points will purchase a single item created by Rating 5 Terrestrial Thaumaturgy.

Raising traits with experience points may require you to recalculate your character's Advantages.

The experience point chart is found at the end of the chapter.

Example: For illustration purposes, I will give the Disgraced Vassal 45 starting experience points. Because he's a warrior, I'll give him 2 charms – Onslaught Attack and Twin Strike. Charms cost 15 experience points each, so the total cost is 30 experience points. With 15 experience points left, I'll spend 10 xp to raise his Strength to 4, 3 points to buy a Weaponry Specialty of "Spears," and 2 experience points on equipment, one each on a Perfect Spear and a Perfect Mail Shirt.

Step Seven: Finishing Touches

During this step, you add details to flesh out your character. These offer no mechanical advantages, but can aid you in playing your character, and can potentially provide inspiration for stunts. Now would be a good time to come up with a character description, some interesting tidbits of backstory, or distinctive personality quirks.

Example: At this point, I will give the Disgraced Vassal a name "Pevlok Gren." Pevlok Gren is 28 years old, but has a rough, weather-beaten appearance that makes him look much older. His face is covered in a sort of scraggly perpetual stubble. He was born to a noble house and fought with honor for most of his life, but in a battle with a neighboring kingdom, he failed to intercept the blow that felled his king. Though the event broke his heart, the worst was yet to come. The king's son named him a traitor and exiled him. He has since wandered the Scavenger Lands, looking for a peace of mind that may never come.

Experience Point Costs and Training Times

Trait	Experience Point Cost	Training Time
Attribute	10	(New Rating) Months
Ability	5	(New Rating) Weeks
Specialty	3	1 Week
Virtue	10	Instant
Charm	15	(Min Ability) Days
Terrestrial Spell	15	(Mote Cost) Days
Formula	1	(Rating) Days
Essence	30	(New Rating) Years

Exalted Rewrite Character Sheet

Character Name_____ **Concept**_____

Attributes

Strength	OOOOO	**Charisma**	OOOOO	**Intuition**	OOOOO
Dexterity	OOOOO	**Manipulation**	OOOOO	**Intelligence**	OOOOO
Stamina	OOOOO	**Composure**	OOOOO	**Wits**	OOOOO

Abilities

Administration	OOOOO	**Integrity**	OOOOO	**Presence**	OOOOO
Archery	OOOOO	**Investigation**	OOOOO	**Resistance**	OOOOO
Athletics	OOOOO	**Larceny**	OOOOO	**Socialize**	OOOOO
Awareness	OOOOO	**Linguistics**	OOOOO	**Stealth**	OOOOO
Brawl	OOOOO	**Lore**	OOOOO	**Survival**	OOOOO
Conveyance	OOOOO	**Medicine**	OOOOO	**Unarmed**	OOOOO
Deception	OOOOO	**Negotiation**	OOOOO	**War**	OOOOO
Forgecraft	OOOOO	**Performance**	OOOOO	**Weaponry**	OOOOO
Geomancy	OOOOO				

Specialties

(_____) _____ O O O   (_____) _____ O O O
(_____) _____ O O O   (_____) _____ O O O
(_____) _____ O O O   (_____) _____ O O O

Virtues and Intimacies

Compassion	OOOOO	**Temperance**	OOOOO
_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
Conviction	OOOOO	**Valor**	OOOOO
_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	_____	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Maximum Willpower:_____ **Current Willpower:**_____

Character Sheet: Page 2

Essence OOOOO
Motes [_][_][_][_][_][_][_][_][_][_]
Panoply[_][_][_][_][_][_][_][_][_][_]

Charms and Spells

Name	Type	Cost	Notes
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Notes and Tags
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Defenses and Resistances

Natural Soak	___B ___L ___A	ADV	____
Armor	___B ___L ___A	RDV	____
Total Soak	___B ___L ___A	MDV	____

Hardness:_____

Health Levels
Unpenalized: [_][_][_][_][_]
Moderate: [_][_][_][_][_]
Severe: [_][_][_][_][_]