

Exalted 3E: What We Know (OBSOLETE)

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3E General Comments

“Also WE HAVE BEEN SITTING ON THIS SINCE SPRING OF LAST YEAR.” (**Holden**)

Q: *What does Ex3 bring to the table that justifies me having to buy all the books again?* (**Morally ambiguous science**)

A: Books that are not the books you already own, even when they touch on similar topics. Also, books which are not the books you already own, which touch on virgin territory. Also, badass ideas, mechanics, gaming materials, and writing.

(**Holden**)

Q: *Will there be an open beta for Ex3?* (**Maese Mateo**)

A: No. (**hatewheel**)

Q: *Can we get the complete list of heroic writers AKA as the complete Exalted Dream Team?* (**Gonzo**)

A: Keeping this under wraps at the moment. **(hatewheel)**

Q: *Is Eric Brennan involved with any of the 3.Ex projects? 'Cause if not, please change that.* **(Praetorian)**

A: Would I let Holden and John start on 3e without badgering them into getting Eric in on it? **(StephenIs)**

Q: *So are there any female writers involved, or is this going to be another sausage party?* **(four willows)**

A: If you are looking for a date, I do not think Liz Grushcow is your type. :(**(Holden)**

Q: *Is this some kind of joke? What's Onyx Path?* **(four willows)**

A: This is not a joke. Further information regarding the nature of Onyx Path is forthcoming. **(StephenIs)**

Q: *Holden, how much of 1/2e canon do you have keep in play. can you change up splat origin? Numbers etc?* **(Susanoo Orbatos)**

A: We've received no "you must do this/you must not do this" mandates from on high. We pitched what we wanted to do, the brass liked it, and that was that. **(Holden)**

"The trick is to create a vision so compelling and well-realized that even people who were hoping for something else can see it's worthy of expression on the page. If you do that, people willing to be won over will be, and critics with any sense of class don't locate their criticism where it blocks enthusiastic discussion. The only people around to take the role of vocal naysayer are self-evident trolls and shit-stirrers like Guy Under The Bridge (remember him?). Exalted 1st Edition often accomplished this, with a few notable exceptions. 2nd Edition... Enhhhh... We're gonna shoot for it with 3e." **(StephenIs)**

"Seriously, it was evident several years ago that Exalted needed a serious overhaul in order to return it to the glory that so many fans, ourselves included, fell in love with. But that overhaul couldn't be accomplished without a new edition and we weren't set up to support such a major project. Fortunately, Holden, John, and a great crew of volunteers were able to begin the thinking on how to revitalize Exalted with their Ink Monkey work and were further able to jump into suggesting how to approach a new edition. Around the same time, a lucky conversation with Geoff Grabowski, my old partner on the development side of Exalted (see the Making of Exalted booklet contained within EX1), revealed he was interested in revisiting the world he had set on its course. The path was clear: EX3." **(Bid sheet)**

Book: 3E Core

December 2012: Exalted Third Edition— The new edition of Exalted developed by John Morke and Holden Shearer, and featuring the return of original developer Geoff Grabowski; this edition will rekindle the original excitement of the setting while the systems will be fine-tuned, balanced, and play tested more rigorously than any WW product ever before. 400 pages. PDF/PoD/Deluxe Kickstarter (WW Bid Sheet)

Q: *So I guess since my question hasn't been touched, that either you can't answer or the Core will just be Solar-only?* **(Epimetheus)**

A: Solars are the only Exalt type playable out of the corebook. If things work out like I hope, it'll also provide a very robust base of heroic mortal options as well. **(Holden)**

Book: Arms of the Chosen

February 2013: Arms of the Chosen – The definitive tome of artifact weapons and armor for the Exalted. Most importantly, Arms expands and develops the Evocation system to be introduced in the corebook. Evocation is the Solar-specific system by which the Lawgivers may derive unique Charms from artifacts, giving them a whole new layer of power and themes to explore. The book will feature not only a much wider selection of weapons and armor than the corebook, but it will also have a section dedicated to Warstriders. 64 pages. PDF/PoD

"Just to be clear: Arms [of the Chosen] info based off very old pitch sheet, Evocations are not a Solar-only mechanic any more." **(Holden)**

Book: The Realm

April 2013: **The Realm** – Covers the Scarlet Empire in the current era. Unlike its predecessors, this book does not end at the shores of the Blessed Isle but also covers Realm satrapies in the Threshold and beyond. It will provide a deep exploration of Dragon-Blooded society and what it means to be a Dynast including the Immaculate Philosophy, the beliefs and histories that guide the morality of the Realm and unite the Dragon-Blooded host against the avarice of the gods and the power of the Anathema. A large part of this book will be devoted to detailing the houses of the Dynasty, updating and enlivening with intention of making the houses as tantalizing as Kindred Clans, in terms of iconicism and player association and appeal. 160 pages. PDF/PoD

Q: So we're talking about the full scope of the houses, and their threshold holdings? Because I'd LOVE to see a WHO's WHO of the major houses. (TheLoneCleric)

A: Yup, as well as an enormous whack of wordcount dedicated to various satrapies. I would be shocked if An-Teng doesn't end up in there, for example. The idea is to explore the Realm as a distinct concept, rather than as a specific geographical location. That does mean the Blessed Isle, but it also means culture, religion, the Great Houses, and its imperialist holdings and far-flung colonial adventures. Both previous editions kind of presented the Realm as this Dragon-Blooded playground locked off behind a wall where nobody else except a few Bronzesids could touch it. But that's not what the Realm is-- it's the great colossus that stands astride Creation, and it touches virtually everyone and everything. (Holden)

"The Realm is emphatically not gonna be a retread of Compass: Blessed Isle (or indeed designed anything like along the lines of a Compass book in general)." (Holden)

Book: Dragon Blooded: What Fire Has Wrought

June 2013: Dragon-Blooded: What Fire Has Wrought – This book introduces the Dragon-Blooded for the first time in Third Edition, including character creation rules and the Dragon-Blooded Charm set. What Fire Has Wrought is the first indicator of the dynamic new "novel" feel of Exalted, of amped up storytelling, with each book as a chapter in the legend of the game. This book will give an iconic view of the Dragon-Blooded, showing their creation as the armies of the Celestial Host and detailing their place in the current era. It will feature some further details of the Realm as well as Lookshy, and may feature other locales where Dragon-Blooded are prominent. Overall, it will focus on the legend of the Dragon-Blooded and the fires they have had to walk through to get to where they are, as Creation's premiere, dominant Exalted. 220 pages. PDF/PoD Hardcover/Deluxe Kickstarter

3E Future and Release Schedule

Q: What is the most shocking fundamental change you can describe? (MissMaddy)

A: The second hardback of 2013. (Holden)

"Also—that is the schedule through August. There are two more books on the way in 2013. You'll just have to wait to see what they are." (hatewheel)

Q: Is there going to be a system of themed book names, in the manner of "Scrolls of Esoteric Wisdom", "Compass of Celestial/Terrestrial Directions", "Books of Sorcery", etc? (Revlid)

A: God, no. Not putting a morgue toe tag on 3e right at the moment of birth. (Holden)

Q: (general questions on the pain of waiting for your favorite splat to get reprinted)

A: We've had a year to grind out ideas and I've had a decade to analyze the problems with both editions. We recently enjoyed a game of just mortals using the new system. Just mortals. I also stat'd up a tyrant lizard and a claw ravager (spinosaurus) and making them fight was a blast. The system is much more fun even before the Exalted get involved. Sorcery, Martial Arts, and Evocation systems will bring new depth to your games. Craft system is going to be more involved and more rewarding. These are all things that exist without the context of the Exalted. Maybe the waiting game

won't be so bad. **(hatewheel)**

"Waiting for the proper hardback to come out so your favorite character is supported sucks hard. I know. I went through it when 2e launched. (And my favorite PC was a Sidereal, so, yeah. Caught both the horns on that particular bull.) Unfortunately, we can put out books that are done very fast or very well, and we just got off the edition that picked 'very fast.' I think the pain will be worth it. In the meantime, let us join together to curse the merciless nature of the fourth dimension." **(Holden)**

"Writing a hardcover splat, especially including the mechanics for it (keeping in mind that the goal is now to make every splat as mechanically *interesting* as, say, 1e Sidereals or 2e pre-2.5 Infernals, if not always as mechanically *novel*), is a major undertaking that takes about six months from design to execution. If we front-loaded the splats, you'd still only see two per year; you just wouldn't see any books in between." **(StephenIs)**

"Also from a purely cynical marketing perspective, big releases like a new splat tend to be rallying points that get the fanbase excited. Putting them all at the front and then releasing nothing but setting material for years is not a good way to keep sales up, which, in turn, is a good way to ensure the line gets cancelled before most of the good setting material has time to be published. But it's mostly the design time thing. The fan rallying point thing is a happy side-effect." **(StephenIs)**

Q: Question! If you could only do 2 splats a year if you did nothing else, how can you also do 2 splats a year and supplements? (Deadpoint)

A: Processes requiring different resources can be run in parallel; processes running on the same resource must be run serially. I can write nations; I'm rubbish at Charms. And a book like Scavenger Sons requires less in the way of playtesting. **(StephenIs)**

Q: Just to confirm, what you're saying is that, say, if the 3Ex Lunars book was being done, you'd have to write up backstory before Charms could happen (or the other way around, of course), but if the Book Of The West was being written at the same time, you can work on that while the other guys work on the Lunar Charms. Do I have it right? (horngeek)

A: What he's saying is that I have a very very small number of authors I trust to do really intensive mechanics, and a much higher number I trust to turn out really good setting material. Or, in other words, while TDO and Plague of Hats are doing mechanics for the Sidereal hardback I can have StephenIs and Dean Shomshak writing a book about religions. **(Holden)**

Q: I'm curious why you decided to go with a core + series of splatbooks this time around too. (BrilliantRain)

A: Our hallmark is quality, and this is the format most conducive to all the books being high-quality products. We've already seen an edition that prioritized speed above everything else, the results aren't something we're eager to replicate. **(Holden)**

"I'll tell you point-blank, full disclosure, right now: A full-color corebook is pricey. Doing PoD stuff in full color costs a shitload. Especially for a big book. If you want a color dead tree version, it will probably cost something comparable to a new high-profile console game. However, we're trying to make sure there are also more affordable printing options for people who want a copy to hold in their hands and read, but don't want to chokeslam their piggy bank to do so. PDF of course will be more affordable yet, as always." **(Holden)**

Q: Also, another question: If the Realm book examines "the Realm as Idea", then will we get a similar treatment of the Guild? Or is MoJ a good idea of how the Realm book will read like? (Hand-of-Omega)

A: MoJ was written with an eye toward being fairly usable for 3e, in terms of tone and shape of ideas. So I would not expect another Guild book any time soon. **(Holden)**

Q: Also, the art. What is the driving philosophy behind the pieces of art that will be included? Pretty much the same as for 2E, or are there new guidelines? For ex, will there be more of an anime influence in the look and feel of the game? Any particular artists you can reveal are working with you? (Hand-of-Omega)

A: Because the plans for art are huge and volatile, I can only say so much without full confirmation. There will still be art in a variety of styles by a variety of artists, but with a driving theme, depicting an ancient, beautiful, primal world, and

characters who are a product of that world. **(hatewheel)**

*I hope they do something like the Storytellers Companion that give you the mechanical ability to run certain splats before thier book comes out. **(Ranger_Lord)***

*Q: Has that ever worked? I mean, even once in the history of ever? **(wastevens)***

A: My experience has been "not really," which is why when Rich asked if we wanted to do one of those, I said "Nah, they've never really been adequate to play with, and they just end up as this useless obsolete thing after a couple of years. I don't like writing stopgaps, done too much of that lately." **(Holden)**

*Q: What is the priority of the new Book of Exalted Power equivalents? I know the first to come out is going to be Dragon-Bloods, then Lunars is being beaten with power tools as we speak, but seriously, Infernals are my favorite (followed closely by Lunars and Abyssals. The light bores me). How long should I put plans on hold? **(Leliel)***

A: I love Infernals too, but I think it's more important to do all the fatsplats well than it is to do them fast. **(Holden)**

*Q: How long until the new Black and White Treatise, as my favorite type in any game is the sorcerer idea guy, and that will be pretty vital to playing him. **(Leliel)***

A: We are probably going to pursue a different format than the traditional Bo3C/S&S/B&WT method. I think you'll like it. **(Holden)**

2E and 2.5E

*Q: So Scroll of the Monk 2 got dropped? **(Tiresias)***

A: Yes. **(hatewheel)**

*Q: Can we expect any amount of backward compatibility, such that those of us who usually play Exalt types traditionally on the far end of the release schedule might still enjoy 3E? **(ysadrel)***

A: Backwards compatibility of mechanics is not really going to be a thing. Sorry! **(Holden)**

"Omicron: I'd identify 2e's problem as the system was boring as shit without magical powers, and it took too long to resolve combat. In 3e, combat resolves smooth, your choices in combat are far more interesting, and combat is genuinely surprising and exciting again, with tactical layers even before you ever try using Charms." **(hatewheel)**

*Q: Any plans on doing anything else for 2.5 before the release of Ex3? **(TranscendantGMStyle)***

A: Nope. We don't have time or energy to waste working to fix an edition of someone else's mistakes. 3e was necessary for the survival of my writing team. The chains are broken. I will not put them back. **(hatewheel)**

*Q: Out of curiosity, though, with the knowledge that 2.5 was first mentioned roughly around the time that Holden started sitting on the topic of Ex3, what was 2.5? Closure? An alpha test? **(TranscendantGMStyle)***

A: 2.5 has been explained many times. It was to make the game playable for the most people possible in time for Shards, so that more people (for example, Sidereal players) could be excited about Exalted and then buy Shards, which would have Sidereal Charms. And look, it paid off—platinum in four days. I only had to nearly kill my writing team to do it.

(hatewheel)

A: It was exactly what it looks like. We started working on EX3 before White Wolf was certain if or when there was going to be an EX3. John said one day "We need to be working on EX3 now, because they're going to ask us to do it, and there won't be enough time when they do, and we need to be ready with answers and ideas and systems already in place when that happens." (Spoilers: A couple months later he was proven correct.) 2.5 was born during that period when 3e was a notional thing we figured was probably going to happen but had no idea when. **(Holden)**

*Q: Was Burn Legend an experiment paving the way for a new combat paradigm? **(LeTipex)***

A: I'm not Holden, but I can answer that: No. Burn Legend was an exercise in paying homage to fighting games and the Street Fighter RPG. The Burn Legend system works because it is optimized for Burn Legend and makes no attempt to handle anything else. You would not want a full Exalted-sized RPG that runs on Burn Legend. **(StephenIs)**

Q: I'm assuming that means that errata is pretty much over for 2E, right? **(Charles Gray)**

A: Yeah. We've collectively put about seven grand in unpaid writing into the Scroll of Errata at this point, very very little of which touches on anything any of us have written. I'm done. **(Holden)**

Q: as a companion to that, was the difficulty of creating errata that worked without changing core assumptions one of the things that convinced everyone 3E was required? **(Charles Gray)**

A: One of many things. **(Holden)**

Q: Writers: What is your favorite 2(.5)e Charm that will no longer work in the 3e paradigm without extensive changes? **(Reminiscent Oasis)**

A: Oooh, you don't want me to answer that one. Would cause a panic-stampede, it would. **(Holden)**

Geoff Grabowski

"I have Geoff doing the chapter fiction for the 3e core." **(hatewheel)**

"You can consider me the lead developer of 3e. 3e is my direction, my designs for Creation, and my book ideas. I construct my hypotheses with, and draw on the advice of Holden, but at the end of the day it is my conclusions that drive the direction of this game and my outlines that will be sent out to the writers. Grabowski offers invaluable support as someone who has been through the fire and has handled developmental crises from every angle conceivable. He has already given me a ton of valuable advice as well as support in terms of liking my ideas and warning me about the pitfalls and obstacles he faced when he was in my position." **(hatewheel)**

"That said, Geoff has already had some pretty great input on the Liminals. Specifically capitalizing on the name Chernozem, he suggested a bit of lore that was pure classic Exalted style, and I am going to run with it." **(hatewheel)**

Q: Say, if Geoff Grabowski is coming back with the new edition, does this mean that the fears of Liminals conflicting with his original vision will be unnecessary? **(Morally ambiguous science)**

A: Oh, he doesn't know about them. We throw a tarp over them and whistle nervously every time he walks by. More seriously, 3e isn't about recreating Geoff's old vision of the game. It's not what we're after and it's not what he's after. **(Holden)**

"For those curious, Geoff is onboard getting this book put together and launched smoothly, and is lending his legendary talents to the project, but he's not the architect of 3e (although so far he's been enthusiastic about the direction we're taking things in). We're no more interested in selling you First Edition again than we are in selling you Second Edition again-- that would be a big waste of everyone's time and money, I think we can all agree!" **(Holden)**

3E Setting

Q: Will large changes in 'canon' history occur? **(MissMaddy)**

A: Define 'large.' **(Holden)**

A: A few. **(hatewheel)**

Q: Are there plans to re-examine the core meta-plot (history of the Wyld and Creation, etc)? **(Totentanz)**

A: The general shape of the setting's history (Usurpation Contagion Empress vanish etc) look like you'd expect. Some details, on the other hand... **(Holden)**

Q: I just have one question for now: Will the scale of the map and/or Creation be redone? **(Hand-of-Omega)**

A: The map is being reexamined. Notice who is saying this. **(StephenIs)**

Q: Will there be an exploration of the First Age? **(Totentanz)**

A: We tend to think of that as something for you to do more than us. However, we will definitely catch interesting new glimpses of the First Age. **(Holden)**

Q: So, we can use Dreams, perhaps, but there are no plans to revisit it? Dreams is plenty; I am just curious how much the 2E version of the First Age survives in the new setting. **(Totentanz)**

A: Dreams is emphatically not the vision of the First Age we want for 3e. **(Holden)**

Q: Could you give us an inkling of ways the 3e First Age might differ? Do you imagine it grander, on a civilization scale? Is it more brutal? I understand you won't lay it all out, but a few peeks would be appreciated. **(Totentanz)**

A: I would imagine less crowing about Merela, for starters. **(StephenIs)**

Q: I have always wondered - as long as you're in the thread and the subject came up... The way Merela was presented felt like an attempt, in a lot of ways, to show that being a special snowflake didn't work, even in the First Age...

(AnubisXy)

A: Yes? No? That's never how I framed it to myself. She's not a special snowflake. She is the sort of person who does things that, afterward, in the retelling, make her look like a special snowflake. Her failures in the immediate aftermath of the Primordial War stem from buying into her own hype. Also aaaaaaagh. I'm doing it again. 3rd Edition announcement was supposed to be my excuse to never rant about Merela again! **(StephenIs)**

"I'm obviously not, here, going to give a list of places that get coverage and don't. I can't even give you general guidelines about what to expect in terms of ratios of old to new. I can't even tell you what the policy will be in terms of what gets coverage and what doesn't. I can say this: We're not committed to covering everything 1e and 2e covered just because 1e and 2e covered it. We are committed to making Creation seem as huge and new and and exciting and unexplored as it was when we first read the 1e corebook. And let's face it, for all that Creation is supposed to be unimaginably huge -- more landmass than Earth! -- and for all that you're supposed to be able to take any arbitrary postage-stamp-sized spot on the map and drop a custom kingdom the size of An-Teng into it, by the end of 2e it was starting to feel a little... filled in. Which we don't want." **(StephenIs)**

3E Metaplot

"On the subject of metaplot: White Wolf has done metaplot badly many, many times. They have often done metaplot that is bad to read. They have almost always done metaplot that is bad for play. White Wolf has done metaplot well exactly once. "Crusaders of the Machine God," in *Time of Tumult* was that one time. (You will note: That was not actually metaplot. That was a fixed setting that existed in time as well as space.) We are well aware of this." **(StephenIs)**

"Geoff had the idea to run the edition over a scale of 5-10 years so that we can do something he was unable to do in 1e: show geopolitical change, the outcomes of wars and natural disasters, etc. There are many valuable incentives to doing this and some of it will necessitate characters doing things. Think of this as a window into the world, into which your characters might crash and change the course of events at any moment. We won't be doing anything like having a character take over the Realm Defense Grid and then hold Creation hostage, or have something like the plot of RotSE happen and turn the setting upside-down. What we will do is purely for the sake of giving you ideas for how to make Creation look vital, to help you pace and understand growth and change and scale. I feel that emphasizing Creation is a key to Exalted's success. I want you to feel immersed and intoxicated by our world, with a burning desire to go there over and over again, as many times as possible. I do not feel that Charms alone can do this." **(hatewheel)**

Q: Apologies for double post, but just read Hate's response. One of the issues with oWoD-style metaplot was it was additive. If, for instance, my Gangrel never left the Cam, many of the future twists and turns were of no use to me as a ST, and in fact became a hindrance. Question: Will there be attempts to mitigate this tendency within Ex3? How easy will it be for me to ignore the metaplot and still derive help from the books? **(Totentanz)**

A: Creation has always been a giant place with lots of room for cool things to happen completely independent of each other. Third Edition will actually act like that's true. **(Plague of Hats)**

A: Effortless. It's a look at process-in-action, rather than a moving target you get dragged through against your will from product to product. We never leave "year one" behind-- it's just that instead of always showing you "year one," you get to see "year one, and immediate consequences," and then jump into the middle of them and change the shit out of them and send out butterfly effect ripples through other places and events in a logical fashion, and really feel the change that your

character inflicts on the Time of Tumult. It is about enabling and empowering your Circle, rather than strapping you to the Metaplot Express, all aboard, choo-choo. (The Metaplot Express is made of soulsteel and moonsilver, btw) **(Holden)**

"Since I'm not authorized to make concrete statements and everything being said by anyone remotely related to the official design team on these threads is being archived for posterity I'm trying to stick to saying as little as possible, but as an old hand at the owoD I know the word 'metaplot' gives certain people the screaming mimis and for good reason. So I will speak up on this topic. Exalted 3e will have metaplot to the same degree that 'Crusaders of the Machine God,' from Time of Tumult has metaplot.

When I say that, what I mean is this: Holden is a mean person and enjoys laughing at failure, as am I and as I do. We have spent a lot of time bantering back and forth over instant messages about how phenomenally bad RPGs in general and White Wolf in specific have historically been at introducing narrative progression through supplements, and how it has never, ever worked, how it kept audience interest up in rickety edifices that inevitably collapsed under the weight of their unplanned, poorly-coordinated, and generally unsustainable bulk. We know all the failures of the Transylvania Chronicles and the Giovanni Chronicles and exactly what went bad with Sam Haight and my timeline in Dreams of the First Age, etc., etc.. These conversations largely go the way of 'Can you believe they' (or 'I,' in that last case) 'thought that shit was a good idea? Ahahahahahahahahah!' (Don't hate me Rich Thomas! We laugh like hyenas because we love, truly!) We have identified 'Crusaders of the Machine God' in Time of Tumult as basically the only time this has been done well. So, to the extent that we have any intention of introducing anything resembling metaplot, it will be done with the intention of doing it well, calibrated to the assumption that Crusaders of the Machine God did it well and everything else in the history of ever did it terribly.

The setting needs to feel dynamic. STs, even those without history, sociology, economic, or anthropology degrees, need to understand how neighboring governments are likely to react to the PCs knocking over a kingdom and taking up residence in its capital city, and they need to understand that reaction as a process the PCs can engage with or interrupt. This sort of thing needs to be effectively communicated through the setting material. Portraying the setting as a mere single snapshot in time (with some history, usually confined to its own chapter and written by a guy who barely communicates with the rest of the writers of the book) doesn't really cut it.

Here's an example of something we would like to avoid, which I am allowed to bash because it's in a book I'm responsible for: 'The Black Fleet of the Bodhisattva Anointed by Dark Waters will surely within the next five years sweep forward and eradicate the entire population of the West, turning the entire Direction into one enormous unassailable shadowland, unless the PCs intercede or the ST decides he's not running this plot, in which case I guess the Bodhisattva sits around with his thumb up his ass until the camera moves to cover what he's doing.'

This post may contain hyperbole introduced for comedic purposes." **(StephenIs)**

"I don't really think of it as metaplot, and it's certainly not what you think of when you hear 'metaplot.' I think of it as a window. Exalted is about a lot of things—society, culture, economics, politics, power, the means by which various human edifices rise and fall, etc. It is about processes, and all processes have a temporal element. This is something we were never able to depict before. Geoff's idea was that rather than staking out 'Day 0' and never dealing with anything else, to mark out a span of five to ten years and to concern the game with that, showing how the interaction of wars and ambitions and natural disasters play out upon Creation—show the Time of Tumult in motion.

What this does not mean is that in the 2013 supplements we write about Gem under siege by Autochthonians, and then in the 2014 books we write about Gem under occupation by Excessively Righteous Blossom. What it means is that when we write about something, we show it as a spectrum rather than a single point, an examination of possible actions and reactions into which your characters might be dropped, totally smashing apart the course of events and driving them in a new direction. Because this will be done in a broad manner across the entire edition, it will be easy to track the ripples created by your actions-- you stop the destruction of Gem, which prevents some potential events outlined elsewhere in the South from ever happening, changing the course of regional history.

If it's a metaplot, it's a metaplot that never leaves you behind, and it's a metaplot made of glass, designed to be shattered

as your heroes go crashing through it, and to make it easy for Storytellers to see how the ripples of PC action go spreading out and changing the course the world might have taken. It's a window into the possibilities of process, designed to empower and to emphasize the impact of your legend, rather than to tie you to the Metaplot Railroad and drive you into the future some writer somewhere wants to build whether you like it or not." **(Holden)**

General 3E System

Q: What kind of system will it use? To be more specific, how beholden to the ST system will it be? (lthle)

A: EX3 runs on a custom-built new version of Storyteller, designed from the ground up to do cinematic combat and to act as a beautiful anchor point for an endless variety of Charms. **(Holden)**

Q: It was inevitable that either the storyteller or storytelling system would be used (though, being a great fan of nWoD mechanically, I personally would have preferred the latter). Also, characters are going to have discrete "cool powers". Given that this is Exalted, what would they be called if not Charms? (Darth Fanboy)

A: Storytelling system is a very poor match for Exalted for a couple of reasons. One, its biggest benefit (enormous simplicity) also means that it's not granular enough for something like a Charm system to attach to very well. Two, the probability curves used for nWoD start to melt once dice pools get yea so big-- it's got a practical power ceiling way too low for Exalted. However, a lot of elements were taken from it when designing the new EX3 engine-- Merits, for example, have proved to be vastly more agile and useful as a system tool than Backgrounds. **(Holden)**

Q: How much 'retraining' will a group not super crunchy and intimidated by like, D&D need? (MissMaddy)

A: Very little, hopefully. **(Holden)**

A: Systems will be written in lively, jaunty, and friendly voice. No more VCR repair manual system sections. There will be examples. System bloat is being cut. The game is being streamlined. There will be a couple new things to learn and a ton of things from 2e to forget and that makes all the difference. I am willing to make people hunt through a list of rules if those rules are exciting and they anticipate the outcome; I found that this was not the case in 2e and so much of the game was a chore. **(hatewheel)**

Q: Would you say the core system changes are more or less fundamental than the 1E->2E changes?

A: Definitely more. **(Holden)**

Q: Will there be explicitly different rules to handle character creation and/or character management for NPCs? (Day_Dreamer)

A: For those who want to use them, yes. **(Holden)**

"Prep and NPC design not a squamous writhing nightmare for Storytellers' is one of the top five priorities for 3e." **(Holden)**

Q: Is the difficulty of completing a roll primarily be based on penalties like NWoD or will it be based on requiring a number of successes? (SGambit)

A: Difficulties are based on successes rolled. **(Holden)**

Q: Will there be changes to what Attributes and/or Skills are available? Are you working from the OWoD / Exalted or the NWoD system as your base for purposes of traits? (Or something else entirely?) (SGambit)

A: The EX2 Attribute/Ability spread are still around. There are some better spreads possible for pure gameplay (especially where Attributes are concerned), but the current spread is adequate for core system functionality and, in our opinions, a better basis for Charm design than, say, the nWoD Attributes. "Appearance Charms" are more fertile soil than "Composure Charms." The purpose many of those Att/Abilities are put to is different, though. **(Holden)**

Q: is epic motivation dead? (Mizu005)

A: Dead as Zed. **(Holden)**

Q: Nice! This made my day. Good info, glad to see your guy's work. I do have some questions, but I'm not sure you can

answer all of them at this time. Still! If 3e is lacking an epic motivation, will they have Virtues and/or Intimacies? If not, what type of thing is currently planned to replace them to represent the moral and emotional aspects of the world that White-Wolf loves to put in their games, if anything? (SGambit)

A: This shall be revealed! **(Holden)**

Q: Are motes keeping the same scale they are now, or are they being made more scarce to reflect that not all charms will require them? (SGambit)

A: This shall be revealed as well :D **(Holden)**

Q: Will I have to keep track of 3+ pools of -stuff- per character. (SGambit)

A: Has there ever been a White Wolf game where you didn't? (Health + Willpower + Magic Mojo at the very least?) **(Holden)**

Q: Have you looked at the nWOD flaw system? Or some similar setup where flaws only give you bonuses if they actually work as flaws? (Conrad Hubbard)

Q: I have never really liked the ideas of flaws as something that award points. There was a time when if I made a character who had some mental or physical challenge, it was because I wanted to make a character with an interesting difficulty to overcome. The payoff was supposed to be the fun of playing those difficulties. I really hope third edition doesn't try to bribe me to take negative character traits; I feel like it cheapens the experience of role-playing. [/elitistmode] (JimB)

A: The most likely model right now appears to be that if you decide you want to play a one-armed boxer, or a stuttering Lunar, or a guy with one eye, your reward will be that the game does indeed allow you to play a one-armed boxer, or a stuttering Lunar, or a guy with one eye. **(Holden)**

Q: I hope that my placement of the word "only" fits your image? Or that my original question applies? (Conrad Hubbard)

A: The only "Flaws" system I've seen that didn't openly invite abuse is the M&M/Nobilis model where you get bennies whenever your debility makes the story more interesting. But EX isn't really built around the same sort of benny-economy as those games, so that's not really a tenable approach for us. With that in mind, it seems that "no mechanical incentive for flaws, it's just a thing you can do for fun" is the best remaining option. **(Holden)**

Ideally, there is a clear difference between 'the best x that can be built in the system' and OTB or something that utterly breaks the system. Nerf Creation-Slaying Oblivion Kick. (kitsune9tails)

Q: Yes, hopefully the system has built-in controls to prevent abuses such as the aforementioned Kick. (Totentanz)

A: That's what I was writing week before last. :D **(The Demented One)**

Q: Actually, the fact they released that Shards book gives me a measure of hope that maybe 3e will be easier to twist and do other things with. But if it isn't, no skin off my back. (ShanG)

A: That is a major feature of 3e. **(Holden)**

Merits

Q: Will Backgrounds exist in this edition? If they do will they be geared towards helping further or flavor the story, or providing personal power to the purchasers? (Exalt in the Machine)

A: We are switching to a Merit system that will be able to do a lot of heavy lifting in this edition. **(hatewheel)**

Q: Merits like the nWOD eh? Interesting. (TheLoneCleric)

A: It solves some problems. **(StephenIs)**

Q: Besides folding the problematic Merit/Flaw mechanic of old into the Backgrounds and allowing the St to define starting power easier? (TheLoneCleric)

A: Besides that, yes. **(StephenIs)**

Q: I'm afraid they'll just copy over from nWoD, not that i don't like that system, it's just not fit for exalted in my opinion. (ttovpy)

A: We are definitely not doing that. **(StephenIs)**

Q: *For those who have played nWoD, what are the advantages of this system to traditional Backgrounds?* **(Daredevil)**

A: The following example is a rough draft and may not reflect finished product. But here's a for-example of how not being locked into a 1-5 scale for everything can be helpful:

Familiar (• to ••) — Story

This Merit may be re-purchased as many times as desired. Creation is filled with beasts both prosaic and exotic, and the character has formed a deep and profound bond with one of them. Although the familiar is (probably) no more able to speak the languages of men than any other beast, the character can roughly understand the chirps, pawings, barks, and gesticulations of his animal companion, and the familiar understands the character's commands in turn. If the character is an Essence-user, he can even share his familiar's senses by concentrating and taking no other actions, so long as the familiar is within (Essence x 100) yards. One dot in this Merit provides a relatively weak familiar, such as a squirrel, owl, cat or dog. Two dots provides a formidable or useful beast, such as a riding animal or vicious predator—horses, simhata, tigers, and omen dogs are all appropriate two-dot familiars. Three dots provides a familiar that is in some way overtly exceptional or magical, such as one of the talking monkeys of Halta, an armored and fire-breathing ox mutated by the Wyld, or a God-Blooded stallion fathered by the horse god Hiparkes. **(Holden)**

Charms

Q: *Is the scope of powers being tuned up, down, or left as-is?* **(SGambit)**

A: Down, but still within the band of "ridiculously awesome." **(Holden)**

"The first anti-lying Charm you get basically completely removes lying from the toolbox of challenges that can be presented to you' is boring as shit." **(Plague of Hats)**

Q: *What is the most shocking fundamental change you can describe?* **(MissMaddy)**

A: Of the ones I can describe without giving too much away, Charms that don't run off the principle of "spend motes gain effect," but which are not Permanent. **(hatewheel)**

For those interested: One thing the writers have stated on the Exalted forum is that the new system has eliminated flurries and the Charms that make them. **(Isator Levie)**

Q: *How about Reactors and similar ideas?* **(ResplendentScorpion)**

A: We are well aware of the problems associated with reactors. This is the same team that errataed the Twilight anima power. **(StephenIs)**

Evocations

"Evocation is the Solar-specific system by which the Lawgivers may derive unique Charms from artifacts, giving them a whole new layer of power and themes to explore." **(White Wolf Release Schedule)**

"Just to be clear: Arms [of the Chosen] info based off very old pitch sheet, Evocations are not a Solar-only mechanic any more." **(Holden)**

Sorcery

Q: *Oh! Oooh! Maybe we could get new, shiny and revamped sorcery, too, worthy of the effort of acquiring it and enough to make an Exalted sorcerer someone to be feared and respected?* **(Lurks-no-More)**

A: Ha ha ha. Ha HA HA. MWA HA HA HA HA HA! *lightning in the dark clouds above* Hee hee. **(Plague of Hats)**

Q: *Do you mean "That was the 1st/2nd/3rd/etc thing we looked at and it's been done for days/weeks/months/etc", or do you mean "it's fine the way it was in 2e"? Because the first is very encouraging, the second very much not so.* **(Steel)**

Eagle)

A: Sorcery will be recognizably different and more exciting in Third Edition. **(Plague of Hats)**

A2: I mean I have the framework for the fix sitting on my hard drive. **(hatewheel)**

Q: Will Sorcery rock? **(Totentanz)**

A: It will be Elric all over the place. **(Holden)**

Combat

"So mundane flurry and Iron Whirlwind style multiattacks are gone in EX3." **(Holden)**

Q: Care to elaborate on this? **(Prometheus878)**

A: You know that thing where you fall asleep waiting for Jim to roll out eight attacks, and then Steve to roll out five attacks, and then Juan Valdez and his magic donkey to roll out three attacks, so that you have to wait 16 attack resolutions to take your turn? That doesn't happen in EX3. (Unless you have 16 players, I guess.) **(Holden)**

Q: *Hmmm. What are your plans for the mechanics? Specifically the deadliness of combat and the mote attrition war. My last Exalted game a few months ago was kinda the killing point for me once I realised that, as fun as the game was most of the time, as soon as Join Battle were declared I immediately stopped having fun. Combat feels like a chore, I feel like I have to work at it to survive. Stunting is no fun because the need to come up with original stunts to keep new motes flowing in, without which you're fucked, quickly drove that to be a chore too. (If my ST is reading this. None of this was your fault in any way, you were perfect and awesome, it's just a natural consequence of the system for me)* **(Rachel Cartacos)**

A: I know the difficult, lethal combat is one of the main points to the game, so I expect you'll maintain that though. Combat has always been one of the major places the game has fallen way short of its promise and potential, I agree. Don't want to do that again. **(Holden)**

Q: *I'd rather actually talk about 3e itself than do this, but I won't get my book for another half year. :(Since I am expecting the death of "motes as HP", can tell us a little about how PCs will recover from combats? Will the default healing times be greatly sped up? Will the Medicine specialist fill a Cleric-like niche? Do you have some kind of amazing new idea for a combat durability economy that I can't anticipate? Am I wrong in assuming that being able to go an entire combat without being physically hit will go from a commonplace to an exceptional event?* **(jhudsui)**

A: One of those is correct! **(Holden)**

Q: Will the Tick-method of tracking initiative still be available? **(SGambit)**

A: EX3 uses a different combat timing engine than EX2. **(Holden)**

Mass Combat

Q: Will there be a mass combat system? Have you kept the "You Wear Them" principle when a PC acts as general? **(Capybara!)**

A: I have devised a two-phase mass combat system that is much easier to use. No testing has happened as of yet. No comment on the mechanical portrayal of armies yet. **(hatewheel)**

All Exalts

Q: To what degree will the old power relationships between Exalts hold in the new edition? **(Totentanz)**

A: Solars on top, DBs down on the bottom, less of a gap between Celestials than in 2e. **(Holden)**

Q: Given that I enjoy Exalted as a fairly unique system where the power relationships are disparate, will I enjoy what you have so far? **(Totentanz)**

A: Oh very yes. **(Holden)**

It's not really a good idea to winnow down the mythic proportions of non-Exalted inhabitants of Exalted, because then you

have a less plausible setting and fewer targets for your PCs to be great heroes at. It's also just, like, fucking boring. One of the things that's wrong with ghosts in Second Edition is that "they're losers who don't matter, in a loser-world that doesn't matter." How can you get excited about them if they're not written to be exciting? I don't want the conclusion of my protagonists' epic journey to be "and then he boot-stomped Wicked Ghost King in one picosecond, THE END." The Exalted can be mighty without dick-punching a Yozi every morning. **(Plague of Hats)**

Q: *I hesitate to ask, but what's your position on Half-Caste existing with access to Exalted abilities in 3e?* **(Lafing Cat)**

A: <http://i284.photobucket.com/albums/1136/Bigsteve87/Gifs/CutThroat.gif> **(Holden)**

God-blooded

Q: *Is the core book going to offer some support to playing Ghost/God/Fae/Celestial-blooded characters, and if no is there going to be a book that deals with them in the conceivable future? Basically, where do you see the Whatever-blooded in your vision for 3E? I find Godblooded and their ilk the red-headed stepchild of Exalted - they have to be included for completeness' sake, but get almost no spotlight apart from filling a niche in between regular mortals and REAL heroes like the exalted. I find them interesting, but there doesn't seem to be much (good) support, at least officially - I think they only get Scroll of Heroes? Mechanically, apart from some abuses their power is somewhere in between mortals and exalts - above, but not completely beyond, non-exalted mortal heroes. These are the kind of figures that are normally the high heroes in mythology, but in Exalted they rank fairly low. On the other hand, this is what makes things so interesting for them - exploring the change of how their archetype works in Creation, their heritage issues, their place in society and how those help shape their life.* **(4uk4ata)**

A: God-Blooded playable out of the corebook: Kinda-sorta-not-really. Not the awakened-Essence kind with Charms, anyway. Later support: I want to give them a 164-page-ish softcover book somewhere down the road. **(Holden)**

Lunars

"Well, for one example, Lunars are no longer characterized as shapeshifters, since that was always a really messy thing to implement. They are now the masters of interpretive dance!" **(Holden)**

Abyssals

Q: *Is there going to be a noticable difference in mechanics between Solar Charms and Abyssal Charms in comparison to 2e?* **(Ganurath)**

A: I don't think the Mirror experiment ended up being as cool as everyone expected it to be. **(Holden)**

Q: *Will Abyssals be given more freedom?* **(Totentanz)**

A: Yes. **(Holden)**

Infernals

Q: *Will Infernal charms still be Yozi Charms?* **(Aiden)**

A: Ask yourself if it was really a good idea to train the fanbase to think of the Yozis as robots whose every behavior could be predicted by examining their Charm trees. **(StephenIs)**

Yozis

"Making the return of the Yozis imminent undid the final outcome of the Primordial War and did irreparable damage to the thesis of the game. This mistake will not be repeated in 3e." **(hatewheel)**

Q: *I've always figured the advantage of the Primordials being that they have 8 XP invested in upgrade Charms (or, at the very least, several million years' worth).* **(Roadie)**

A: The advantage of the Primordials is that they are incarnate cosmic forces, the titans who raised the pillars of the world.

Making their primacy a matter of system abstractions tends to diminish that. **(The Demented One)**

Q: Yet, if the system is going to interact with them - and it must! - presumably at some level you've got to express their primacy as a system abstraction. (Irked)

A: Having the system support the setting is nice. It improves verisimilitude. Yay verisimilitude! But— When you think back to the games you've played, the moments that have been awesome or dramatic or spectacular, you don't think about them in terms of the system, do you? I remember the time that my gnome enchanter sacrificed himself by leaping into an abyssal rift so that he could mind control an otherworldly horror and force it back through to the other side. Not the time I rolled a natural 20 on my touch attack for Overwhelm, and the monster failed its Will save. I remember my players proving themselves innocent of crimes against the Realm and reality to the Bronze Faction in a trial presided over by the Unconquered Sun, not them rolling a lot of successes on their Charisma rolls. We don't try to strip the triumphs and defeats and turnabouts of our characters down to their bare mechanics—so why does it make sense to do that for events in setting history? Yes, the Primordials rolled with tons and tons of Charms. But if we think of the Primordial War as "A bunch of guys with a small number of Charms defeated a bunch of guys with an arbitrarily large number of Charms," it goes from mythic past to, well, math. Math is good to have, but that's not why I play Exalted. **(The Demented One)**

"Removing the Yozis back into a more abstract realm' != 'Completely removing the Yozis from rules abstractions or interactions' (This is not a commentary on what, if anything, will be done in Third Edition.)" **(Plague of Hats)**

Q: My main issue with removing the capability to represent the Primordials in a playable abstraction is that then also removes them as a playable element of the game. This effectively means that the mythic history of the Exalted is something that is not repeatable in a playable fashion and is something that cannot be matched or even properly attempted as part of the game. One of the things I enjoy about Exalted is that nothing is supposed to be off the table in terms of interaction. Of course I can still house rule how I want to portray the Yozis and other Primordials off the foundation of previous material, so the lack of such support isn't horrid but it will be missed if I am understanding the future correctly. (DreamStalker)

A: If we were to ever do, say, a Primordial War boxed set, it would be very important to have rules to let you wage war upon the unbound Primordials, and to weather their reality-scouring mystic assaults! But in the Time of Tumult, the broken Yozis are bound into a prison made of the flesh of their king, anchored to and surrounded by a desert which stretches to infinity and thus can touch nothing else but the prison itself. They are the first opponents the Exalted defeated back at the dawn of recorded history, vast and alien but also ultimately impotent and irrelevant. This is not their story; in the Second Age of Man, they are footnotes, and the Primordial War is a story long since finished. **(Holden)**

Raksha

Q: Will the Echo keyword be making a comeback? (Ganurath)

A: Good God, no. We can design without needing horrible sutures and band-aids to hold things together now. **(Holden)**

Sources

"Ex3. This year. John and Holden and Geoff. Talk amongst yourselves." **(Kukla)**

<http://forums.white-wolf.com/default.aspx?g=posts&t=64643>

Our Questions about 3e **(MissMaddy)**

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