



Annalise



Stories of Pain, Hunger & Redemption

Final Edition



by Nathan D. Paoletta

How To Use This PDF

This PDF is a number of parts. While the bookmarks menu should be fairly self explanatory, here's a menu you can use to jump directly to the different portions of the file.

- Annalise's Journal - a 24-page epistolary short story.
- Annalise Game Text Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Chapter One: Introduction & Overview
- Chapter Two: How To Play This Game
- Chapter Three: Discovering Characters
- Chapter Four: Laying The Foundations
- Chapter Five: The Confrontation
- Chapter Six: The Aftermath
- Appendix I: Play Options
- Appendix II: Guided Play Scenarios
- Character Sheet
- Moment Reference Sheet
- Moment Record Sheet

Thank you so much, and please enjoy the game!

9/17

I've never done this before, but I'm having a hard time out here, and I need to talk to someone. Even if that someone is just a stupid journal. I thought that things would change when I left home, but I guess ... well, I guess that was wishful thinking. I should have known. If coming here for school was something that would actually improve my life, my parents would have found some way to keep it from happening, like with everything else.

Whatever. It's not like they ever cared enough to get mad at me. Just ... apathetic towards everything, unless it would give me some kind of joy, and then...

Eww. I'm getting all emo. Enough of that. I guess I should do some homework, or something. It's funny, I haven't had to hand write anything for so long, my hand's starting to hurt?

We'll see if I actually manage to keep this journal thing up.



9-19

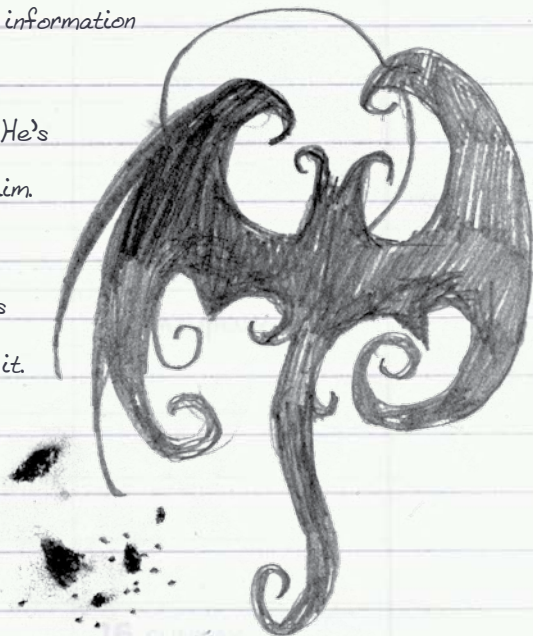
I'm writing this in class, and oh jesus but this guy is boring. You would think that a class on the development of the modern horror novel would be interesting, but Prof. Claghlin manages to totally suck the life out of it. No pun intended.

Not to mention that I've already read, like, everything on the syllabus. I wish someone had told me how the shopping period worked in time for me to actually use it. I love how schools go to all this effort to get you to apply, and then once you're committed they don't provide any information at all about how to actually do anything.

This guy at the front of the class keeps on looking at me. He's kinda cute, but every time he opens his mouth I want to slap him. What an idiot.

Maybe I should do some sketching. My art teacher seems to be really big on our "sketchbook" having a million things in it. I usually just do pencil, but she wants more "media," so I need to go get some pens.

Five minutes left. Guess I should put this away and get ready to go to another meaningless waste of an hour and a half of my life.



9-27

I'm going on a date tonite. I'm actually a little amazed that this is happening. I don't think I've gone on a "real" date since freshman year of high school. This guy Dave from my modern horror novel class has been really making an effort to hang out with me, I guess, and then this morning after class he asked me if I wanted to go get dinner with him off campus. I wasn't really thinking when I said yes - I mean, he's a nice guy and all, but I still think he has nothing interesting to say about, well, anything. Totally empty between the ears.

But he is cute. And I could use a break from this crappy routine. And it's not like I have plans or anything. And he is cute.

I dunno. Maybe I'll just screw him and dump him. Wouldn't be the first time, right?

I hope he takes me somewhere halfway decent to eat.



Cute
Dave

9-28

We arrive at the restaurant, some vaguely Mediterranean place. He pulls out my seat for me. I smile, feeling cold. I know this isn't going to go anywhere. He's boring and nice. I'm high maintenance and complicated. Why am I even here, again?

He asks if I like mussels. I say, "of course?" thinking, "they're ok." We split an appetizer. We talk about school until it becomes unbearable. He asks where I'm from. I have a moment of panic (atotalmidwestshitholewithdumbpeopleandnolifeandparentstwhodontevenknowingone) but manage to smile and answer him. "Don't be tweeaky," I tell myself, "he doesn't need to know how fucked up you are yet. We haven't even ordered dinner yet."

He orders linguine with clams. I order vegetarian lasagna. The food is good, and conversation (thankfully) lags while we eat. I'm full halfway through. I excuse myself to go to the bathroom. I need a break from the banality of the table. On the way I glance out the window. It's dark now. Horribly, oppressively dark, it seems to me. I feel cold again and shiver. I have the sudden sense that out there in the dark is something silently watching.

That nite I sleep with him.



And I
want
your
brain...





No entry in a while. I went home for break, and left this journal in my bag I seriously didn't want my mother having a sudden fit of curiosity and reading it if I left it out somewhere.

Anyway, I got back to town today. Technically yesterday, now. The point is, Dave wasn't there to pick me up, like he said he would.

He told me that he was going to get dinner with his friends, and that he would pick me up from the bus stop after, which worked out just fine for when my bus was supposed to get in.

My bus ran a little late (surprise). Hell, I was worried that he'd be waiting. I'm such an idiot. I called him. No answer, left a message. Now I'm sitting at the bus stop, alone, in the dark, hoping that he's actually going to come and get me. He's still not answering his phone. He'd better be dead, that's the only way this is acceptable.

I'm shivering, even though it must be 65 and I'm wearing a coat. I feel like the dark is pressing in on me. It's hard to hold the pen. The oxygen is getting sucked out of the air by the darkness, and all I'm inhaling is stagnant, useless gas. What is happening... Headlights? They're pushing away the darkness. That had better be Dave.

Same day, just later. Earlier? I ended it. That idiot thought his drinking buddies were more important than me. So now I'm alone again. Whatever. It's more comfortable this way. Just turn everything off and drift through... I almost wrote "drift through the darkness." But I don't want anything to do with the darkness. I don't know why but... I'm starting to get scared of the dark.

11-18

I went to a concert tonite, which is something I haven't done in ages. Most of the music I like is either so old that the band isn't around anymore, or so weird that they're never on tour. Definitely not out to this little scrap of nowhere, at least.

This girl Aimee (she's in a couple of my classes) invited me, and I don't know why I said yes, but I did. Just for something new, I guess. It was for some british band with a chick singer, and one of Aimee's other friends was in one of the opening acts and had free tickets, so what the hell.

I guess I just really needed to get out, even if just for one nite. Anyway, the opening band sucked, abut Aimee's friend Brandon scored us some beer, and that made the experience tolerable. And the main act was really good? I actually really liked it, and I bought a CD (which I'm listening too right now). They're called Bat for Lashes, and I (lame)ly feel like the singer is talking directly to me in the songs.

I should make it a point to do more stuff with Aimee. I think that tonite is the first nite in months that I ... well, this sounds totally dumb, and childish, but. This is the first nite in months that I haven't been scared of the dark.



"WHAT'S A GIRL TO DO" is my favorite song ...

11-21

Bad nite last nite. Bad day so far too. This morning even Aimee couldn't cheer me up. I think I did irreparable damage to my Soc. grade by telling my professor. "No matter what you say, you can't convince me that any of this actually matters" in front of the whole class.

I felt like I was suffocating all nite. When I managed to dream, everything was red and black and I knew that if I made the wrong decision everything would hurt. I was desperate, longing to find out what the decision was supposed to be about, but just as I'd be about to realize it, I would stop breathing.

My roommate didn't even notice, even when I woke up choking. I hope that bitch dies.



11-26

Exhausted, but feeling the need to write. Aimee is in the hospital. She hasn't been feeling well, and she wasn't in class today (and she's little miss punctual ALL THE TIME). I called her after class and she didn't answer, and it didn't go to voicemail either. Just ringing. It was strange. Just ringing... I suddenly felt that oppressive choking feeling that's been plaguing my dreams. And I knew that something was very, very wrong.

I went to Aimee's room. Door was ajar, room was dark. I go in and there's no light and I can't see if she's in bed. Are you here Aimee? Aimee? She's there, on the bed, she moans in response to my words. I can just barely see her in the darkness. I go to her, calling her name. I call 911 and sit with her, trying to draw in breath through the stagnant air.

She's ok. Apparently she has had some "issues" with anemia in the past, and she hasn't been eating well lately (finals are coming up, after all) and her iron level dropped. Or something. I sat with her for awhile today, and now I'm just tired everywhere. She should be out tomorrow. Sleep, for me, now.



Aimee got back home from the hospital today. She was in good spirits but I could tell that she's not feeling well. Something about how she's moving. It's like she has lead weight in her bones. I signed up for a winter session class so that I have an excuse to stay here and take care of her. We have a couple of mutual friends (well, friends of hers that I've met), and I could tell that they wanted to ask me what happened to her, but I didn't give them the opportunity. It's nobody's business but ours.



12-11

Woke up again tired today. Instead of going to class I'm sitting under a tree on the edge of campus, sketching in the snow.

I've been having more and more strange dreams. The nite before last I dreamed in all red and silver. I was walking into a strange library with tall stacks of books surrounding me, a labyrinth of words and bindings. I could measure my pace like the ticking of a clock, my heels clicking out the dry seconds among these moldy tomes. I wandered for days, maybe hours, and then I was before the only open book, bound to a silver pedestal with chains of pulsing red as if to keep the library from floating off the ground. The book was held open to a map of the heart, all exposed veins and ventricles, the chambers each opening and closing into the channels of life running out to the library. The book of hearts. And I reached out as if to touch it, but then darkness slammed down around me and I woke up gasping for air.

I can't get that image, the map of the heart, out of my head. Sometimes it turns into a map of Mimeo's features. Sometimes I wonder why I couldn't touch it.



sitting under a
tree...

Oh shit. I'm really freaked out right now. Deep breaths, writing, getting a handle on things. It's funny how putting things down into words helps me figure it all out. So. I was hanging out with some idiots and drinking bad wine, and I had a sudden image of the map of the heart and felt ill. Very ill. Almost vomited over everyone kind of sick. The guy who had been trying to hit on me all nite tried to stop me, but I had to get out of that house. The cold air helped a little bit, but I knew that it would be a very bad idea for me to go back in there, so I headed back to my dorm.

All the way back, I swear to god I kept hearing this whisper as if just behind my ear. I could almost feel breath on my neck, and I kept turning around but there was nothing there. Just darkness and wind.

I was totally sober, I AM totally sober as I hold this pen now... this voice, soft, gentle, whispering something just beyond my comprehension... and then when I get to my building, for just a second I swear that I see a face. A face in the glass, reflected as if from behind me. I turned again, I might have screamed a little, but of course there was nothing there and when I turned again it SMILED at me, and it's mouth was red, red and silver like my dreams... was I dreaming? No, not at all, and then I was inside and nothing at all.

I have to call Aimee, even if it is four in the morning and she hasn't been feeling well. Something is NOT OK.



12-14

Another dream. I'm back in the infinite library, and I can feel the heart's beating throbbing through my shoes. I start pulling books off the shelves at random, and they're all blank. Just blank silver pages, and I start tearing them out, one by one, methodically and silent. I stalk the heart, destroying the books and then I start screaming, "COME OUT" I scream, "I've had enough, COME OUT" The silver pages turn to blood and flow towards me, and I'm at the bottom of a well. The blood runs up over my feet and hips and breasts, it's up to my neck and then Aimee's face is before me, and she says "help me" in a small voice. The blood closes over my head and I wake with red before my eyes, gasping for breath.

I have to... I don't know.

Make it stop.

Somehow.



12-18

Aimee has been acting strangely. She's sleeping through her morning class and I've had to start bringing her lunch in her room, though she hardly picks at it. She says that she's just too tired to go outside. But she's been going out every nite, and she's getting all of her work done for school, so I guess she doesn't really care as long as her grades stay up. I asked her if it was the anemia thing, but she said that she just hasn't been feeling motivated until the sun starts going down. I told her that she sounded like someone out of a bad Dracula ripoff, and she laughed at me. But she also asked me to keep checking on her, and I can tell that she's worried about something, even if she won't share with me.



I'm also worried, but I definitely can't go to anyone. The school doesn't give two shits about the students, and her parents are total whackjobs and would probably try to institutionalize her again. I'm the only one she has, and I'll be keeping a close eye on her. I'll figure out some way to help her.

12-19

When I get back to my room today there's an envelope pinned to my board. It has my name on it. Inside is a crucifix, with a note that says, "Please put this on. It will help."

The cross looks like it's smeared with blood. What the fuck do I do now?



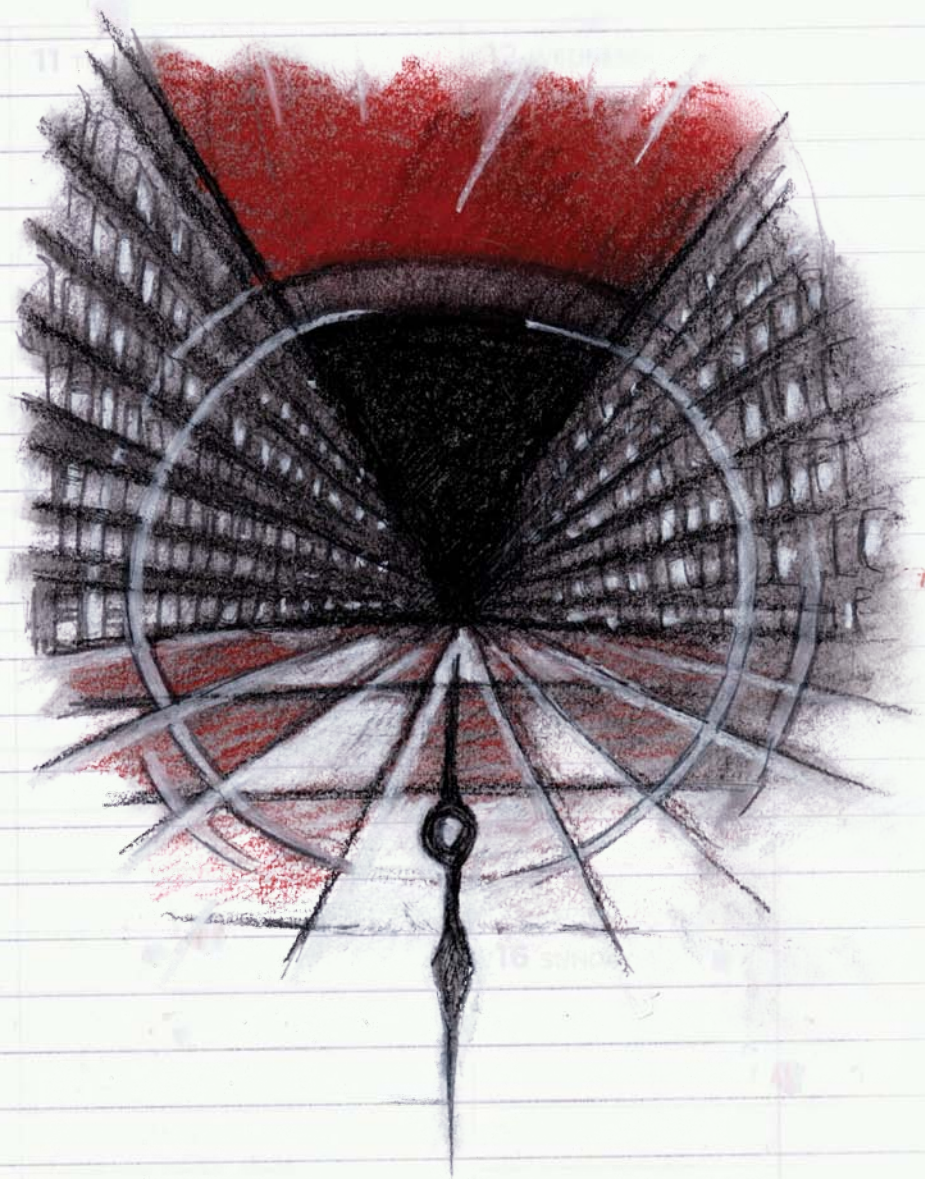
I carried the cross in my bag all day. I didn't want to leave it on my door, obviously, and I it wierded me out to think of it sitting in my stuff, or touching my skin, so into the outside pocket of my bag it goes. I don't really know what to do about finding out who put it there. It's obviously related to all this weird shit that's been going on, but I'm just so frustrated that I can't think straight about anything. The broken sleep, the dreams, the stress of dealing with Aimee, it's hard for me to concentrate.

I almost yelled at her today. She kept looking really uncomfortable when I came close to her, and didn't want to talk to me, and didn't even look at the food I brought her. And then, when I came back from the bathroom, she was pulling stuff out of my bag? She tried to cover, she said she "smelled something bad," but seriously? I asked her if she was on drugs or something and she started getting teary and told me I should just leave her alone. If she's going to treat me like this, maybe I will.



12-21

Finally? I can't
decide whether I
should laugh or cry,
but I finally feel like
I'm getting closer
to an answer? See,
earlier today I was



Now I just want to cry. Last entry got cut off because ... well, here's the story. I was in the library, looking up (of all things) dream analysis. I mean, I didn't know what else to do, with all this that's been happening, and my dreams being so ... painful. I'm going through this stack of books, and then I hear someone coming up behind me. I'm on edge, I stand up, quickly, and slam my knee on the table, then I fall over (idiot) and I'm looking up and this guy is standing over me. I've never seen him before, he seems pretty young, maybe in his mid-20s, not that great-looking, but with this weird intensity in his eyes. He doesn't seem to care that I freaked out, he's just staring at me and says, very softly, "Why aren't you wearing it?"

I want to ask a million questions, but I know that he's the one who left the crucifix on my door. I just look back at him and say, in my coldest fuck-you tone, "Why should I?" He says we need to talk. I agree. He looks out the window nervously. "We have some hours until nitefall, it should be safe to stay here for now." I say, "Look, I don't care about what time it is, just tell me why the fuck you've been following me." He says, "I haven't been following you. I've been following it."

It?

He says, "Stay here. I need to make sure we're ... safe." He leaves, which is when I started writing the last entry, but he came running back after just a couple minutes - and I mean **RUNNING**, I think he jumped over a table, which was impressive given his, uh, less than athletic build - and goes, "the presence is here, I can feel it. We have to go elsewhere." At this point, I'm so fucking confused and, to be honest, scared, that I just dumbly follow him.

More later. I still ... haven't processed what happened next.

12-22

I grab my bag and follow this guy through the stacks. I ask him his name, and over his shoulder he says "Anderson." He's heading towards the back exit, I'm starting to get that weird pressure feeling all around me and I start to see the books extend out to either side of me, like in my dream, like in the infinite library... he turns and barks at me "PUT IT ON" and I numbly do so, the crucifix settles on my chest and I feel that I can breathe again.

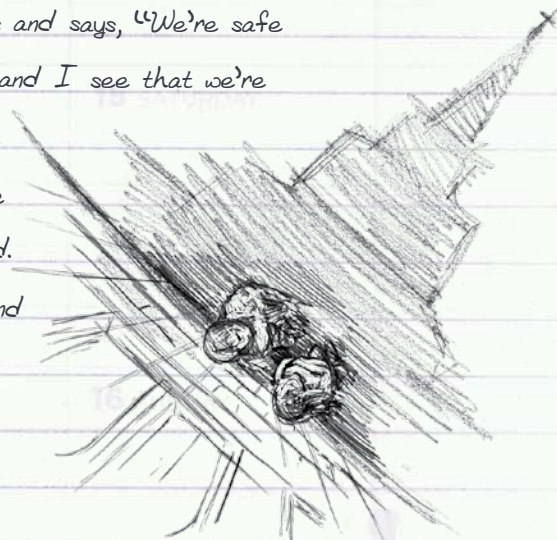
We rush out the back exit and he takes an immediate left, hugging the building. He looks around the corner, and seems to be ... listening? ... then says, "its safe, let's go" and we head across the quad. I see people I know, going about their day, going to class, and I'm struck by the surreality of the whole thing. I'm floating through them, following a stranger to somewhere "safe" where he's going to ... what? Protect me?

I don't need protection.

We're next to the chapel. He stops in an odd place, turns and says, "We're safe here." I say, "Why?" He looks up, and I follow his gaze, and I see that we're standing directly in the shadow cast by the building. I say, "Are you serious?" And he says, "Serious as cancer." He almost cracks a smile and suddenly looks very young and tired.

I say, "Ok. We're safe. What the FUCK is going on." And he says, "I'm hunting a Vampire. I need your help."

And I laugh.



All I can think about is the time when I was a kid, little, a little kid. A little girl. And I was out in the yard, and I saw this bird. It was really pretty and I wanted to pet it. And when I tried to pet the pretty bird it pecked me, it didn't peck me it STABBED me, stabbed me right in the hand with its sharp beak, and I started crying and then my dad was there. He picked me up and held me and didn't seem to mind that I was getting blood on his shirt, his white work shirt because he had just come home from work, but he didn't mind and he cleaned my hand and wrapped it and told me everything was going to be ok.

That's the last time I can remember my daddy taking care of me.



22 SATURDAY

23 SUNDAY

DATEBOOK

12-22

(later)

Anderson isn't really good at explaining things. He kept talking about history, and battles, and curses and shit like that, and finally I just said, "Stop." I grabbed his chin, looked straight into his eyes and said, "Look. A bunch of crazy shit is happening, my best friend is DYING, I keep having these dreams, someone is stalking me, and you're telling me it's a Vampire? Blood-sucking fiend of the nite? Bela Lugosi, Dracula, all that? Fine, whatever. But if you actually have something USEFUL to say, spit it out or I'm calling the cops. Because you're harassing me too."



There ... may have been some more cursing in what I actually said.

He seemed to get it, though. He blinked a couple of times, shook himself and looked around, like he expected something to jump on him right then. "This thing, I don't know where it came from or even it's name, or anything. I just know where it's been, and what it's done, and what it's going to do. To you, to your friend, to anyone who catches its eye."

"What has it done?" I say. "Doesn't matter," he mutters, and looks at the ground, "I ... we ... just need to stop it." He says has a plan. He checks his watch and looks at the sun, and tells me it's safe to move, and to meet him outside Aimee's dorm tonite. Sunset, of course. So now I'm sitting, waiting, writing this all down just in case ... I don't know why.

I guess I'm scared.

I fell asleep. Another dream. I was standing on top of a house, maybe my old house, maybe another one, I couldn't really tell. And all around me were birds, crows and ravens and finches and buzzards, blue jays and jackdaws, seagulls, robins, grouse, pigeons. All different, all flying around me, all silent. So silent. And beneath my feet I felt a pulsing, and between my toes I felt chains, and I looked down and I was standing on the heart, the heart chained to the ground, with the birds rising out of it and around it. Circling it. Protecting it. But they didn't see me. I was invisible, unwatchable, unknowable.

I woke up, but something was different. I felt better, somehow. Something has changed. Was knowledge all I needed? Simple realization?

Then I saw my journal already open. And somehow there was a new entry, in between two I'd already written. About my father. Something I'd forgotten.

It's important, I know it. Something... I'll figure it out. Before sunset. Only a couple of hours.

I need to get to work.





Nothing ever goes the way you think it will. I don't even really know how to say this. Just the facts, I guess.

I meet Anderson at sunset. He's carrying a heavy-looking bag and looks nervous. Determined. But nervous. We go up to Aimee's room ... I go to knock, he puts his hand on mine. It's strangely thrilling. He tries the doorknob, it turns, he eases his way in. I follow, clutching the map. Aimee? Are you here, darling? She whispers from the bed, but I know she's not talking to me. The window is open, cheap curtains fluttering on the breeze.

I go to her. Her eyes are closed, her breathing is labored, but she's smiling. Smiling so pretty. I can't remember the last time I saw her smile. I'm dimly aware of Anderson, taking things out of his bag. I bite my lip and unroll the map, and slowly, so slowly, place it so the chains meet over Aimee's heart.

Her eyes snap open and fix on mine. Words trapped behind her lips. Behind me, Anderson grunts and I hear a crash. But that doesn't matter. Now it's just me, me and Aimee, and she needs me. I see it now, she needs me and I need her, and this thing has gotten between us. It's been taking her because that's how ... oh. Because that's how it can get to ... me.

Aimee sees me realize this, and she makes a supreme effort, grabs my hands and presses them to her as hard as she can, poor thing. She is so weak, she's lost so much. She can't stop me.

I lean down and kiss her, lightly. I wish her well. I'll miss her. But she should get better now. I turn around, and see Anderson holding out his crucifix with one hand, a sharp wooden stake in the other, pathetically trying to keep himself between me and it, the one who has been here since the start, the one who was waiting. I see those eyes, eyes reflected through a mirror, through glass, through blood and blank page, and he knows that I know.

I place my hands on Anderson's shoulders and turn him around. His mouth is open in a comical "O," his surprise overcoming his determination. His blood spatters across my face and he slumps to the floor.

I take off the blood-stained crucifix and leave it on his body. I go to meet my love. I suppose this is my last entry, then. I won't be needing this anymore.

I finally found the one who loves me.

10 MONDAY

11 TUESDAY

12 WEDNESDAY

MORNING

AFTERNOON

EVENING

13 THURSDAY

14

15 FRIDAY

MORNING

AFTERNOON

16 SUNDAY



Annalise



Stories of Pain, Hunger & Redemption



by Nathan D. Paoletta



Credits

- ♣ Game Design, Writing, and Layout by Nathan D. Paoletta
- ♣ Editing by Adam Dray
- ♣ Proofreading by Elizabeth A. McKeon
- ♣ Critical Feedback by Jamey Crook, Dave Cleaver, and Moreno Roncucci
- ♣ Original Playtesting by Nathan D. Paoletta, Patrick Hume, Can Kantarelli, Jesse A. Caldwell-Washburn, Adam Shive, Shreyas Sampat, Elizabeth Shoemaker, Jonathon Walton, Kat Jones, Melissa Fugiero, and Matt Beisler

Guided Play Scenario Credits:

- ♣ “The Mysterious Voyage of the Auspicious” by Nathan D. Paoletta
- ♣ “Dracula Reloaded” by Kat Jones
- ♣ “The Wake of Zenas Quantum” by Jared Axelrod
- ♣ “At the Crossroads of Sanctuary and Salvation” by Jesse Burneko
- ♣ “Viva L.A. Revolution” by Kira Scott
- ♣ “In the Shadow of the Mountain” by Sam Zeitlin
- ♣ Illustrations by Jennifer Rodgers

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Please visit *Annalise* online at <http://www.findannalise.com>

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Jennifer Rodgers:

- ♣ Annalise’s Journal Entries 9-17, 9-19, 10-26, 12-12, 12-18, 12-19, 12-20, 12-21, 12-22, undated entry, 12-22 (later) pages 1, 2 and 3, and final undated entry
- ♣ Book Illustrations on Title Page, page 52, and page 64
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- ♣ Annalise’s Journal Entries 9-27, 9-28, 11-18, 11-21, 11-26, 11-28, 12-11, 12-14, and 12-22 (later) page 3

Please visit her online at

www.spiralunwinding.com

BAT FOR LASHES

Bat for Lashes is an amazing band whose music was extremely inspirational for this game. The band’s name and artist’s interpretation of their logo is used here without permission, but with respect. No challenge to the band’s identity is being made or inferred, and I have absolutely nothing to do with them other than being a fan. Please visit Bat For Lashes online at

www.batforlashes.com



Foreword	...	page 5
Chapter One: Introduction & Overview	...	page 7
About The Game	...	page 7
Books & Short Stories	...	page 8
Films	...	page 9
Where This Game Fits	...	page 10
Introduction For The Uninitiated	...	page 11
Introduction For The Experienced Roleplayer	...	page 12
Chapter Two: How To Play This Game	...	page 13
Game Structure	...	page 13
The Players	...	page 15
Dice & Coins	...	page 16
Characters	...	page 17
Setting	...	page 17
The Vampire	...	page 17
Chapter Three: Discovering Characters	...	page 19
Starting the Game	...	page 19
Core Trait: Vulnerability	...	page 20
The First Scene	...	page 21
Claims	...	page 22
Finishing the Introductions	...	page 24
The Setting	...	page 25
Core Trait: Secret	...	page 26
Lines & Veils	...	page 28
Assigning Coins	...	page 29
In Conclusion	...	page 29
Summary	...	page 29



Chapter Four: Laying The Foundations	page 31
Overview	... page 31
Roleplaying	... page 33
Claiming Scene Elements	... page 33
Satellite Traits	... page 35
Moments	... page 36
Moments & Outcomes	... page 38
Resolving Moments	... page 39
Using Claims in Moments	... page 42
Ending Moments	... page 43
Reserves	... page 44
Vulnerability during...the Foundations	page 45
Secrets during Laying the Foundations	page 46
Ending the Phase	... page 47
Summary	... page 48
Chapter Five: The Confrontation	... page 53
Beginning The Phase	... page 53
Playing Through The Confrontation	page 53
Major Differences	... page 54
Flipping Traits	... page 55
Sacrificing Claims	... page 56
Revealing Secrets	... page 57
Giving In	... page 57
Ending The Confrontation	... page 59
Summary	... page 59

Chapter Six: The Aftermath	... page 61
Finishing The Story	... page 61
Ending the Game	... page 62
Summary	... page 63
Afterword to the Final Edition	... page 65
Appendix I: Play Options	... page 67
Facilitating the Game	... page 67
Games for Two Players	... page 67
Games with One Protagonist	... page 68
Appendix II: Guided Play Scenarios	page 69
The Mysterious Voyage of the Auspicious	page 71
Dracula Reloaded	... page 74
The Wake of Zenas Quantum	... page 78
At the Crossroads of Sanctuary & Salvation	page 82
Viva L.A. Revolution	... page 85
In the Shadow of the Mountain	... page 89



Foreword

Ever since I played **carry: a game about war** with Nathan at a convention many years ago, I have been a fan of his games. When he told me he was working on a game about the victims of a vampire, I was intrigued but not entirely hooked. You see, I was not a fan of vampire stories. *Annalise* changed my mind.

Nathan writes sneaky games. I had read **carry** before playing it with him, and I totally didn't understand how it was special. I had the same experience when I read *Annalise* for the first time—while editing it, in fact. I didn't see how the rules you're reading now could produce anything special in play. Later, when I watched while he and some friends played for a few hours, I realized there was something very interesting going on. I had to play it myself to finally get it. I understand it a little better every time I play.

What impresses me most about *Annalise* is how it creates mood. There's something about how the Claims work that can make everyday things downright creepy. In one game, I mentioned the smell of rotting meat in a garbage can. My friend Daniel grabbed “rotting meat” as a Claim, and he kept reincorporating that element throughout the game as a telltale of supernatural activity. Similar things happened with Claims on “doors” and “dusty old books.” I think that the repetition of any element in a horror game can give that element additional weight. The element becomes an ominous sign that reinforces the dark mood of the story.



Another thing I love about this game is how quickly you start playing. Everyone writes down a name and why their character is vulnerable, and then introduces those two things in a short scene that they narrate. There is no lengthy character set-up process. You develop characters—rather, you discover them—through play and you never really have full control over your character. There’s a sort of spooky Ouija board action as the hands of every player pull the story in different directions.

Finally, the resolution mechanics are brilliant. Every important moment is resolved by building a collection of outcomes, good and bad. Dice still determine what happens, but you get to decide which outcomes are most important to you. And of course, the other players get to tug the results this way and that by interfering in ways that force you to compromise. The story never quite ends up the way you think it will.

Whether you play the game about a literal, blood-sucking vampire that stalks the characters or more figuratively about some terrifying horror that the characters must confront, *Annalise* provides a solid framework for creating dark and suspenseful stories. I’m looking forward to playing again—perhaps with you some time.

Adam Dray
Editor



These sidebars serve three purposes. First, they contain supplementary text and explanations of nearby material. Second, they contain cross-references to related information in other locations of the text. Finally, sidebars contain two sets of running examples of the game's rules in play.

IN THIS CHAPTER

This introductory chapter contains three parts. Where This Game Fits describes the game in basic structural terms, with an eye towards informing you how it can fit best into your gaming life. The Introduction for the Uninitiated aims at people who have little experience with roleplaying or story games. The Introduction for the Experienced Roleplayer is for people who have roleplayed before, and describes how *Annalise* is similar to and different from other roleplaying games. Read the Introduction which seems like it best fits your experience; it probably isn't a bad idea to read everything, but it's not necessary, either.

Chapter One: Introduction & Overview

About the Game

Something is out there in the darkness, watching you. It wants you. Somehow, it's found you. You are repulsed and intrigued, attracted, and revolted. You struggle against it, perhaps without even realizing it. In some ways, this battle defines you. In the end, the darkness will change you—but for better or for worse?

Annalise is a game for two to four players, each playing a protagonist in a vampire story. The characters have all fallen under the influence of a vampire, a creature of the night that gains its sustenance from others. At its core, this game is about managing destructive emotions via the metaphor of the struggle against the vampire. On a less visceral level, *Annalise* is about creating vampire stories from the perspective not of the vampire, but of its victims, servants, enemies, and others affected by its appetite. Sometimes games play out like a Bram Stoker story, sometimes like an Anne Rice novel, and sometimes like a Stephen King thriller. This is creating the story of *Dracula* by playing Van Helsing, Mina Harker, and Renfield. This is writing the story of *Lost Boys* by playing Sam, the Frog brothers, and the grandfather. You get the idea.

In the process of play, the group discovers and defines the Vampire. The Vampire literally can be a blood-drinking, undead creature or it can be a metaphorical entity that requires something of a less grotesque nature for its survival. No one creates the creature before play, and no one is solely responsible for playing the creature.



While the game is inspired by and aimed squarely at creating vampire stories, these stories (at least, the ones I'm most interested in) are themselves a subset and descendant of the "Gothic horror" genre. These tales are typified by the struggle between desire and reason, the terror of isolation in the face of the unknown, and catharsis and resolution via destruction—sometimes the destruction of the source of the horror, but sometimes the destruction of that which the characters hold dear. It is not uncommon for a game of *Annalise* to morph away from a classic vampire and towards a different kind of shadowy malevolence. For the sake of clarity, however, the rest of this text will concentrate on the literal vampire as the object of the characters' focus.

Below is a sample of some of the inspirational fiction for this game. Obviously, you need not read all of these stories nor watch all of these movies to enjoy the game—the game is built to guide you through creating the appropriate kind of fiction, after all—but you can use these sources as touchstones for the tone and theme in play.

Books & Short Stories

- ♣ *Carmilla*, by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1872)
- ♣ *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker (1897)
- ♣ *Revelations in Black*, by Carl Jacobi (1933)
- ♣ *I Am Legend*, by Richard Matheson (1954)
- ♣ *Pages from a Young Girl's Journal*, by Robert Aickman (1975)

A WORD ON THE FICTION

All of the books and short stories listed here are inspirational in terms of tone and content, and are structured in such a way they can be viewed through the "lens" of *Annalise* as a game that produces similar fiction. *Carmilla*, while not the founding text of the modern genre (that honor goes to John Polidori's 1819 story *The Vampyre*) founded the story core to many of the tales to follow, including *Dracula*.

Carmilla is a written account of a young woman, isolated in a strange place, with mysterious symptoms of an unknown disease; she becomes emotionally involved with a mysterious and aloof stranger, who fascinates and terrifies her in equal measure. Finally, an expert on such things discovers the truth and the creature is destroyed. This story, entirely appropriate to an age concerned with the influx of alien Eastern European cultures into the West, became stale by the early Twentieth Century.

Revelations in Black represents a personal kind of horror. Told in the first person, this story concerns the narrator's interaction with a mysterious book written by an insane man. The tome leads him to meet and discover the nature of a woman dressed in black. Initially unable to resist her, he falls ill, but with the final pages of the tome as his guide, he manages to throw off the influence of the vampire and destroy her. In much vampire fiction, objects have power and intrinsic meaning, especially objects that symbolize rationalism, modernism, and true religious faith.



I Am Legend takes the basic vampire myth and recasts it in a scientific mold, transforming the trappings of modernity into the reason for the vampire's existence and requiring the discovery of new tools to destroy a vampire. This story inverts the standard paradigm as it follows the last man alive after a terrible plague that turns the rest of humanity into blood-drinking creatures. The vampires here are a mass of ever-present horror and the narrator stands alone against them. This story also moves away from the ensemble cast, and can serve as inspiration for a game of Annalise that focuses on only one character.

Finally, Pages from a Young Girl's Journal explores the other side of the vampire—the seductive creature of mystery offering unknown temptations. Written in epistolary style, Pages follows the story of a young girl traveling abroad with her emotionally distant parents at the time when she meets a thrilling Italian stranger. Over the course of the story, she makes it clear that she enjoys his presence and the power that he has, and in the end she simply accepts her fate with a simple, “I doubt if I shall write any more. I do not think I shall have any more to say.” This stands out as a breaking of the trend of the fiction always ending with the destruction or rejection of the vampire, and sets up the vampire-as-sympathetic-protagonist genre of the later Twentieth Century.

The films listed here run the gamut from stark experimental work (Nosferatu) to classics of the genre (Dracula) to the modern action-movie interpretation of the vampire (Blade & Blade II). They serve primarily as inspiration for tone and examples of visual storytelling, rather than for content. Notice the broad themes throughout these films: blood, shadows, the moon, blood, fire, mistaken identities, victims, blood, prosecutors of the wicked, and more blood. These are good themes to fall back on when playing Annalise.

Films

- ❧ *Nosferatu*, starring Max Schreck (1922, directed by F.W. Marnau)
- ❧ *Dracula*, starring Bela Legosi (1931, directed by Tod Browning)
- ❧ *Dracula's Daughter*, starring Otto Kruger (1936, directed by Lambert Hillyer)
- ❧ *Dracula*, starring Frank Langella (1979, directed by John Badham)
- ❧ *The Lost Boys*, starring Jason Patric and Corey Haim (1987, directed by Joel Schumacher)
- ❧ *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, starring Kristy Swanson (1992, directed by Fran Rubel Kuzui)
- ❧ *Blade*, starring Wesley Snipes (1998, directed by Stephen Norrington)
- ❧ *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*, starring voice of Hideyuki Tanaka (2000, English version directed by Jack Fletcher)
- ❧ *Blade II*, starring Wesley Snipes (2002, directed by Guillermo del Toro)
- ❧ *Let The Right One In*, starring Kåre Hedebrant (2008, directed by Tomas Alfredson)



Where This Game Fits

In the lingo of the gaming hobby, *Annalise* is a no-prep, short- to medium-form, setting-less, GM-less game. It could be considered a “story game” in the sense that the product of play is intended to resemble the kind of Gothic horror fiction described above. However, the game uses a tight mechanical structure to achieve this, making it not particularly “rules-light.” If none of this makes sense to you, don’t worry about it—I recommend reading the Introduction for the Uninitiated (below, **page 11**) for a little more context.

Annalise works well for groups of two, three, and four players. It still works fine for groups of five or more, but I’ve found that each player above four makes it more and more difficult to keep everyone involved and on the same page during the game.

Annalise requires no preparation to play. Like a board game, you start play once the group sits down and opens the box (or pdf file, in this case). It is usually helpful to appoint a facilitator (see **page 67** for details) who explains how the game works and who makes any judgment calls about the rules as needed, but there is no individual Game Master. Rather, the job of the GM (called the scene guide in this game) rotates from player to player during the game.

Play is structured in discrete scenes, and works well when the group uses strong scene-framing techniques

and everyone at the table offers some input for the content of each scene. *Annalise* uses a kind of conflict resolution system that creates an array of potential outcomes for a given dramatic moment. Players negotiate outcomes as part of the resolution process. Finally, the game has a loose, over-arching structure to it. You and your group will have to find your own pace and balance between “freeform” roleplaying and the use of the mechanical system.

Annalise requires as little as one session of three to four hours to play, up to as many as five or six sessions. The duration depends on how hard your group drives towards resolution and how much you engage in freeform roleplay compared to interaction with the rules, so it can fit into your normal gaming schedule in many ways. *Annalise* is a good game to pick up when you want to break up a long-running campaign; toss in a game of *Annalise* when players don’t show up for your regular game. Play a short-term game when you can’t find players who can commit to a long series of evenings. Use the Guided Play Scenarios (or create your own) to create a good one- or two-session structure. The included Guided Play Scenarios (starting on **page 69**) are perfect for a convention or game day event. *Annalise* is not an epic kind of game that spans months or years, but it is certainly a satisfying game. I hope you have fun with it!



Introduction for the Uninitiated

Hello! This introduces the game to those who have very little or no experience playing this kind of game. *Annalise* is a couple different things. In the most literal sense of the word, *Annalise* is a roleplaying game. You and your friends will take the roles of characters that you created together (the “roleplaying” part) and use a set of rules (the “game” part) to tell a certain kind of story that casts your characters as the core protagonists. Therefore, this game is also what could be called a story game. The point of the game is to create a story about a vampire and its victims, its lovers, and its hunters.

Obviously, you don’t need a set of rules to sit around with your friends and make up a story together. So what’s the point of the rest of this pdf, then? The rules shape and order your make-believe and channel your energy and creativity to create a compelling, exciting, and interesting story. The rules create a safe space in which to share your imagination. By following the rules, you are giving up a little bit of freedom to assure a certain baseline quality of narrative. After playing once, you may find some parts of the rules that are still uncomfortable or that you don’t feel like you need. That’s totally okay— playing the game as written should teach you the skills you need to tell a great vampire story in the modern Gothic horror tradition. If you get to a point where you don’t need the training wheels anymore, that’s fantastic!

What do you actually do when you play, other than follow the written rules? The majority of freeform play “in between” using the rules is a hybrid form of writing, directing, and improvisational theater—roleplaying! When it is your turn, you act in the role of your character, saying what the character says, describing what the character does, and authoring a story in real-time as you play. For most of the game, each turn also features a scene guide, another player who authors the rest of the world around your character and jumps into the roles of non-player characters (NPC, for short). The scene guide describes events as they happen and plays out the consequences of your character’s choices. The other players are audience members observing the two people involved in each scene, though they usually participate by commenting and offering informal suggestions. The positions of active player, scene guide, and audience rotate around the table with each turn; each player gets to occupy each position multiple times during the game.

Roleplaying can be a strange activity when you’re not used to it. Pay particular attention to the examples in the sidebars to get a sense of how players interact as they use the rules. Maybe start your first game using one of the Guided Play Scenarios (starting on **page 69**), which give you a set of characters and the beginning of a story right off the bat. In any case, I hope you enjoy the game!



Introduction for the Experienced Roleplayer

If you're reading this introduction, then you have some amount of experience with reading and playing roleplaying games. Right on. *Annalise* is a game written in the tradition of roleplaying games, but it works in different ways. A lot of these differences are covered under Where This Game Fits (above, **page 10**) but here's a little more detail. The attributes *Annalise* has in common with many other games are the differences between a player and a character, what a game master (in this game called the "scene guide") does, the use of dice to resolve what happens during the game, and the basic form of a group of friends getting together to have a good time.

Note, however, a number of differences from how most popular roleplaying games work. First of all, there is no single GM (scene guide) for the game. Every player has a character, and the scene guide role rotates among the players on a scene-by-scene basis, giving each player the opportunity to both play and GM the game at different times. Also, this is not a "party-style" game in the "don't split up the party" sense. While the characters all know each other, probably will have scenes together, and may work together to face the Vampire in the end, each scene puts one character at a time in the

spotlight. As a result of these two factors, the plot cannot be planned out ahead of time. The narrative of the game arises out of play at the table, in the moment. No one person is responsible for doing "homework" and coming up with an adventure for the party to go on. Because everyone takes a turn in the spotlight and as scene guide, the story evolves as a result of everyone's input at the table. Finally, there is no default setting for the game. The setting is dependent on the characters, and the default mode is for you to create both characters and setting from whole cloth. However, there is nothing stopping you from setting a game of *Annalise* in any time period, fictional world, or even in the setting of a different roleplaying game.

This pdf is organized procedurally. It first explains the core concepts of the game, and then steps through the four phases of play. Because different parts of the rules are tightly integrated, it is helpful to read through the entire text before starting a game, as opposed to trying to read as you go. Also, take a look at the Guided Play Scenarios (starting on **page 69**) in the back of the pdf to get an idea of what characters look like once play begins and to get a sense of the kind of settings possible for the game.





Chapter Two: How To Play This Game

SIDEBARS IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter the sidebars contain supplementary information and references to other relevant sections of this pdf.

PHASES OF PLAY

Chapter Three: Discovering Characters starts on page 19.

Chapter Four: Laying the Foundations starts on page 31.

Chapter Five: The Confrontation starts on page 53.

Chapter Six: The Aftermath starts on page 61.

This chapter of the pdf explains the structure of a game of *Annalise* and introduces the basic concepts and vocabulary used in play. It also explains the responsibilities of each player and goes into some detail about how the Vampire works in the game.

Game Structure

Annalise as a game is equal parts board game, improv theater, and collaborative writing exercise. Like a board game, it has a specific set of rules and procedures that players are expected to follow. These rules structure your game so that it follows the general narrative arc of the vampire fiction that inspired this game. Each game you play will be generally similar in form to other games of *Annalise*; however, each is made unique by the combinations of special ingredients: individual players and the creative choices they make in deciding who their characters are, the kinds of world the characters inhabit, and what the characters say and do as they pursue their agendas and try to resolve their relationships with the Vampire.

A game of *Annalise* progresses through four phases: Discovering Characters, Laying the Foundations, The Confrontation, and The Aftermath. Discovering Characters is the introduction, when the players create their alter-egos for the game and establish the setting. Laying the Foundations is the rising action, when the characters react to the challenges presented to them, try to discover more about the nature and purpose of the Vampire, and start pushing to gain their interests. The Confrontation is



the climax, in which the characters finally take action and resolve their relationships to the Vampire. The Aftermath is the epilogue, in which the characters (really, the players) reveal the consequences of The Confrontation and close their story.

During each phase, play progresses through a series of scenes. Think of scenes just as you would a scene from a movie, TV show, or play: a period of time with a definite beginning and end, generally focused on one action or interaction that advances the ongoing plot. This interaction might be between two or more characters (like a conversation, a physical fight, or a chase), between warring aspects of an individual character (like an internal monologue or tough decision), or about anything else that the players find engaging and worth playing out. A scene can be a sequence of these plot points, if it makes sense to flow from one into another. Also, use scenes to divide up the “in-game time” in different ways. Scenes could occur one after another with little or no in-game time elapsed in between, or they could be flashbacks, flash forwards, parallels to things that have already happened, and so on. The decision about what a scene is focused on, what characters are in it, and when it’s happening is called framing the scene. There’s no single “right” way to frame your scenes. Each group must find its own pace for

how long or short scenes should be, what kind of material they cover, and how they relate to in-game time. Each player in turn gets one scene that focuses on their character, so each participant gets roughly equal “screen time” and thus equal ability to affect the game.

Each scene contains one or more Moments, the crucial plot points that drive play. In a Moment, a character confronts a situation that has consequences for them and for the ongoing story. It is by resolving the Moment that the group discovers what happens next. Moments have a specific set of resolution rules, covered in detail in Chapter Four (starting on **page 36**).

To sum up, a game of *Annalise* progresses through each of four phases, revolves through each player’s scene, and resolves the Moments within those scenes. Depending on the scope of each scene and how hard the players drive towards resolution in their Moments, a full game of *Annalise* takes anywhere from one to six game sessions of three–four hours, though three or five session games are typical. If playing a single-session game interests you, please look at the Guided Play Scenarios in Appendix II (**page 69**). These Scenarios give you an established setting and cast of characters, so you can start Laying the Foundations right away. Appendix II details how to use Guided Play Scenarios.



The Players

Everyone at the table is a player of the game, and every player has the same ability to affect the game during play. Everyone takes turns and rotates through three roles with distinct responsibilities: active player, scene guide, and audience. Each scene has one active player, one scene guide, and the rest of the players are audience. *Annalise* works very well with two, three, and four players. In games with more than four players, each player waits that much longer between their turns, and it may be difficult to maintain the same kind of focus on the game.

When you begin the game, establish a turn order (generally, one player volunteers to go first, and then you go clockwise around the table). During each player's turn, that person is considered the active player, and the scene focuses on that person's character. When you are the active player, you are responsible for roleplaying your character however you like. At the same time, take advantage of opportunities to weave in elements from other players' scenes, in order to create more coherent fiction. During the first and last phases of the game (Discovering Characters and The Aftermath, respectively), the active player has total control of their own scenes. During the bulk of the game (Laying the Foundations and The Confrontation),

however, a scene guide joins the active player and the other players take a role in determining the character's fate.

Starting in Laying the Foundations, the active player must designate another player to be their scene guide. You can choose a different person to be your scene guide for each scene or choose the same person each time. The scene guide is responsible for the many things that experienced roleplayers think of as "GM duties," like describing the world around the character, playing the roles of non-player characters (or assigning them to audience players), and providing adversity for the active player's character, usually by making advances by the Vampire or his minions. While the active player may have an idea for a scene, the scene guide is ultimately responsible for framing it. It is the scene guide's job to darken each scene with the presence of the Vampire.

Each scene during Laying the Foundations and The Confrontation has one active player and one scene guide. Every other player is audience for the scene. The audience must pay attention to the scene as it unfolds, make comments "from the sidelines," and keep track of the unfolding narrative so they can contribute to it when they become the active players and scene guides. When you are in the audience, your character may end up in the scene, or the scene



guide might ask you to play a non-player character. If this happens, play the character as you would play your own; however, any Moments of the scene always involve only the active player's character. That is, only the active player rolls dice, ever.

When you are in the audience, you may narrate an element into a scene when you have a Claim on that element (Claims are explained in Chapter Three, starting on **page 22**). The active player and scene guide have narrative control over their own Claims, but because they also have broader narrative control in a scene, it is worth emphasizing that audience members should take advantage of their Claims to contribute to scenes in which they are not participating in a more formal fashion.

Each scene focuses on each player's character in turn. Thus, each player will be the active player in a regular sequence. The scene guide of each scene will change irregularly depending on the choice of each active player. As mentioned above, the sitting order around the table is generally the easiest way to establish scene order. If something else works out better for your group, though, don't feel beholden to this suggestion.

Dice & Coins

Play of *Annalise* requires a number of both dice and coins. Dice are normal six-sided dice. Having eight or ten dice on hand should be sufficient, as only one person at a time will be rolling. The game also requires a healthy number of tokens (called coins in *Annalise*) to track the ebb and flow of some things on the character sheet: Traits, Reserves, and Claims. 20–30 coins per player is a safe number. Coins do not have to be literal coins; feel free to use poker chips, unused dice, glass beads, or

THE FREE COINS PILE

These rules will often refer to placing coins on a Trait or Claim, or spending coins out of a Trait or off a Claim. Unless otherwise noted, these coins come out of and go into a pile of freely available coins you have at the table. In a couple of places this is referred to as the “free coins pile.”

THE EBB AND FLOW

Keeping an eye on the coins on each player's sheet can be very helpful in play for two reasons. First, the number of Satellite Traits everyone has generated indicates how well-developed their character has become. If someone is obviously lagging behind, and you are the scene guide, push some Moments on them to give them more opportunities to generate new Traits. Also, one of the tells for when the game is ready to move on to The Confrontation is when every character has generated around five Satellite Traits and is using them over and over, rather than making new ones.



anything else that is available. As a last resort, you can track the numbers by writing them down, but it really does make a difference to be able to see and move tangible tokens around while you play.

Each player needs a character sheet on which to record their character's information, and scrap paper on which to record the possible outcomes for Moments. A reference sheet for Moment resolution is a helpful aid, too. Reference sheets are included at the end of this pdf to photocopy, or download them from the *Annalise* website at findannalise.com.

Characters

Characters in *Annalise* are the protagonists of the vampire story. While they may end up victims, lovers, servants, or hunters of the Vampire, they all begin simply as people—people of interest to the Vampire, of course. An *Annalise* character is comprised of two Core Traits (called Vulnerability and Secret), a number of Satellite Traits (generated in play), and a pool of Reserves that a player calls upon to rebuild the character's Traits as they erode. In addition, players possess a number of Claims, elements of the fiction over which that player has asserted ownership. Rules for discovering and developing your character are in Chapter Three (Discovering Characters, **page 19**) and Chapter Four (Laying the Foundations, **page**

31). At the beginning of the game, though, all you need is a basic character concept and a reason why the Vampire might be interested in that character.

Setting

Choosing the setting in which your characters confront the Vampire is left completely up to you. The term “setting” is used here as shorthand for the fictional world in which the game takes place. When and where are your characters? Set your game in any time and place you want: the modern day inner city, a rural outpost in the Australian outback, a polar research station in the year 2050, or any fantasy world you've read about or imagined. As the players introduce their characters, they imply and describe more about the setting: as such, the setting grows organically out of the characters. However, there is nothing wrong with choosing the setting first and making characters that fit into that world. As the characters become more detailed over the course of play, the setting will, too. See the Guided Play Scenarios in the back of this pdf for examples of settings.

The Vampire

The Vampire is both the most and least important part of a game of *Annalise*. Least because the game is about the characters, but most because the characters



are defined by the presence and actions of the Vampire. A large portion of the second phase of the game is the discovery of the identity, agenda, and powers of the Vampire which you have created your characters around. However, the first phase of play—in which you begin playing and talking about your characters—does not even address the Vampire. This is intentional and important. A good deal of the fun of the game is hinting at the Vampire in scenes and gradually discovering, together, who and what is this malevolent force in the characters' lives. The Vampire could be a literal blood-drinking creature of the night or a more metaphorical or abstract entity (or group of entities). It depends entirely on your characters. The Vampire is detailed in only one mechanical way (by the Hold of the Vampire, which is detailed in Chapter Four starting on **page 45** and Chapter Five starting on **page 57**). While each player should have their own idea about the Vampire, couch everything in vague terms at the beginning of the game and leave things open-ended for the other players to build upon. Over the course of *Laying the Foundations*, it will become more and more apparent what form the Vampire takes, and what its agenda is. Generally, by the time *The Confrontation* happens, everyone is on the same page about the Vampire.



GUIDED PLAY SCENARIOS

The included Guided Play Scenarios are:

- “The Mysterious Voyage of the Auspicious”, set on a ship on the open sea in the 1700s. See page 71.
- “Dracula Reloaded”, a retelling of the 19th century classic with a modern twist. See page 74.
- “The Wake of Zenas Quantum”, a modern/near-future superhero setting. See page 78.
- “At the Crossroads of Sanctuary and Salvation”, taking place in the mid-20th Century American south. See page 82.
- “Viva L.A. Revolution”, a future world cyberpunk scenario. See page 85.
- “In the Shadow of the Mountain”, Roman drama at the base of Mt. Vesuvius circa 79 AD. See page 89.

Sidebars in this chapter explain common trouble spots in play or provide insight into important game concepts.

PHASES OF PLAY

Phase 1: Discovering Characters (this chapter) concerns the discovery of the story's protagonists and their world.

Phase 2: Laying the Foundations (Chapter Four) concerns learning more about these protagonists, the situation in which they find themselves, and the nature and agenda of the Vampire. It starts on page 31.

Phase 3: The Confrontation (Chapter Five) concerns the resolution of the conflict between the protagonists and the Vampire. It starts on page 53.

Phase 4: The Aftermath (Chapter Six) concerns the fallout of the Vampire's influence on the lives of the protagonists. It starts on page 61.

Chapter Three: Discovering Characters

The first thing you do in the game is introduce and then discover your characters. This chapter covers the entire first phase of the game, with two sets of running examples. Example Set 1 concerns a group playing in a modern-day, small-college setting, focusing on an internally-focused character. Example Set 2 concerns a group playing in a medieval fantasy setting, with a character with more external issues and methods for resolving them. These examples continue through the next three chapters (Laying the Foundations, The Confrontation, and The Aftermath).

Starting the Game

To start the game, sit around a table with your friends.

Gather some pencils, eight–10 six-sided dice, 20–30 tokens to use as coins, and

some note cards (blank business cards and “sticky notes” are perfect, or cut some index cards in half).

Designate one player as the first active player. This person has a lot of power to define the general course of the game right from the start. If one person in the group is more familiar with the rules than the others, they should not be the first active player, since the other players actually



EXAMPLE SET 1

Examples are contained in sidebars that look like this. Example Set 1 is marked with this icon.



EXAMPLE SET 2

Example Set 2 is marked with this icon.





have more options during the first active player's scene and the person who knows the game best can lead by example.

The first active player begins the game by literally introducing their character. Right now, a character consists of two pieces: a name and a Vulnerability. The additional components of the character are

generated later. If you have more ideas and general-concept stuff, that's great, but for now all you need are a name and a Vulnerability.

Core Trait: Vulnerability

Characters have two Core Traits: Vulnerability and Secret. Create your character's Secret later (see **page 26**), but choose your character's Vulnerability now. Vampires prey on the vulnerable. These characters have suffered pain, loss, or trauma that attracts the Vampire and this is what makes the character a protagonist in the story. Vampires are most attracted to the kind of vulnerability that stems from negative relationships and experiences in the character's past. Some general themes and examples:

- Experiencing physical, mental, or emotional abuse. "I am vulnerable because my parents abuse me at home."
- Suffering neglect, or lacking care or a support network. "I am vulnerable because no one has ever helped me get out of trouble."
- Being smothered, not being allowed to be one's own person. "I am vulnerable because my husband views me as an extension of himself."
- Losing someone important to you, through death, abandonment or accident. "I am vulnerable because my best friend killed herself when we were both in elementary school."

INTRODUCING A CHARACTER

Damien, Travis, and Sarah are playing. Damien is the first active player.

Damien: My character is named Annalise. She's a young woman, just starting college. She's tall and pale, with dark hair and dark eyes, and very pretty in a haughty way. Her Vulnerability is neglect—here's what I wrote down: "I am vulnerable because my parents never cared enough to get mad at me."

Damien frames his introductory scene, getting into the character of Annalise as he talks.

Damien: So, I think my intro scene is that I'm breaking up with the guy I started dating at the beginning of school. He's actually kind of a dick, and I've finally realized that he's not even going to pretend to put in the effort that I need from him in this relationship. Travis, will you play the boyfriend?

As the first active player, Damien has established that the game will take place in the modern day, on or around a college campus. Neither Travis nor Sarah has a problem with this, and they just run with it as they introduce their own characters.

- ♣ Getting caught in a damaging or dysfunctional relationship. “I am vulnerable because my romantic relationships have always been just about me.”
- ♣ Being an outcast or “other” in society. “I am vulnerable because I’m homeless.”
- ♣ Having some kind of inborn or irreversible weakness, disease, or disorder. “I am vulnerable because my manic depression stopped responding to my medication.”

Once you’ve introduced your character, record your Vulnerability on your character sheet by finishing the statement “I am Vulnerable because...”

The First Scene

The first active player’s first scene consists of an introduction that describes the character in broad strokes and requires a situation that showcases the character’s Vulnerability. The scene may also involve the why and how of the Vampire’s first noticing the character, but it does not have to involve the Vampire *per se*. This first scene is also your prologue for the character, an introductory piece that gives the other players a glimpse before the story proper begins. Feel free to cast other players as non-player characters that you frame into the scene, or simply narrate how the whole thing plays out. You can announce your character’s Vulnerability at the outset,

or you can let it become apparent through play. Everyone should know your character’s name and Vulnerability by the end of the scene.

INTRODUCING A CHARACTER

Shreyas, Elizabeth, and Kat are playing the game for a second time. Elizabeth ends up the second active player. After Shreyas introduces his character (a traveling scholar in the King’s Court), it’s Elizabeth’s turn. She decides to run with the Medieval theme introduced by Shreyas.

Elizabeth: My character’s name is Sir Hector Greenbriar. I am a knight of the realm, a defender of truth and justice and the very picture of chivalry.

Elizabeth doesn’t declare her character’s Vulnerability at the outset. She frames her introductory scene.

Elizabeth: Sir Hector is just breaking down the door into the room at the top of a tower where the Princess Laurendell has been imprisoned. Shreyas, you wanna play her? Basically, she’s been stuck up here for a while but she doesn’t want to be rescued by Hector, and she doesn’t want to go with him.

Kat: Let me guess... your vulnerability is something that means that you don’t listen to what other people want?

Elizabeth: Yup. I wrote down, “I am vulnerable because everyone has always treated me like I’m worth more than they are.”



Claims

While each player has total authority over the framing and content of their character's introductory scene, the other players are a participatory audience to their narration. As each player introduces their character, the other players can Claim elements of that scene. Claims are little pieces of the fiction mentioned in a scene, such as non-player characters, locations, motifs, and items that the characters interact with in the story. The most important thing to remember about Claims is that you always Claim something introduced by another player—you can never Claim something that you narrated or described yourself. Some examples of Claims:

- Non-player character. Any character introduced into a scene once it begins can be claimed, such as “my lover,” “the jock who beats me up” or “Henry the shopkeeper.” You can't claim other players' protagonist characters.
- Prop. Any object that the characters could potentially interact with can be claimed. “My father's sword,” “a car with dark tinted windows” and “the vase of roses” are considered props.
- Location. Any physical place introduced into play can be claimed. Locations should be discrete enough so that they can be entered and exited during a scene, like a room, a single building, or a neighborhood. Claiming “the Earth” or “the United States” is probably too large, unless your game is working on a cosmic scale.
- Visual motif. If some visual element of the scene is described in detail, it can be claimed. Things like “the city skyline,” “shattered glass littering the ground,” “a reflection doubled between two mirrors” and “swirling smoke” are good visual motifs, assuming that they are narrated into the scene with some detail and attention.

APPROPRIATE CLAIMS

Claims “stop at the skin”—that is, do not claim emotions, abstract notions or other ephemera. “Anger” and “Nothingness” are not good claims, though “a motion made in anger” or “a mirror showing only nothingness” are good. Claims are tangible and demonstrable things. This definition may get a little wobbly when claiming relationships, but in general obvious or important relationships are fine as Claims. Also, all Claims are things in the fiction of the game. While sometimes tempting, general table chatter is not eligible for Claiming.

CLAIMING THE VAMPIRE

Claims and the Vampire interact in an interesting way. While you cannot claim the Vampire when it is introduced as such, what happens if you introduce a character, they get claimed, and then later in the game all the signs point towards them being the Vampire?

Well, you have a few options. It's usually easy enough to redefine the Claim to be a relationship with the Vampire or a motif about the Vampire—a good option when there is an obvious link between the character and the Vampire. If this doesn't make sense in your game, then abandon the Claim and transfer the coins on it to your other Claims. This is a quick way to “reset” the problem and get back



to storytelling. Finally, you can always narrate the character into a scene in such a way as to prove that they are not the foul creature, if you are invested in the character NOT being the Vampire. In any case, feel free to speak up if and when you feel like a Claimed character is edging into “being the Vampire” territory, whether it is your Claim or another player’s.

AN INTRODUCTORY SCENE



Damien narrates his intro scene for Annalise.

Damien: I’m waiting at a bus stop where I’m supposed to meet my boyfriend, Dave, who’s been out at a bar with his friend. He’s supposed to pick me up and take me home, but he’s late.

Sarah: I Claim “Dave, the boyfriend.”

Damien: Well, he’s gonna be my ex by the end of the scene.

Sarah: Got it.

Sarah writes down “Annalise’s ex-boyfriend Dave” on a card and puts two coins on it. Damien continues.

Damien: So, I’m waiting there for half an hour, then 45 minutes, then an hour, then Dave shows up. He gets out of his car, and he’s obviously tipsy—not drunk, but he’s all smiley and loose and he has trouble paying attention to what I’m saying. I’m standing there, all in black, backlit by this street light, and he can’t see my face.

Travis: I’m Claiming “backlit, with shadowed features.”

Damien: Ooh!

Sarah: Cool!

Travis writes “backlit, with shadowed features” on a card and puts two coins on it.

• **Discrete, repeatable event.** If an event that involves the active player’s character is described in some detail, and it is an event that could happen again later, it can be Claimed. An event always must have the potential to involve a character or force a reaction from a character. Things like “a torrential down-pour,” “an argument between lovers” or “a car chase” could be Claimed as an event.

• **Relationship.** Having a crush on someone, being married to someone, being someone’s best friend—these are all Claimable relationships.

When you make a Claim, write down that scene element on a card (or sticky note, or piece of paper) and place two coins on it. During the Discovering Characters phase of the game, you can make as many Claims as you want, but you can Claim only those elements that other players narrated into the fiction. By making a Claim, you do two things. First, you declare “this is a neat thing, and I want to be able to bring it back into our story later in a way that matters.” Second, you earn coins that you can use in later phases to influence the unfolding story. You want to have Claims, and the best Claims are things that interest you. There is no penalty for having too many Claims or making Claims that don’t get used, so claim everything that you think is interesting!

Remember, you cannot claim a player’s character and you cannot claim abstract ideas. Also, you cannot claim the Vampire.



Finishing the Introductions

Once the first active player's scene wraps up, the next player frames an introductory scene and establishes their character's name and Vulnerability.

In addition, the second and subsequent players must establish some kind of relationship to a player's character who has already been introduced. This relationship can be of any scope and kind, as long as it brings the two characters close enough that they could reasonably (and frequently) meet. If someone introduces an interesting non-player character by the time it gets to your turn, feel free to grab it as your character. If you do this, and someone else has the non-player character as a Claim, they need to rewrite the Claim to be something related to your character (in order to fulfill the restriction that you cannot Claim a player's character). The second active player's character necessarily has a relationship with the first character that was introduced, but subsequent players can create relationships with any other player's character that has been introduced. You do not have to establish a relationship with the character of the player immediately preceding you (unless you are the second player, obviously), nor with more than one of the other characters (unless you want to do so).

Each player frames a scene for their character, introduces the character, describes their character's Vulnerability, and



AN INTRODUCTORY SCENE

Shreyas (as Princess Laurendell): "Oh my... and who might you be, Sir Knight?"

Elizabeth: "Your Highness, it is I, Sir Hector Greenbriar! I have adventured through these moors and mountains in order to save you!" I'm standing there, all tall and strong, my sword out and glinting in the firelight.

Shreyas: I Claim "metal glinting in the firelight."

Shreyas did not introduce it, so even though he's playing in the scene, he can Claim it. Shreyas writes it on a card, puts two coins on it, and continues as Laurendell.

Shreyas: "Sir Knight, while I appreciate your courage and prowess, there seems to be some misunderstanding... I don't need to be saved." She turns and goes to the window, obviously ignoring you.

Elizabeth: That's not gonna fly. I walk over to her, grab her arm and spin her around. "My lady, you must come with me. I cannot, in good faith, allow you to remain in the prison, your beauty and your honor wasted up in this tower." And she's all struggling and everything, and I just throw her over my shoulder and carry her out of the tower.

Kat: Wow, you're a dick. Um, I'm claiming the event "Taking someone away against their will." Sorry for the weird phrasing, but that's basically what the event is, right?

Everyone agrees. Kat writes that down on a card and puts two coins on it.

Elizabeth: Okay, I also need a relationship. Um, Shreyas' character is a traveling scholar, right? I think he is at the same Court as Sir Hector pretty often, and they're both young and adventurous, so they're pretty friendly acquaintances.



There are two variant ways of creating Secrets that work just as well in play, and if your group feels more comfortable with one of these, feel free to use it.

Single Secrets: Each player writes only one Secret, and then everyone draws one randomly. If a player doesn't like their Secret, they may offer to trade with another player. This method makes it more likely that you'll pick your own Secret, and also that you may have an easier time guessing which other player picked the Secret you wrote, enabling you to help frame scenes for him or her that highlight the Secret.

Hardcore Secrets: In this version, adapted from Jesse Burneko's "At The Crossroads of Sanctuary and Salvation" Guided Play Scenario (page 82), each player writes down something that they or someone they know in real life has done that they consider morally wrong. When you draw a Secret, you can tweak it to integrate into your character, but the core of the Secret is drawn from real moral problems. Groups that enjoy playing more personal and potentially cathartic games will love this variant. Your group may also want to draw a Single Hardcore Secret, pointing the characters directly at a small set of focused moral issues.

establishes a relationship to at least one of the characters who has already been introduced. Keep in mind that everyone gets to make Claims during every introductory scene. You may notice some people in the group ending up with fewer Claims than others. This should be fine, as long as everyone has at least two or three by the time the introductory scenes are over. Sometimes, a person playing *Annalise* for the first time won't make any Claims because they don't know what's appropriate, or they're not comfortable interjecting ideas into someone else's narration. This is fine, but any player who has no Claims when you end the introductions should claim a couple of elements they think were interesting or cool before you move on.

The Setting

As you play through *Discovering the Characters*, create a basis for the setting of the game as well: time period, location, general feel, tone, and so on. The first active player is able to dictate a lot of these things, because they have the most leeway when introducing their character, but everyone should feel free to mix things up with their characters and the elements that they claim.

If players find they have very different expectations about what is happening at the table, the group should resolve the differences before moving on. Ask for clarification about the setting from those who have already introduced their characters and talk through confusion and differences of opinion. Most groups will find it useful to discuss briefly what kind of game they want before digging into *Discovering Characters*. That said, it can be rewarding to have the first active player start out with a totally blank slate, and go from there.



Core Trait: Secret

Once everyone has introduced their characters, the group generates the next character element: Secrets. Secrets are the other Core Trait of an *Annalise* character. While everyone at the table knows every character's Vulnerability, a character's Secret is known only by that character's player.

A Secret is something that the character is unwilling or unable to share with anyone that they know, something that finishes the phrase "I can never reveal..." In the final encounter with the Vampire, a character's Secret may turn out to be a potent weapon. While a Secret can be anything, two broad categories of Secrets work best for *Annalise*. The first kind of Secret is a truth that the character never admits to other people, but it's a truth that defines that person and influences the character's decision-making. These kinds of "internal" Secrets are well-suited to a darker and more mysterious game. The second kind of Secret, received or inherited by the character, is something that places them outside of "normal" society and as such forces the character to hide their ability, curse or power. "External" Secrets tend to benefit an action-oriented game.

Internal Secrets could be:

- A taboo sexual desire or kink. "I can never reveal that I can only feel pleasure when I hate the person I'm with."
- An opinion or value system that they aren't "supposed" to have. "I can never reveal that I'm a White supremacist."
- Some kind of trauma or negative experience that the character doesn't feel that they can share. "I can never reveal that I was molested as a child."

APPROPRIATE SECRETS

Don't worry too much about making sure that the Secret you write down is "right" or if it's applicable to a confrontation with a Vampire. Secrets end up driving a lot of play, as players make decisions for their characters based on the Secrets they received. The rules of *Annalise* ensure that each Secret will become important, no matter what it is. Often, seemingly bizarre or innocuous secrets become extremely relevant in the later phases of the game. Write down something cool that you want to see create an impact on the story.



External Secrets could be:

- ♣ An inborn power. “I can never reveal that I can set things on fire with my mind.”
- ♣ A mysterious legacy. “I can never reveal that I carry my father’s watch and it lets me stop time.”
- ♣ An uncontrollable mental or physical affliction. “I can never reveal that I can’t cross running water.”

Secrets also serve as a dial for how much of the supernatural you want to see in play. “I can never reveal that I was born with the power to use black magic” will mean that somebody’s character will probably end up using black magic at some point; “I can never reveal that I only care about myself” will generate less extravagant content in play. Don’t worry about whether the Secret you write down is on the same supernatural or emotional level as the other Secrets. In play, a wide variety of Secrets is just as effective as Secrets that end up being interrelated.

Unlike everything else about your character, you do not author your own Secret. Once all of the characters initial scenes have been played out, you each write down two Secrets that you would like to see in play (keep in mind that you could end up having one of those Secrets for your character).

Shuffle the Secrets and randomly redistribute one to each player. The Secret you receive is the Secret for your character. If you are absolutely not cool with your Secret, you can ask if anyone wants to trade. The group should not move on to the next part of the game until everyone has accepted a Secret.

Secrets function differently in different phases of the game. During Laying the Foundations, you will hint at your Secret as your character becomes more defined and starts getting more involved in the story. During The Confrontation, your Secret may serve as your final reserves, and its revelation can potentially define the end of the story for your character. It is

SECRETS, LINES & VEILS



Sarah finishes her scene

Sarah: Ok...Secrets now, right?

Damien and Travis nod. Everyone takes a moment to write down a couple of Secrets on note cards. While they do this, Travis introduces a Veil.

Travis: So, just to be clear, you guys know I’m not cool with explicit sexual violence, right? I mean, it can be mentioned if it’s appropriate, but if it can be way off-screen, I would appreciate it.

Damien and Sarah agree, and they don’t have any explicit Lines or Veils of their own. They all fold the Secret cards in half and put them in a hat, then each draws one at random.

Damien: Hrmm... cool. Are we all cool with our Secrets?

Everyone is, and they move on



never necessary to reveal your Secret unless you think it is appropriate; alternatively, reveal it early simply through what happens in play, though you lose a big mechanical boost in the later phases of play.



SECRETS, LINES & VEILS

The group decides to do Single Secrets. Shreyas pulls his Secret.

Shreyas: Oooh... um, that's an interesting one, but I don't think I'm up to it. Anyone wanna trade?

Elizabeth: Heh, I bet you got mine. I'll trade with you. I had a good idea if I ended up with mine, anyway.

They trade and are both satisfied with their new Secrets. Technically, they each know each other's Secret now, but both see this as an opportunity to help each other foreshadow the eventual revelations of those Secrets. Since this group has played together before and are comfortable with each other's play styles, they don't have a formal Lines & Veils discussion.



ASSIGNING COINS

Damien puts three coins each on Vulnerability and Secret. He puts one more on Secret (for a total of four), and the other six on Vulnerability (for a total of nine). He sees Annalise as building up a lot of barriers between her and her vulnerability. She's not very good at keeping secrets. Damien places three coins in Annalise's Reserves, and now he is ready to start Laying the Foundations.

Lines & Veils

After all the players have introduced their characters and while you are writing down Secrets, have a quick conversation to make sure everyone is on the same page about what kind of fiction you will be making together. The themes of *Annalise*—not to mention the adult genre tropes of vampire fiction—lend themselves to subject matter that might bother someone in play. Because the characters are defined by Vulnerability and a potentially intense Secret, talk to each other about where the lines are for you, and what you would prefer to be veiled, before getting into real play.

Lines are a person's boundaries about potentially painful or offensive content in the game. Lines are limits that no player can cross. Veils are a measure of vagueness surrounding certain content in play. Veils require players to leave out graphic details when approaching certain subjects. If you have a hard line about something, you should state it aloud: "Hey guys, I'm really not cool with sexual violence at all. Can we make sure not to have any Secrets about that?" This is the best time to raise issues with any other themes or subject matter that you prefer to be not brought up at all (a Line), or things you prefer to occur "off-screen" or without graphic depiction (a Veil). Any player can always throw down a Line or raise a Veil at any point during play.



Assigning Coins

Before launching into Laying the Foundations, everyone divides 13 coins between their Vulnerability and Secret. Each Core Trait starts with three coins, and you divide the remaining seven coins between the two Traits however you want. You gain more specific Satellite Traits during play, but these 13 coins represent your character's potential to influence what will happen to them during the game. If either Trait (or both Traits) falls to zero coins, your character suffers consequences that depend on the current phase of the game.

Finally, each player places three coins in their character's Reserves, a simple pool of coins representing the character's willpower, determination, ability to overcome setbacks, and strength to regain their composure.

In Conclusion

Once everyone has a Secret that they like and has assigned their coins, Discovering Characters is over and the group is ready to start Laying the Foundations. At this point, everyone should have a character with a name, a Vulnerability, a Secret, a relationship to at least one other character, plus a few Claims. Everyone should have distributed 13 coins between Vulnerability and Secrets, and dropped three


coins into Reserves. Everyone should understand everyone else's Lines and Veils.

ASSIGNING COINS

Elizabeth puts three coins each on Vulnerability and Secret and divides the remaining seven as evenly as she can. She puts four more coins on Sir Hector's Secret (for a total of seven) and three more on his Vulnerability (for a total of six). She grabs her three coins for his Reserves and starts thinking about the kind of scenes she'd like to play while she waits for the others to finish distributing their coins.

Summary

1. Begin the game by choosing the first active player.
2. The first active player introduces their character by announcing the character's name and Vulnerability.
3. The first active player narrates a scene in which they introduce a little more information about the character and the nature of the character's Vulnerability. Possibly, the scene alludes to the Vampire's interest in the character, as well.
4. Every other player may make Claims on the fictional elements that the active player narrates: non-player characters, objects, locations, visual or narrative motifs, events, or anything else that the player wants to reincorporate into the game later.

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5. Once the first active player is done, the next player introduces their character. In addition to name and Vulnerability, this player also includes a relationship between their character and the first active player's character. Players continue to make Claims.
 6. Each player in turn introduces their character, narrates their introductory scene, and builds a relationship to at least one other character. Players continue to make Claims.
 7. Once all introductions have been made, each player writes down two Secrets they want to see in the game.
 8. While this is happening, the players discuss any Lines they want to draw about content they don't want in the game, and any Veils they have over content they want to happen "off-camera."
 9. Once Secrets are written, they are mixed up and each player draws a Secret at random. If a player isn't happy with their draw, they draw a new one, or offer to trade with another player.
 10. Each player places three coins each on their character's Vulnerability, Secret, and Reserves; then they divide an additional seven coins between Vulnerability and Secret.
 11. Move on to Laying the Foundations.





Chapter Four: Laying the Foundations

Now that you have discovered your characters, introduced the setting, and hinted at the place of the Vampire in your game, you Lay the Foundations for the eventual confrontation between the characters and the Vampire. In this phase of the game, players do six things:

- Get to know your characters and define them to a greater degree.
- Generate Satellite Traits for characters.
- Begin to use and modify your Claims, as well as make more of them.
- Hint at and foreshadow the revelation of your Secrets.
- Show how and why the Vampire is attracted to the characters.
- Define the relationships between characters and the Vampire more concretely.

Foundation scenes establish more information about the characters, generate Satellite Traits, and create more scene elements for other players to Claim. This phase is like the “rising action” of a short story or movie. It creates tension, advances the plot, and introduces new twists and turns into the narrative. While the Vampire, or at least its influence, is present throughout these scenes, it is not necessary that it interact with every character in every scene. Each active player’s scene focuses on that player’s character, but scenes can include other characters, if appropriate.

SIDEBARS IN THIS CHAPTER

Sidebars in this chapter explain common trouble spots in play and give advice about how to handle the tools the game provides.



Overview

While the Discovering Characters phase allows each player to narrate their own scenes, Foundation (and, later, Confrontation) scenes include another player—called the scene guide—to frame the scene for the active player and generate adversity for their character. Starting with the first active player and proceeding around the table, each player takes a turn being the active player. At the beginning of their turn, the active player selects another player to be their scene guide. Players can volunteer for the job, of course, but it is up to the active player to choose. Players who are not the active player or the scene guide are the audience for the scene.

During a scene, the active player roleplays their character as they see fit, and the scene guide roleplays non-player characters or assigns them to audience members to play. Audience members who have their characters pulled into the scene play their character as normal, but they have no more influence on the outcome of Moments than other audience members.

Most scenes involve the resolution of one or more Moments, or critical turning points in the story. Only the active player or scene guide can declare that a situation is a Moment. When the active player does this, it is called Seizing the Moment. When the scene guide does this, it is called Pushing a Moment. Audience members cannot Seize or Push Moments.

Any player can make Claims on one or more scene elements, just as they did while Discovering Characters. Keep in mind that any player can introduce something that they have Claimed into the ongoing scene, even if they are an audience member (see Roleplaying and Claiming Scene Elements starting on **page 33**).

WHAT SHOULD THIS SCENE BE ABOUT?

If this is your first time playing Annalise or you're simply not familiar with this kind of up-front scene framing in your roleplaying, don't worry! It's not hard. Here are a couple of simple suggestions for scene-guiding.

Ask the active player, "Do you have an idea about what you want your character to do?" and frame a scene around the answer.

If the active player doesn't have an idea, remember that this game is about a vampire. Frame a scene that obviously points to vampiric activity, such as a mysterious disappearance or the weakened state of a loved one.

Look at the Claims on the table, and try combining them into a situation. An NPC who is the character's boss, the motif of "shattered glass on the sidewalk" and a church? Frame a scene with the character discovering his boss on the ground after unknown assailants have thrown him through a church window.

The first scenes in this game can be a little halting, as everyone is trying to get into their characters' heads as well as make solid scenes for other people. Take a deep breath, remember that a slow start is normal, and keep an eye out for ways to weave elements from each character's individual story into the broader narrative.



While it is often obvious when a scene is over, the scene guide has final authority over when it's time to move on. Generally, a scene is over once the main event of the scene has concluded, or when there's a major shift in location, characters present or the passage of time. Not every scene includes a Moment, and a scene can include more than one Moment if it's appropriate. Generally, though, each scene includes one Moment.

Roleplaying

This game assumes that you'll spend most of each scene roleplaying. Describe what your character does, say things "in character," explore the world that you are all creating, interact with non-player characters, and so on. Until a Moment occurs, the scene guide has authority over everything in the fiction except the thoughts and actions of the active player's character and other players' Claims. At any time in a scene, a player can involve their Claims, if they feel that it is appropriate. Interject an idea about the Claim, add detail about the Claim, speak as the Claim, or otherwise narrate how the Claim comes into the scene. The scene guide and active player should incorporate these additions into their narration and into the general situation of the scene. In addition, the scene guide can ask an audience member to take on the role of a non-player character in the scene.

ROLEPLAYING

Damien asks Travis to guide his scene.

Travis: Annalise is in her dorm room. She's trying to concentrate on doing homework, but she keeps getting distracted by the sounds of her roommate making out with her boyfriend on the other bed.

Damien: I turn up my iPod louder, but it doesn't help. I'm still angry about Dave, my ex, being such a jerk, and I don't think I have that great of a relationship with my roommate. After a couple of minutes I pull off my headphones and say over my shoulder, "Will you two do that somewhere else? I'm trying to work here."

Travis: You can practically hear Greta rolling her eyes behind your back. "It's my room, too. Why don't you go to the library if you have so much damned work?"

The two of them continue to play out the conversation as it gradually turns into an argument.

Claiming Scene Elements

At any point in a scene, any player may claim a scene element. As during *Discovering Characters* ([page 22](#)), you simply tell the other players, "I'm claiming [scene element]," and write it down on a card. If this is the first Claim you made in the scene, take two coins from the free pile of coins and place two on the Claim. If you already made at least one Claim, do not gain any free coins—rather, you have to redistribute coins that are on your existing Claims





such that there is at least one coin on the new Claim. You can take as many coins as you wish off an existing Claim and move them to the new Claim, and you can move coins from multiple Claims if you want. Remember, you cannot claim an element that you have introduced into the fiction.



ROLEPLAYING

Elizabeth asks Kat to guide her scene. Kat thinks for a moment, then has an idea and frames a scene.

Kat: You have returned to court, the princess in tow. So, here's the scene: You're in the king's receiving room, with all the courtiers and hangers-on in attendance, and you are giving the king a recap of your adventure.

Shreyas: Oh hey, I have a claim of "The King of the Land." Can I play the king?

Kat likes that idea and they roleplay Sir Hector's report. Shreyas presents the king as being a pretty absent-minded guy, getting on in years, and it quickly becomes clear that Sir Hector doesn't think much of him. This interchange begins to wind down.

Kat: You're finishing your report, when the Royal Wizard—a dried-up old stick who's been around forever—suddenly speaks up. "My Lord, you have had quite the adventure ... but what do you have to show for it, other than this brat of a princess at your side?"

Elizabeth: Oh, no way! Sir Hector is a knight! He doesn't stand for that kind of talk about a lady ...

There are two ways in which you use Claims. As you will see, all players—including those who are audience in scenes—can use their Claims to affect Moments in those scenes. Players always have the authority to narrate their Claims into a scene as color or background, even (especially!) when they are audience. These interjections have no mechanical weight but they are a good way to stay involved as well as set up your character's next scene. Claimed elements also come into play during The Confrontation phase of the game (see **page 56** for details).

Having a Claim means that you have the primary authority over that piece of the fiction, and you can (and should!) narrate colorful details and fill the holes in scenes by asserting your Claims, particularly when you are audience. This assertion might be the introduction of simple details: "The girl at the bar who keeps glancing at you is Carlotta" (for a claim of a non-player character named Carlotta) or "The water is tinged red for some reason" (for a claim of "blood in the water"). Asserting a Claim might add a little nuance to a scene or nudge it in a specific direction: "And that's when your phone rings!" (for a claim of "ringing telephone") or "Your husband really doesn't want you to go out" (for a claim of "your marriage to Tom"). The scene guide and active player should do their best to incorporate Claim



details injected in this manner. Claims also have a specific role to play in the resolution of Moments, described below on **page 42**.

If a player spends all of the coins off one of their Claims, it becomes a Floating Claim and goes into the center of the table. The active player in each scene can spend Reserves to claim Floating Claims (see Reserves starting on **page 44**). If any Floating Claims are still on the table when play moves on to The Confrontation, remove them from play.

Satellite Traits

Once you begin Laying the Foundations, you can more fully define and realize your character by creating Satellite Traits. While your Core Traits are broad, abstract, and common to all the characters, your Satellite Traits are more focused expressions of your character's individual abilities, attitudes, capabilities, and learned or inborn skills. Each Satellite Trait is linked to either your Vulnerability or Secret, and should be thematically connected to the Core Trait from which it springs. For example, a character with "I am vulnerable because I never let myself get close to anyone" may have Satellite Traits concerning her attitude ("Air of superiority"), skills that she's developed ("Good liar"), or the results of her actions ("Self-sufficient").

MAKING CLAIMS



During a scene, Sarah claims a location, "the old overgrown churchyard" where Annalise is following a shadowy stranger. Sarah takes two coins out of the free pile and puts them on the Claim. Later in the scene, Travis is narrating as the scene guide.

Travis: The moonlight shines through the stained-glass windows, making weird abstract patterns on the pews.

Sarah: I claim "moonlight through stained glass."

Sarah already has made one Claim this scene so she has to redistribute coins. She takes one coin off "the old overgrown churchyard" and one coin off the only other Claim she has, "speaking without words," which currently has three coins on it. She puts those two coins onto the new Claim.

At the beginning of the scene, Sarah had one Claim with three coins on it ("speaking without words"). At the end of the scene, she has created one Claim with two coins on it, and then created a third claim and taken one coin off each of her other Claims. So, she has "speaking without words" with two coins, "moonlight through stained glass" with two coins and "the old overgrown churchyard" with one coin.

Define Satellite Traits for your character only when you are the active player, and only when you are entering a Moment during your turn. Because Moments are the turning points of the story, they showcase your character's ability to respond to adversity and push things towards where you want to see them end up. That ability is expressed in the



character's Satellite Traits. As described on the facing page in the section on Moments, you may Seize the Moment in order to define a Satellite Trait, or the scene guide may Push the Moment on you, requiring you to either use an existing Satellite Trait or generate a new one.

When you generate a Satellite Trait, explain what it is and designate the Core Trait from which it springs. Then decide how many coins from that Core Trait you wish to spend for the Satellite Trait. The coins invested in the Satellite Trait are equal to double the number you spend from the Core Trait, plus one. So, if you define a Satellite Trait linked to your Vulnerability, and you decide to spend two coins from Vulnerability, your new Satellite Trait begins with five coins (two times two is four, plus one, for five total). You must spend at least one coin, and can spend as many as you have in the Core Trait. There is danger in allowing your Core Traits get too low, as explained later.

If you define a Satellite Trait linked to your character's Secret, there is one more step in the process. In addition to generating the Trait in question and giving it coins, you must also drop a hint about your character's Secret (if the Secret has not yet been revealed). This can be a simple declaration to the other players, or you can work it into your narration about your character's approach to the Moment, but you must in some way reference your character's Secret when defining a Satellite Trait that is linked to it.

CHOOSING SATELLITE TRAITS

Remember that you always generate a Satellite Trait during a Moment, and it always relates to the immediate situation facing your character. If you want your character to have a specific Satellite Trait, Seize a Moment in order to create that Trait.

Think of Satellite Traits as your character's armor that keeps the Vampire away from their Vulnerability and keeps other people away from their Secret. Define Satellite Traits in reaction to the circumstances pushed on you by the scene guide. In addition, use Satellite Traits to express any special abilities or mystical powers you want for your character, especially when the traits are based on a highly supernatural Secret.

In any case, the exact scope of what a Satellite Trait covers is left intentionally vague, and each group of players will find their own comfort zone for how expansive or narrow a Satellite Trait should be.



Moments

Moments are pivotal points of play when the outcome of the story could go in many different directions, when something important could happen, and when you discover more about a character's background and capabilities. Situations become Moments by establishing that a character has a specific Achievement that they want to make, but gaining that Achievement may have a Consequence. Moments may be internal to the character, may occur between the character and another character, or may exist in a more difficult-to-define conceptual space. Moments are also the turning points of the plot, and the sequence of Moments throughout scenes is what creates the narrative of the game. Finally, Moments allow players to develop their characters by establishing Satellite Traits.

A Moment happens only when someone specifically says, "This is a Moment." If no one declares a Moment, then the scene simply continues as free roleplay.

Once a Moment is declared, the player determines how their character is addressing the situation. There are two kinds of Moments: Moments that are Seized by the active player, and Moments that are Pushed by the scene guide. In both cases, the active player either defines a new Satellite Trait or chooses to use one that has been already defined, and the scene guide and the active

player decide on a set of potential outcomes for the Moment. The player declaring the Moment defines the first outcome. That is, an active player Seizing a Moment defines the first possible outcome as an Achievement, while a scene guide Pushing a Moment defines the first possible outcome as a Consequence.

You can have a number of Moments during each active player's turn, and some scenes may very well not require any Moments at all. Each group must find its own stride, but it's usually a good idea for each player to experience a number of Moments over the course of Laying the Foundations.

SEIZING A MOMENT



Damien: I want to Seize the Moment. I want to make Greta and her boyfriend leave. I'm creating a Satellite Trait, "If I'm not happy, why should you be?" linked to my Vulnerability. I get one free coin, and I'm going to spend two coins out of Vulnerability, giving me four more, so five total. I now have seven Vulnerability and four Secret.

Travis: What's your Achievement?

Damien: I want Greta and her boyfriend to leave the room, obviously.

Travis: Hrm... the Consequence here is that this pushes Greta over the edge, and she starts actually hating you. Do you have another Achievement that you want to add?

Damien: No, not really. I'm cool with this.



Moments & Outcomes

Moments concern the generation and then the resolution of an array of possible outcomes, divided into Achievements and Consequences. Achievements, defined by the active player, usually concern the positive outcomes that arise out of the situation. The scene guide defines the Consequences, which describe the problems and negative outcomes that arise. A single outcome is simply a statement of something that could happen in the fiction as a direct or indirect result of the Moment, like “My character learns the identity of the man in the mask” (an Achievement) or “The tower is struck by lightning, trapping everyone inside” (a Consequence). The boundaries for what constitutes a good outcome vary by group, mood, and the style of the game. If a player feels something is inappropriate or not fun, everyone at the table has the ability to say, “Hey, I don’t think that’s a good outcome. Can we come up with something else?” The active player and scene guide are encouraged to ask for input from the audience when they have difficulty formulating appropriate outcomes.

Once the first outcome for a Moment is defined (whether an active player’s Achievement or a scene guide’s Consequence), the active player declares which existing Satellite Trait they are using for the Moment, or if they are creating a new one. Since characters start the game with no Satellite Traits, a character’s first Moment necessitates the creation of a new one.

Once the Satellite Trait has been chosen or generated, the player who hasn’t yet defined an outcome does so. So, if the active player Seized the Moment (and created an Achievement), the scene guide decides on

ORTHOGONAL, NOT OPPOSING

Something very important to keep in mind, especially if you have a lot of experience with other conflict resolution systems, is that Achievements and Consequences in this game never oppose each other. They always need to be orthogonal to one other—that is, the success or failure of an Achievement should never mean that a Consequence cannot happen, and vice versa. This is because the dice assigned to the elements of the Moment determine what comes to pass and what does not. Writing Achievements and Consequences creates an array of possible fallout from the circumstances of the Moment. In other words, you cooperatively push the fiction of the game forward while letting the dice decide exactly what happens and what does not. It is certainly possible (though rare) for a conflict to end with no Achievements being made and no Consequences being suffered, as well as for every outcome to come to pass, good and bad. Always make sure before you roll dice that the Achievements and Consequences on the table will not end up contradicting one another if they all happen.

If you have only one coin left on a Satellite Trait, you may Seize a Moment without having to face a Consequence. If the scene guide Pushes a Moment on you, you cannot match it with an Achievement—you'll have to use a Claim once the Moment begins if you want one!

THE MOMENT RECORD

While not strictly necessary, it is very helpful to keep a written record of all of the Achievements and Consequences that a Moment generates. Simply write down the outcomes as they are proposed and then place dice assigned to those outcomes right on the paper. You may want to record the final numbers assigned to the outcomes or otherwise indicate which ones came to pass and which did not. In addition to making it easier to keep track of in play, this becomes a cheat sheet that records the events of the story. Blank sheets and example Moment records are available for download from findannalise.com.

OTHERKIND

Many thanks are due to Vincent Baker and his game *Otherkind*, which was the primary inspiration for how Moments are resolved.



a possible Consequence. If the scene guide Pushed the Moment (and created a Consequence), the active player chooses an Achievement.

Once there is one Achievement and one Consequence on the table, the active player may decide to add an additional Achievement; if the active player does so, then the scene guide must add an additional Consequence. The active player then has the option to add another Achievement, and so on. The Moment can have a total number of outcomes equal to the number of coins on the Satellite Trait being used for the Moment. This is often an odd number of coins, which means that the active player may “max out” their Trait in order to have one more Achievement on the table than the scene guide has Consequences. This leaves the Trait vulnerable to being totally drained, however.

Generating Achievements and Consequences must follow one important rule: they cannot directly counter each other. No outcome can be the opposite of any other outcome. The resolution of the Moment will determine whether some, all, or none of the outcomes happen, and it must be possible for all of the outcomes to be able to happen at once, if that's how the dice fall.

Resolving Moments

Once all Achievements and Consequences for a Moment have been declared and written down, the active player spends a number of coins out of their Satellite Trait equal to the outcomes on the table, and then rolls a handful of dice—one die for each outcome. The active player assigns one of those dice to each Achievement and Consequence, giving each outcome a rating equal to the number shown on the assigned die. Note



that you roll the dice before assigning the numbers (as opposed to picking an outcome, rolling a die and assigning that number to that outcome).

Once you assign numbers, the initial state of the Moment is set. The scene guide and active player both describe what's happening in the fiction, based on this state. This chart describes what each number means for the assigned outcome.

The outcome chart is reproduced at the end of this pdf. This play aid is also available for download from findannalise.com.

Moment Outcome Chart

Achievements:

- Value of 1: You do not even come close to gaining the Achievement.
- Value of 2: You do not gain the Achievement.
- Value of 3: You come just short of gaining the Achievement.
- Value of 4: You gain the Achievement.
- Value of 5: You gain the Achievement handily. When the Moment closes you add a coin to this Satellite Trait.
- Value of 6: Your Achievement has an unexpectedly positive outcome. If this is the initial roll of the Moment, the active player generates another Achievement and places a die with a value of 4 on it.

Consequences:

- Value of 1: The Consequence happens with full force. If this is the initial roll of the Moment, the scene guide generates another Consequence and places a die with a value of 3 on it.
- Value of 2: The Consequence happens. When the Moment closes, spend an additional coin out of this Satellite Trait. If you do not have any coins left in this Satellite Trait, spend a coin out of the linked Core Trait instead.
- Value of 3: The Consequence happens, though not to its fullest possible extent. When the Moment closes, place a coin in your Reserves.
- Value of 4: You avoid the Consequence, though perhaps only barely. When the Moment closes, place a coin in your Reserves.
- Value of 5: You avoid the Consequence. When the Moment closes, place a coin in your Reserves.
- Value of 6: You completely avoid the Consequence. When the Moment closes, place a coin in your Reserves.



After you have assigned the initial dice and generated any additional outcomes due to a 1 placed on a Consequence or a 6 placed on an Achievement, each player has the opportunity to adjust the assigned numbers by spending coins off their Claims (see Using Claims in Moments starting on **page 42**). Once the group completes a round of using Claims, the active player chooses whether to close the Moment or to allow another round of Claim usage. Once the Moment is closed, the active player and scene guide narrate the outcomes according to the outcome chart on the facing page.

Finally, the active player makes any Trait or Reserves adjustments as required by the outcome chart. A value of 2 assigned to a Consequence costs a coin from the Satellite Trait (or the linked Core Trait if the Satellite Trait has no coins left). A value of 3, 4, 5, or 6 assigned to a Consequence adds a coin to the character's Reserves. A 5 placed on an Achievement earns a coin for the Satellite Trait used in the Moment. All added coins come from the free coins pile.

The additional outcomes generated from a 1 on a Consequence or a 6 on an Achievement are only triggered on the initial roll of the dice. If using a Claim later adjusts a die to a 1 or a 6, no additional outcome is added to the Moment.

RESOLVING A MOMENT



There's one Achievement and one Consequence on the table, so Damien spends two coins out of his new Satellite Trait (bringing it down to three) and rolls two dice. He rolls a 3 and a 1, and takes a look at the chart.

Damien: Ahh, suck.

Damien places the 1 on the Achievement and a 3 on the Consequence. This doesn't look good. Right now Damien has a 1 in his Achievement, which means that he will not get it this scene, and a 3 in his Consequence, which means that the Consequence is going to happen.

Travis: Ok, before we go on to Claims and stuff, we have to describe what's going on. Umm, so, what do you say to Greta?

Damien: I glare daggers at Greta and say, "I'm sorry... I wasn't aware that I wasn't allowed to do work in my own room. Well, I'll be sure to stay nice and quiet while you fake it once again with your hunk of meat there." That's pretty much guaranteed to make her hate me, I think.

Travis nods.

Travis: She turns bright red, then grabs her boyfriend and practically pulls him on top of her. She sure as hell isn't leaving now!

Damien starts looking at his Claims to see how he can make this work out better for Annalise.



Using Claims in Moments

Once the active player has rolled and assigned his or her dice, players can use Claims to affect the outcomes of the Moment. Starting with the active player and going in turn order, each player can spend coins from their Claims to modify the values of the dice assigned to outcomes or to add new outcomes to the Moment. Each player may:

- Spend one coin off a Claim to reroll a die assigned to any Consequence or Achievement. The active player is bound to accept the new result, good or bad. Anyone can use a Claim to reroll a die in any potential outcome.
- Spend coins off a Claim to modify a potential outcome. Raise or lower the number assigned to a potential outcome up or down by the number of coins spent. For example, spend two coins to add or subtract two from a die, spend three to add or subtract three, and so on. You cannot modify the value of a die below 1 or over 6. Modifying a die to a 1 (on a Consequence) or a 6 (on an Achievement) after it's been rolled does not trigger the addition of an outcome.
- Spend one coin off a Claim to add a new outcome to a Moment. Roll a new die to generate the number assigned to that outcome. The new outcome counts as if it had been developed along with the others. It can be rerolled, and it can change the active player's Reserves when the Moment closes.
- Spend two coins off a Claim to add a new outcome to a Moment, and assign a value of 3 or 4 to it. The player spending the Claim chooses the value. This



USING CLAIMS IN A MOMENT

Damien, the active player, has the first opportunity to use Claims, and he does so.

Damien: I'm going to reroll the 1 that I have on the Achievement, using my "Burning Eyes in the Dark" Claim. I think that there are a set of burning red eyes outside the window of Annalise's room, and when Greta notices them she freaks out.

Damien spends a coin from "Burning Eyes in the Dark" and rerolls the 1, getting a 5, which means that he gets the Achievement handily.

Damien: Awesome! So, she sees the eyes, screams and runs out of the room, her boyfriend following.

Sarah is sitting in between Travis and Damien, but she decides she doesn't want to use a Claim. Travis has the next opportunity to use a Claim, and he ponders a bit.

Travis: Umm, I'm going to use a Claim to add a Consequence.

Travis spends two coins off "Backlit, with Shadowed Features."

Travis: Annalise can see a beckoning light in the red eyes, enough to illuminate just enough of the face outside the window to almost recognize it ... the Consequence is that the face burns itself into your mind and you can't stop thinking about it. I'm spending two coins so I can set the value to either 3 or 4. I'm going with 3, obviously—I want you to remember the creepy face!

The Moment now has the Achievement "Greta and her boyfriend leave" with a 5 and the Consequences "Greta hates Annalise" with a 3 and "Annalise becomes obsessed with the face" at 3.



outcome counts as if it had been developed with the others, as above.

- You may spend as many coins as you wish, and use as many Claims as you want, on your turn.
- You may not combine Claims. All of the coins spent for an individual effect must come off the same Claim.

Using a Claim requires you to describe how that element comes back into the fiction in a way that affects the Moment. When you use a Claim, narrate an additional thing that occurs, that has been prepared, or that suddenly becomes relevant to the situation established so far. Do not use Claims to remove an element that has already been introduced, but use them to modify or change part of the fiction. Narrating appropriate Claims and layering them into the story so far adds texture to Moments and grounds Moments in the narrative elements that you and your group have established.

Once the opportunity to use Claims rotates back to the active player, they can either close the Moment or continue to allow more Claims. If declared closed, the Moment is over. If the active player allows additional Claims, each player in turn order gets another chance to spend coins, as described above. Once the Moment is closed, any Claim without any coins on it becomes a Floating Claim and is moved to the center of the table.

Ending Moments

Once the Moment is closed, the active player and scene guide narrate how the Moment resolves, turning that narration into material for the rest of the scene. Generally, the scene guide has authority over the Consequences that take effect, and the active player describes how Achievements come to pass. The two players should work together to describe the results of a Moment satisfactorily.

ENDING A MOMENT

It's back to Damien's turn.

Damien: I actually think that that's a really cool Consequence. I'm going to end the Moment.

They look at the Moment outcome chart and see that all three outcomes happen, as both Consequences have a 3 on them and the Achievement has a 5 on it.

Damien places two coins in his Reserves for the two Consequences. For the 5 in the Achievement, he places an additional coin in his Satellite Trait, "If I'm not happy, why should you be?", bringing it up to four coins. The Moment is over, and the group is ready to continue with the scene.





Reserves

Reserves are a generic pool of resources from which you draw to maintain your character's resolve in the face of adversity. Unlike Traits, Reserves are not further defined through play. They are simply a pool of coins that represent your character's current willpower, strength of personality or sheer stubbornness.

You can use your character's Reserves in order to improve your Claims and Traits. You start the game with three coins in your character's Reserves. Over

the course of play, you spend coins out of Reserves in order to bolster your character's Traits and Claims, and you gain coins in your Reserves as the result of Moments. Once a Moment is resolved, every 3, 4, 5 or 6 assigned to a Consequence during the Moment adds a coin to your Reserves.

At the beginning and end of each turn, the active player can spend his character's Reserves in these ways:

- **Bolster a Satellite Trait.** Spend a number of Reserves equal to one plus the current number of coins in the Trait you are improving. You may improve a Trait by only one coin at a time, though you may improve it as many times as you have Reserves to afford it. That is, if you wish to improve a Trait from two to four coins, you first pay three Reserves to raise it from two to three, and then you pay another four Reserves to raise it from three to four, for a total of seven coins spent.
- **Improve a Core Trait.** In any given scene, you may improve Vulnerability or Secret, but not both, though you may raise that Trait multiple times if you have enough Reserves. Raise a Core Trait as you would raise a Satellite Trait, except the cost is two coins plus the current number of coins in the Core Trait. Thus, it costs three coins to raise a Core Trait from one to two, four coins to raise it from two to three, and so on.

USING RESERVES

It's the end of Damien's scene. Damien has three coins in Annalise's Reserves from the beginning of the game, plus two more from the first Moment of the scene, for a total of five.

Damien created the Trait "If I can't be happy, why should you be?" at five, but lost one of those coins from the Moment, so it's down to four. He could spend his five coins to bring it back up to five, but decides that he has better uses for his Reserves.

He spends one coin to bring his Trait "I pretend that I don't need anyone" from zero to one, and then two coins to bring it from one to two. Finally, he spends his last two coins to place two coins on his "Burning Eyes in the Dark" Claim.

Damien: I think that this will get a good amount of use ...



- Improve a Claim. Move any number of coins from Reserves to a Claim. You can improve any number of Claims you wish.
- Take a Floating Claim. If there are any Floating Claims in the middle of the table, you may spend one Reserves in order to take that Claim as your own. Place the coin you spent on the Claim.
- You may spend as many coins out of your Reserves as you wish during your turn. There is no penalty for having no coins in your Reserves.

THE HOLD OF THE VAMPIRE

The Vampire has but one mechanic associated with it, the Hold of the Vampire. If the Vampire appears in a scene, it is considered the same as any other non-player character. Keep in mind the overall structure of the game when considering whether to call for the Vampire in a scene. During the Laying the Foundations phase, introduce the Vampire into scenes to drive the plot, build tension, or highlight a character's Vulnerability. If a character has any Holds over them, the scene guide is encouraged to use "free" Consequences to increase the entanglements between the character and the Vampire or to demonstrate the terrible nature of the creature. Characters can do little to throw off the Hold until the next phase of the game, since only during The Confrontation is the Vampire directly addressable.

Vulnerability during Laying the Foundations

Much of this phase revolves around Vulnerability and the Satellite Traits linked to Vulnerability. Between creating Satellite Traits, the fallout from Moments, and the way you spend your Reserves, the coins in your Vulnerability fluctuate throughout the game, and it is possible for you to lose all of them. If your Vulnerability drops to zero during this phase, then the Vampire has gained a Hold over you. In the fiction, this means that the Vampire has either gained some kind of magical or metaphysical control, or maybe that it has found your emotional weak spot or even that it has taken one of your loved-ones hostage (or turned them towards the darkness). The exact nature and extent of the hold can be established as part of the post-Moment narration or in your next scene, whichever is more appropriate.

For the remainder of the game, whenever a character with a Hold on them is in a Moment, the scene guide can add an extra "free" Consequence to the Moment after generating the usual set of outcomes. This additional Consequence must concern the power the Vampire has over the character in some way. The player still has to spend a coin for this



Consequence. If the character's Satellite Trait doesn't have enough coins in it, the player must spend a coin out of the linked Core Trait. If the Core Trait is also empty, simply roll a "free" die for the Consequence.

You can replenish coins in Vulnerability after hitting zero (it costs two Reserves to raise your Vulnerability from zero to one). However, if you hit zero in your Vulnerability again, the Vampire gains another Hold over you, and the scene guide can add up to two Consequences to any Moment your character is in. In addition, the Vampire also gains a Hold whenever you have zero coins in your Vulnerability and you would lose a coin due to the result of a Moment. Keep track of the Holds that the Vampire has over your character, as it will matter during The Confrontation.

Secrets during Laying the Foundations

Secrets tend to be less of a focus during this phase of play, but become more important during The Confrontation. Regardless, the coins in your Secret fluctuate throughout play. Any time you create a Trait based on your Secret, you must drop a hint about your Secret or foreshadow its eventual revelation. This can be a short flashback scene, some out-of-character explanation, an interior monologue or simply a revelation of a little piece of your Secret in order to establish the Trait.



THE HOLD OF THE VAMPIRE

During the second session of their game, Sir Hector begins to suspect that the Baron of Three Pines does not have the best interests of the kingdom at heart. Elizabeth Seizes a Moment with the Achievement of "discover the Baron's real plans."

Due to some poor rolls and spirited Claim usage, not only does Sir Hector fail to gain that Achievement, Elizabeth ends up with a 2 in one of the Consequences. She had spent all of her coins out of her "Chivalrous" Satellite Trait for the Moment, so she has to spend a coin out of the linked Core Trait—in this case, Vulnerability. Unfortunately, she has only one coin in Vulnerability, so spending it brings the Trait to zero.

Elizabeth: Oh no! My Vulnerability is at zero. The Vampire gets a Hold over me!

Shreyas is her scene guide for the scene.

Shreyas: Good timing! I have an idea for the Baron that I think will work out really well. You know how you stormed out of the manor in a rage? Well, I think you're wandering through the hunting grounds, all pissed off. As if from a distance you hear your name being called, very softly, but you can't ignore it. You head towards where it seems like it's coming from, and you find yourself back at that clear spring from the end of last session. On the other edge of the spring is a dark, cowed figure, hard to make out, but in his hand you recognize the signet that you gave to the Baron! The figure raises the signet as if in victory and then vanishes.

For the rest of this phase, Elizabeth's scene guide can add a Consequence having to do with this Hold in any appropriate Moment after the normal outcomes are generated, but before Elizabeth rolls dice.



If the coins in your Secret fall to zero during this phase, then you must reveal your character's Secret by the end of your next scene in whatever manner you feel appropriate. Feel free to request that your scene guide frame your scene in a certain way in order to facilitate your reveal. Keep in mind that you need to reveal your character's Secret in the fiction, as well as to the other players. You no longer can use Reserves to raise your Secret. It will remain at zero for the rest of the game. Unlike Vulnerability, losing all of the coins out of your Secret does not give the Vampire a Hold over you.

It is possible that another player will guess a character's Secret through the events of play, and it may even be fictionally appropriate for another character to discover it. In these cases, the Secret does not count as revealed as described above. The triggers for revealing a Secret, whether by losing coins or making the decision to do so during The Confrontation, mean that the Secret is laid bare for all to see, and carries mechanical (as well as fictional) weight. If you correctly guess the Secret of another player's character without them triggering a mechanical condition, you are encouraged to use this knowledge to dramatic effect.

REVEALING SECRETS

Sir Hector has set out on a quest that he hopes will fulfill the wishes of both his king and the Baron—and maybe give him some answers about the nature of the creature that holds his signet.

Elizabeth seizes a Moment that has to do with Sir Hector's struggle through the barren wastes at the edge of the kingdom, and the results of the Moment require her to spend the last coin out of Sir Hector's Secret. In addition to narrating the outcomes of the Moment, Elizabeth has to reveal the knight's Secret.

Elizabeth: As I fall off of my steed, a string of nonsense syllables bursts out of my mouth, and suddenly there's a golden glow around me that softens my fall and deflects the rain of jagged ice. The "you lose your steed" Consequence means it still gets ripped to shreds, but it's this magical protection that achieves the Achievement that I make it out unscathed. My Secret is that I'm heir to the ancient arts of witchcraft.

Sir Hector's Secret stays at zero coins for the rest of the game.

Ending the Phase

Laying the Foundations should take your characters from their introductions to the point at which the next natural step in the story involves actively pursuing confrontation with the Vampire. When this happens is entirely a function of how your group paces their scenes and Moments and how you develop the fiction in your story. It probably will be fairly obvious when it is time to move on. When you



feel like it's time to end the phase, ask the other players and make sure everyone agrees. Often, you should finish out another scene or two to tie up any dangling plot threads or allow a player with a specific idea to get it in before moving on. There is no hard trigger that transitions to The Confrontation, but here are some general signs that you should consider ending the phase:

- All of the characters have established four to six Satellite Traits.
- The Vampire is present in most, if not all, scenes.
- The fiction itself concerns a journey to find the Vampire.
- Attempts to find out the details of the Vampire's life, powers or agenda are the critical points of the plot that need to be resolved.



PUSHING A MOMENT

Travis decides that the scene isn't over yet.

Travis: Okay. It's a couple of hours later, and Greta and her boyfriend are still gone. You've been trying to get back to work ... but you can't. The image of that face with those floating red eyes keeps coming to you, almost as if they're calling you ... so, this is a Moment. The Consequence is that you'll go out into the night, alone.

Damien thinks about that.

Damien: Hrm ... I don't want to make another Trait right now, so I'm going to use "I pretend that I don't need anyone," even though it's pretty low in coins. My Achievement is that I'm going to end up spending the night in my own bed.

Damien checks his character sheet. Annalise has only two coins on the Satellite Trait, so the two outcomes already generated max it out and no more can be added before Damien rolls the dice. He takes the two coins off the Trait and rolls two dice, getting a 2 and a 6.

Damien: Nice, no problem!

Damien puts the 2 into the Consequence and the 6 into the Achievement, so the initial state of the Moment is that they both come to pass. Because Damien put a 6 in an Achievement, he generates an additional Achievement that starts play with a 4 on it. He's having trouble coming up with something, but Sarah makes a suggestion.

Sarah: Hey, what if it's something about ex-boyfriend Dave?

Damien: I like that idea. How about "Dave comes crawling back" as the free Achievement?

Damien records the Achievement and places a die showing 4 on it. All of the players decide not to use any Claims to affect the dice, so the Moment resolves with all three outcomes happening. The 2 on the Consequence means that Damien must spend an additional coin out of his Satellite Trait, but he doesn't have any left in it, which means he has to spend a coin out of the linked Core Trait (in this case, Vulnerability) instead. With that, Damien begins to narrate how Annalise moves towards the window, compelled by the eyes...



Summary

1. Players roleplay freely before, between and after Moments.
2. The first player asks another player to be their scene guide.
3. The scene guide frames a scene centering on the active player's character. Other players can be asked to play non-player characters in the scene. If another player's character is in the scene, the player plays their character as normal, but they do not have Moments.
4. If the active player wishes to spend Reserves, they may do so at this time.
 - Spend X Reserves to add X coins to a Claim.
 - Spend 1 Reserves to take a Floating Claim and put 1 coin on it.
 - Spend $1+X$ Reserves to raise a Satellite Trait from X to $1+X$ (spend 3 to raise from 2 to 3).
 - Spend $2+X$ Reserves to raise a Core Trait from X to $1+X$ (spend 4 to raise from 2 to 3). You can raise only one Core Trait per turn.
5. Players may make additional Claims during scenes. The first Claim a player makes in a Scene has two coins placed on it. If that player makes additional Claims, the

player must place at least one coin from their existing Claims onto the new Claim (and can place more if they like).

6. Scenes may contain any number of Moments. A Moment can be Pushed by the scene guide, or Seized by the active player.
 - If the scene guide Pushes the Moment, they create a Consequence for the Moment and then the active player creates an Achievement.
 - If the active player Seizes the Moment, they create an Achievement for the Moment, and then the scene guide creates a Consequence.
 - The active player chooses whether to use an existing Satellite Trait or make a new one.
 - If the active player is making a new Satellite Trait, they define it and state which Core Trait it springs from. They then spend X coins out of that Core Trait to put $2X + 1$ coins on the newly created Satellite Trait.
 - The active player decides whether to define an additional Achievement for the Moment. If another Achievement is added, the Scene Guide must create an additional Consequence, if possible. There may be only as many outcomes on the table as there are coins in the Satellite Trait the active player



is using. If there are an odd number of coins, the active player may use the last coin to create an Achievement that is not matched by a Consequence.

- ❧ The active player spends coins equal to the number of outcomes generated out of the Satellite Trait, and rolls that number of dice.
- ❧ The active player assigns the rolled die values to the outcomes in order to establish the initial state of the Moment according to the Moment Outcome Chart (see the reference sheet at the end of this pdf).
- ❧ Any additional outcomes due to a 1 assigned to a Consequence or a 6 assigned to an Achievement are generated and given their appropriate dice.
- ❧ The active player has the option to use Claims to adjust the assigned die values.
 - ❧ Spend X coins off one Claim to adjust a single die by X up or down (no higher than 6 or lower than 1).
 - ❧ Spend 1 coin off one Claim to reroll a single die.
 - ❧ Spend 1 coin off one Claim to add an outcome. Roll a new die and assign it to the new outcome.
 - ❧ Spend 2 coins off one Claim to add an outcome. Choose whether to assign a 3 or a 4 to the outcome.

- ❧ Each other player in turn has the option to use Claims in the same manner.
- ❧ The active player may either allow another round of Claims (though they do not need to use more Claims themselves), or close the Moment.
- ❧ When the Moment is closed, the active player adjusts Satellite Traits and Reserves according to the outcome chart. Any Claim with zero coins becomes a Floating Claim.
- ❧ The active player and scene guide narrate how the Moment resolves.

7. Any player may add narrative details to a scene based on their Claims at any time.
8. The scene guide declares when the scene is over.
9. If the active player wishes to spend Reserves to bolster a Satellite Trait, improve a Core Trait, improve Reserves, or take a Floating Claim, they may do so at this time.
10. Continue with scenes in turn order until the group feels like it is time to transition to The Confrontation.





Kat Pushes a Moment on Elizabeth's character, Sir Hector, with the Consequence "Sir Hector is embarrassed before the court."

Elizabeth's initial Achievement is "Sir Hector proves that he's a true knight." She doesn't have another Achievement that she wants to make. She pays for the two outcomes with two coins off her "Chivalrous" Satellite Trait (leaving five coins) and rolls two dice, getting a 2 and a 1.

Elizabeth: Not good for Hector! I'm putting the 1 into the Consequence and the 2 into the Achievement.

Looking at the chart, this means that Hector is going to be embarrassed and he will fail to prove that he's a true knight. Also, because of the 1 in the Consequence, Kat needs to come up with another "free" Consequence. She thinks for a second.

Kat: Hmm... okay, so the additional Consequence is that one of the barons in attendance will demand your pledge of loyalty.

Kat writes this down and puts a die with a value of 3 on it. The initial state of the Moment is that Sir Hector will be embarrassed, will fail to prove that he's a true knight, and that a baron will demand his loyalty. Kat narrates.

Kat: The withered old man steps forward and raises his staff, saying with a sneer: "Leave these halls, you stripling. The only prize you've gained is that of a fool—the princess was banished for a reason."

Elizabeth: I'm spending two coins off my Claim "Heraldic Crest" to change the 2 to a 4 for my Achievement. Um, anyone else using Claims?

Shreyas is next in turn order.

Shreyas: Oh, well, I don't really want to see you shamed in front of the court. I'm going to spend a coin off of my Claim "Blood dripping down the blade" to reroll that 1. I think that you swear a blood oath to the king!

Shreyas rerolls the 1... and gets a 4!

Elizabeth: Great! I draw my sword and slice my hand, then get down on one knee. "My liege, I swear by my blood that I had only your best interests at heart."

Next is Kat, who doesn't want to use any Claims. Now the choice returns to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: I'm happy with this. The Moment is done.

Elizabeth has a 4 in the "embarrassed before the Court" Consequence, so Sir Hector barely avoids being embarrassed. She also has a 4 in the "prove that I'm a true Knight" Achievement, so Sir Hector has proved himself to be worthy of his title. And she has a 3 in the "a Baron demands your pledge" Consequence, so that will happen, as well. Elizabeth thinks for a moment.

Elizabeth: So, I avoid being embarrassed, and I've proved I'm a true Knight. I think the blood oath mightily impresses the King and whatever baron is interested in me has an idea of my strength of character.

Kat: Definitely ... as you rise after receiving the King's blessing, you see the court Wizard whispering in the ear of the Baron of Three Pines, who is staring right at you ... or at least at your bloody sword.

Before moving on with the scene, Elizabeth places two coins in her Reserves for the Consequences resolving with 3 and 4.





Chapter Five: The Confrontation

This phase works in the same structural manner as Laying the Foundations. Each player in turn enjoys a scene, selects their scene guide, and plays through one or more Moments. The content of these scenes should build towards the confrontation with the Vampire. Make choices about your character's Traits and decide how the character changes in reaction to the events of play. While the structure of this phase is the same as Laying the Foundations, your characters are now fully Discovered. This means that many of the mechanical options from the last phase are no longer available, while other options more appropriate to The Confrontation are now open.

Beginning the Phase

After ending Laying the Foundations but before beginning The Confrontation, players have an opportunity to consolidate their Claims. Often, by this point in the game some Claims will have become more useful, more resonant, or more interesting than others. You may reassign the coins on your Claims however you like, including taking all of the coins off a Claim that you don't think you'll use. Any Claims with no coins on it becomes a Floating Claim. If you wish to spend Reserves to claim any Floating Claims or bolster your remaining Claims, do so at this time as well. Once everyone has consolidated their Claims, discard all Floating Claims.



Playing through The Confrontation

Starting with the first player again, play continues around the table. Each player chooses a scene guide and plays through a scene in the same manner as in Laying the Foundations. However, while scenes in that phase of the game were primarily about



A MOMENT DURING THE CONFRONTATION

Sir Hector is at the top of a mountain, valiantly trying to stave off the onslaught of the Vampire's undead servants as his ally works a spell to break the pall of darkness over the land.

It is Elizabeth's turn with Kat as scene guide. Kat Pushed a Moment, targeting Sir Hector's Vulnerability. At this point the knight has four linked Satellite Traits, and Elizabeth chose his "Defend the Needy" Trait.

The Moment has been generated as such: Achievements are "Buy enough time for Johann to work his spell" and "Destroy all of the Vampire's minions." Consequences are "Johann and Sir Hector are separated" and "Sir Hector is infected with the Vampire's blood."

Also, Kat says that she thinks the Vampire is present in the scene through his minions, so she writes down the free "You Give In to the Vampire" Consequence as well.

So far, it's not looking good. After rolling dice and the first round of Claims, the situation stands at "Buy enough time" with a 2, "Destroy the minions" at 5, "Johann and Hector separated" at 3, "Sir Hector infected" at 1 and "You Give In to the Vampire" at 2!

developing the characters and their situation, The Confrontation phase focuses on the investigation of the Vampire and the eventual confrontation with the Vampire. Sometimes all of the characters will ally together in their efforts; in other games, the characters pursue their goals alone and unaware of the others. Thus, there can be multiple scenes that could be considered "the confrontation" scene, even for one character, if that makes sense in your game's fiction. The climax of this phase (and of the game) is a series of scenes that resolves the relationships between the characters and the Vampire.

Major Differences

Now that play has moved onto The Confrontation, characters are considered fully Discovered. This changes how Moments and Claims work.

- First, players can no longer create new Satellite Traits during Moments. When you Seize a Moment, you must use one of your existing Satellite Traits. If you have no coins left in Satellite Traits, you must use one of your Core Traits directly.
- Similarly, the scene guide now Pushes a Moment on a specific Core Trait of the active player, and that player must resolve the Moment with either one of their Satellite Traits linked to that Core Trait or the Core Trait itself.



Play has moved into The Confrontation. Damien starts a scene where his character Annalise is trying to break the Vampire's hold over her friend Aimee. Travis is the scene guide for Damien, and they've set up the Moment.

Damien's Achievements are "Break the Vampire's link to Aimee" and "Track the Vampire through Aimee's blood." Travis's Consequences are "Aimee turns on you" and "Your protective crucifix is destroyed."

Damien chooses Annalise's Trait, "I only make friends I can use." He spends four coins off the Trait and rolls four dice, getting 2, 3, 3 and 4—not great for Annalise. He assigns the 4 to "Break the Vampire's link to Aimee," the 2 to "Track the Vampire through Aimee's blood" and the two 3's to the two Consequences. Damien and Travis narrate the action.

Damien: I get on my knees next to Aimee's bed, take my penknife and make a small cut on each of our palms. My expression frozen and still, I press our palms together.

Travis: Oh man, nice. You feel like Aimee's blood is almost grabbing yours, and her other hand shoots out and grabs the crucifix around your neck!

Damien: Is anyone using a Claim? Well, I think this is an ideal moment for this. I'm flipping the Trait. As Annalise looks into Aimee's eyes, she gives a small, genuine smile and says, "Aimee... you're the first person who's ever cared about me. You're my only real friend, and I can't let you go like this, even if you never speak to me again." I'm calling the flipped Trait "I would never use my real friends."

Damien rerolls the Achievement's 2 and gets a 3. He rerolls the two 3s on the Consequences and gets a 4 and a 5! While Annalise won't be able to track the Vampire, she does successfully break the creature's hold over Aimee, keep Aimee from turning on her and prevent the destruction of the crucifix. Damien marks "I would never use my real friends" as flipped.

Also, every Moment that involves the presence of the Vampire starts with a free Consequence of "You Give In to the Vampire" (described below under Giving In, starting on **page 57**).

Finally, players no longer make new Claims, though they can continue to bolster their Claims and take Floating Claims by spending their Reserves.

Flipping Traits

The Confrontation is just as much about how the characters have changed due to their experiences as it is about facing the Vampire. During a Moment, a player can "flip" a Satellite Trait their character is using in order to reroll any or all of the dice that have been assigned to outcomes. To flip a Trait, the player describes how that Trait inverts and becomes a reversed reflection of how that character used to act. A generally positive Trait flips to being generally negative, and vice versa.

The player erases the old Trait and writes down the new one, with a note that it has been flipped. You cannot flip a Trait more than once. Describe what flipping the Trait means in the fiction. Then pick up any or all the dice you



SACRIFICING A CLAIM

The initial state of the Moment isn't looking good for Sir Hector.

Elizabeth: All right. Crap. I think it's time for this. I'm sacrificing my Claim of "My Father's Armor."

It has four coins on it, so she puts four more on it, totaling eight.

Elizabeth: I throw myself into the zombies, shouting at Johann to hurry up, and as I fight them off with my sword, they rend the armor from my body. I'm spending three coins to turn "Buy enough time" from two to five, and I'll spend two more to turn "Johann and Hector separated" from three to five, as well.

Shreyas: I really want you guys to be separated... I'm spending a coin off "Cold Winds Blow" to reroll that die. The cold wind blasts snow and dead leaves down the mountain, making it impossible to see each other.

Shreyas rerolls the 5, and it comes up 4. Elizabeth will still gain the Achievement.

Shreyas: I guess Johann stays put through the gale!

Elizabeth still has three coins from sacrificing her Claim. She spends two of them to change the 2 on "You Give In to the Vampire" to a 4.

Elizabeth: I totally don't want to give in, either... As I hack at the undead I feel the creature's presence diminishing.

Nobody else wants to use Claims, so Elizabeth closes the Moment. The last coin on her "My Father's Armor" Claim and the Claim itself are both discarded before she deals with the coins resulting from the Moment.

have assigned to outcomes and reroll them. The rerolled dice remain with the outcomes to which they were originally assigned, and you do not generate new outcomes for a 1 assigned to a Consequence or a 6 assigned to an Achievement.

You can flip only a Satellite Trait, not a Core Trait. You can decide to flip a Trait at any point during the Moment, including after it has been closed. If you flip before the Moment is closed, the dice that you reroll are still open to being modified by Claims.

Sacrificing Claims

The incidental characters, artifacts, motifs, and other fictional elements that you have been reincorporating into the game via Claims can be used to their full potential now. As mentioned above, you can no longer make new Claims, but you can sacrifice a Claim you still have in order to use it as a potent weapon.

Anytime you can use a Claim during a Moment, you may sacrifice it. To do so, narrate how that element is killed, destroyed, negated, or otherwise shunted out of the fiction. Double the number of coins currently on the Claim. You can then spend these coins like you would any other Claim. Once the Moment has been resolved, discard any coins that you did not spend, and remove the Claim from play entirely.



Revealing Secrets

Your character's Secret is the one thing that is truly theirs, which is why it's such a potent weapon in your character's time of most dire need. If your Secret has not been revealed due to the events of play so far, or due to your character's Secret hitting zero coins, you have the option in this phase to reveal it during a Moment.

Once all of the outcomes for a Moment have been generated and your initial dice are assigned to outcomes, you may declare that you are revealing your character's Secret. Narrate the revelation, and immediately turn all of the dice assigned to outcomes to whatever combination of 3 and 4 that you wish.

This closes the Moment immediately, so these values cannot be modified by Claims and players cannot generate new outcomes. Revealing your Secret drops your Secret to 0, and you cannot raise it again for the rest of the game. When a player reveals their character's Secret, they should take the opportunity to really drive the outcome of the Moment towards resolving the relationship between their character and the Vampire.

Giving In

The danger of struggling against the Vampire is that it finally has you where it wants you. Its efforts to

REVEALING A SECRET

Annalise is having a climactic scene in which she has bound the Vampire in a mirror. Sarah is Damien's scene guide, and has pushed a Moment, with the main Consequence being "You Give In to the Vampire." The main Achievement is "Annalise destroys the Vampire's soul."

Damien rolls nothing but 1s and 2s, and it isn't looking good for Annalise.

Damien: This is it. I'm revealing my Secret. It's "I'm only happy when the people around me are miserable." I peer into the mirror and let the Vampire's face blur in my vision as I tune out the tempting offers it's making me. I just sit there, my back to the window, brushing out my hair and smiling absently, until dawn breaks over my shoulder. The last words it hears are "Now, this makes me happy."

Damien sets the Consequence die to 4 and his Achievement to a 4. Because he revealed a Secret, Claims cannot modify those dice and the Moment closes.

Damien narrates how Annalise smiles as she listens to the creature's dying wail. Sarah and Travis both think that that's an incredibly great ending scene for The Confrontation.

draw you closer have succeeded, and you now face the possibility that the Vampire's plans will come to fruition. Giving In to the Vampire means that your character's relationship resolves in a manner that's favorable to the Vampire's intentions—though, depending on the events of the game, maybe it's what your character wants, as well.





There are three ways a character Gives In to the Vampire: your Vulnerability hits zero, you lose a “you Give In to the Vampire” Consequence, or you decide to Give In willingly.

The most direct is that, when your Vulnerability falls to zero during The Confrontation, you no longer can resist. You cannot raise your Vulnerability with Reserves if it hits zero, and your character’s next scene must concern their surrender to the darkness.

Alternately, the Vampire’s Hold over your character can push them towards Giving In. In Laying the Foundations, a Hold gave the scene guide a free Consequence, “You Give In to the Vampire.” In this phase, Holds do not give the scene guide additional Consequences to add to your Moments. Rather, the number of Holds makes it more likely that your character will suffer a predetermined Consequence: “You Give In to the Vampire.” In every Moment that involves the Vampire’s presence, whether the Vampire has any Holds on the character or not, the scene guide may declare that this Consequence is on the table. The active player does not spend a coin for this outcome, and the active player and the scene guide generate the rest of the outcomes as normal.

The active player does not roll a die for this outcome. Instead, “You Give In to the Vampire” begins the Moment with a value of 4 minus the number of holds the Vampire has over your character. Once this value has been assigned, it is treated as any other outcome for the purposes of



GIVING IN TO THE VAMPIRE

Over the course of Laying the Foundations, while Sir Hector has been struggling valiantly, the Vampire managed to get two Holds over him. In each Moment in The Confrontation thus far, Elizabeth has managed to escape Giving In, but she now faces a climactic battle.

The Vampire, who turns out to be the ancient magician from earlier in the game, challenges the knight to a duel at the top of his mountain lair. Elizabeth’s Achievement is to best the creature in single combat. The two Consequences on the table are “Sir Hector falls to his death” and the free “Sir Hector Gives In to the Vampire.”

Elizabeth spends only two coins out of her Satellite Trait, and rolls two dice for the Achievement and the other Consequence. “Sir Hector Gives In to the Vampire” starts with a 2 on it, as Elizabeth subtracts the two Holds from the starting value of 4.

Over the course of the game Sir Hector has become more and more vainglorious, and Elizabeth chooses not to change the 2.

Elizabeth ends up not gaining her Achievement and suffering the other Consequence! Kat, her scene guide, narrates how the preternaturally strong wizard easily defeats Sir Hector and throws him from the peak.

Elizabeth: Oh, and here’s where I give in... my broken body is lying on the mountain path, and I beg the Vampire not to let me die. He drains what’s left of my blood, and the next night I arise as his new champion.

Shreyas: Wow, so you end up some kind of undead Vampire Knight? Totally good.

Elizabeth: Well, I have one more idea for the Aftermath, but we’ll get to that. Basically, yes, undead Vampire Knight.



resolving the Moment. If you end the Moment with a 3 or less in it, then the Consequence takes effect, and you Give In to the Vampire.

Giving In does not necessarily mean that your character is out of play, or even that they stop struggling against the Vampire in the fiction—just that these struggles are fruitless. Your character cannot resist any of the Vampire’s commands, and willing or not, the character pursues the Vampire’s interests against the other player characters. You cannot raise your Vulnerability for the rest of the game. Your Aftermath is going to deal with the nature of your new relationship to the Vampire.

Finally, you can simply declare that you Give In to the Vampire if the events of play make that the most satisfying outcome for you. If you do this, drop your Vulnerability to zero for the rest of the game.


Ending The Confrontation

In The Confrontation, like in Laying the Foundations, there is no hard and fast rule about how long it takes to finish the phase. Every character needs a confrontation with the Vampire, of course, but the nature of each of these confrontations is different and occurs at different times. Each character must resolve their relationship to the

Vampire before the narrative can draw to a close. Of course, this resolution doesn’t mean that your character will come out of the confrontation unscathed. Once each player is satisfied that they have brought their character’s story to an end, the phase is over.

Summary

1. Each player consolidates their Claims by redistributing the coins on them in any manner they wish. Any Claims with no coins become Floating Claims. Any player may spend a coin from their Reserves to take a Floating Claim. Once finished, all remaining Floating Claims are discarded from play.
2. Starting with the first player, play progresses as with Laying the Foundations, with the following changes:
 - You may no longer:
 - Create new Satellite Traits.
 - Make new Claims.
 - Raise your Vulnerability with Reserves if it drops to zero coins.
 - Give the Vampire a Hold over your character if the character’s Vulnerability drops to zero coins.
 - During Moments:
 - The active player may Seize a Moment using a Core Trait or a Satellite Trait.

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- The scene guide selects a Core Trait when Pushing a Moment. The active player must use that Core Trait or a linked Satellite Trait.
 - After the standard outcomes are generated, the scene guide may add the Consequence “You Give In to the Vampire” to any Moment that involves the Vampire. The active player does not pay a coin or roll a die for this Consequence. Instead, it begins the Moment with a value of 4 minus the number of Holds the Vampire has on the character.
 - The active player may flip a Satellite Trait.
 - After dice are rolled, declare that you are flipping the Trait and describe what the new Trait is, and what that means in the fiction
 - Reroll any or all dice.
 - You can flip a Trait after closing the Moment, but you cannot use Claims.
 - The active player may reveal their character’s Secret.
 - After dice are rolled, declare that you are revealing the character’s Secret and describe what that means in the fiction.
 - Turn all of the dice in the Moment to 3 or 4, however you like.
 - The Moment closes.
 - Any player may sacrifice a Claim.
 - When you could use a Claim, declare that you are sacrificing one of your Claims and describe what this means in the fiction.
 - Double the number of coins on the Claim.
 - Spend coins off the Claim to influence the Moment.
 - When the Moment closes, discard the Claim and any coins remaining on it.
 - During this phase, a character Gives In to the Vampire if any of these happen:
 - The character’s Vulnerability drops to zero coins.
 - The player ends a Moment with a 1, 2 or 3 on the Consequence “You Give In to the Vampire.”
 - The player chooses to lower their Vulnerability to zero and narrate that their character Gives In to the Vampire as part of a Moment or during free roleplay.
3. Continue with scenes in turn order until each character has resolved their relationship to the Vampire.
 4. Move on to The Aftermath.





Chapter Six: The Aftermath

The last phase of play, like the first, is short and gives narrative authority for each character back to that character's player. Often, The Aftermath is simply one scene per character, as you narrate what the fallout from that character's actions during The Confrontation means for the character and their relationships. As in Discovering Characters, each active player now has the final say about anything happening in their scenes. While the active player can (and should) ask the other players for input into their Aftermath scenes, it is up to each individual player whether to simply narrate their own ending or cast the other characters in supporting roles. If the characters finish the game with stronger relationships to each other, players may simply roleplay the interactions between their characters.

Finishing the Story

In terms of fictional content, scenes in The Aftermath showcase the changes to the characters, their reactions to the events of The Confrontation, and the changes to their relationships with each other

There is no longer a need to have Moments. Use the state of your character's Traits at the end of The Confrontation phase as a guideline to focus the content of your final scenes. Usually, one scene per character is enough for The Aftermath, but there's no reason not to have more if your group feels that it is appropriate.

These are guidelines to aid you in demonstrating how your character has changed. First, showcase your flipped Traits, if you have any. One easy way



to go through The Aftermath is to state explicitly, “this scene is about my flipped Trait X.” You can ask another player to frame a scene for a particular flipped Trait, or set of flipped Traits, if you want. If you revealed your character’s Secret, your scenes should involve the fallout from having that Secret be revealed. If the Secret was not revealed, you should consider doing so now, though you don’t have to. Especially if you’ve been creating a lot of Traits linked to your Secret, it will probably be very satisfying to reveal it. If you haven’t included it as a big part of your character, however, it may not matter.

If your character gave in to the Vampire, involve in your scenes what that means for the character. Your character may have become its willing servant, could be on the run from its vengeance, or perhaps is grieving over its destruction at the hands of another character. However, now that you have exposed your character’s Vulnerability, it may be appropriate to have scenes about overcoming that Vulnerability and forming healthy relationships. You can combine these into single scenes, particularly flipped Traits and revealing a Secret, or a flipped Trait and a Vulnerability focus. It is useful to focus on only two things at a time.

Ending the Game

And that’s it.

If you want to play another game of *Annalise* with some continuity with the one you just completed, keep all of the unsacrificed Claims and put them into the Floating Claims pile at the beginning of the next game. If you want to use the same character, re-create the character with a new Vulnerability and take a new Secret if you revealed it in this game. If your character’s Secret was not revealed, keep the same one. Create the character with three Reserves and 13 coins distributed between Vulnerability and Secret. Start with no Satellite Traits.

Alternatively, you can make your character into a Floating Claim for the next game, and create a new character.

Thanks for playing!



Summary

1. Starting with the first active player, each player narrates a scene exploring and wrapping up their character's story. Players have full narrative authority over their own scenes, but may ask other players to roleplay other characters.
2. Scenes center around the changes to the character based on the events of the game, tie up loose plot threads, and generally wrap up the story.
3. Keep all unsacrificed Claims as Floating Claims if you wish to play another game in the same continuity as the one you just finished. If you want to play the same character again, give them a new Vulnerability and maybe a new Secret if the original Secret has been revealed. Start with no Satellite Traits.



FINISHING THE STORY



It's Elizabeth's turn to have her Aftermath scene for Sir Hector, who fell to the Vampire and became his undead champion. She narrates.

Elizabeth: So, remember how Sir Hector blamed the Baron of Three Pines for tricking him into dishonoring himself? We're at the manor of the Baron. It's night, with a full moon in the sky. A cloaked rider approaches the front entrance, and two men-at-arms step forward to stop him—and then one of them screams. The rider pulls out his sword and dispatches the two guards, and then rides straight into the building. There's a bunch of screaming and clashing noises, and then fire bursts out of the top windows. Cut! And we see the knight riding away from the manor as it collapses in flames. Around his neck is Sir Hector's signet, still stained with blood. There's a splash of moonlight on his face and we can see Sir Hector's features, but pale and drawn tight against the bones... but there's a gleam of satisfaction in his eye and a hint of smile as he glances at the signet of the Baron, the trophy that he's bringing back to his master.





Afterword to the Final Edition

It's been over two years since the first release of this game. It was originally conceived through the intersection of my frustration with my (in)ability to play a specific character with my deep fascination with vampire fiction. I have grown and changed a lot in the intervening time, but this game continues to grab me in so many different ways. The most wonderful part of nurturing *Annalise* through a prolonged adolescence of different publishing experiments has been the response from players of the game, most of them strangers, who have been inspired by the game to create new materials and share their own views on what makes a fun game.

So, here are some special thanks to Chuck Henebry and Tazio Bettin for their alternate character sheets; Kat Jones, Jared Axelrod, Jesse Burneko, Kira Scott, and Sam Zeitlin for their Guided Play Scenarios; and Claudia & Michele Gelli, Moreno Roncucci, and the other fine folks at Narrattiva for their gorgeous Italian translation of the game. Seeing you all be so inspired by something I created is the highest praise of all.

The spark that set off this whole thing was a very unsatisfying experience I had playing another game, *Misspent Youth*, by Rob Bohl. *Misspent Youth* is a really tight game of youthful rebellion and sticking it to the man, but during that session I was on a totally different wavelength. I ended up making a character that I couldn't play satisfactorily. *Misspent Youth* is about kids who act out for the good of their friends and their world, not who turn inwards to deal with their problems. My character was young, emotionally damaged, vulnerable but extremely self-sufficient and going through many problems both real and imagined. In general, she was a



character that I wanted desperately to help—to resolve her issues—through play. The problem was that her issues only could be reached or even seen by exploring her internal, emotional demons. Her name was Annalise.

And so I wrote this game wherein the metaphor of the Vampire as an external predator casts a character's inner life in sharp relief. One thing I've found about the game over the years, however, is that it's extremely flexible. *Annalise* can focus on adventure, excitement, and action just as much as introspection, abuse, and healing. But it's the core focus on the Vulnerability of the characters—in the spotlight or in the shadow—that really drives satisfying play. It is my hope that you, dear reader, will be as excited and moved by the possibilities of this game as I have been, and that you will truly make this game your own in play.

Annalise exists in a number of editions. You are reading the Final Edition. This edition has been extensively rewritten, reorganized, and expanded from earlier editions, and it includes the few rule changes that I decided to make based on feedback and my experiences of the game since its initial release. To keep up with any additional developments or supplementary releases, or to give your feedback on the game, please keep an eye on the website (findannalise.com) and my independent publisher forum at The Forge (<http://www.indie-rpgs.com/forum/index.php?board=66.0>).

Thank you for your attention, dear reader. Have a wonderful game.

Nathan D. Paoletta



Appendix I: Play Options

This appendix contains some different options for structuring the game for various numbers of players and/or protagonists.

Facilitating the Game

In some situations the most knowledgeable player in a group may wish to facilitate the game for the other players. The facilitator does not make a character or act as a scene guide. Instead, they walk the other players through each step of the game, explain the rules, give suggestions for appropriate scenes, and explain what the impact of making a certain decision may have down the line. The facilitator basically keeps the logistical part of the game on track, so that the other players can learn it as they make fiction together. Depending on how much time it takes for the rest of the players to learn the procedures, the facilitator may eventually want to start making Claims and interacting as an audience member in scenes. Facilitating the game is appropriate when teaching the game to people who don't have much experience with this kind of game, when running a convention slot of the game where you have more than three other players in attendance, or when running a one-shot "test" game to see how well the game works for your group.

Games for Two Players

Annalise works very well for two players. Each player creates a character as normal, and then you simply take turns as scene guide for each other's character. Create Secrets as normal, or each player can write their own character's Secret in order to preserve a sense of mystery for your partner..



Games with One Protagonist

It is possible to play *Annalise* as a one-protagonist story, with *I Am Legend* being the iconic example. Create the protagonist character as usual, but everyone at the table has a say in the protagonist's creation. Discuss who they are, why they are alone, what their Vulnerability is, and narrate an introductory scene as normal. One person at the table is "in charge" of the Secret. This player is the only one who can create Secret traits for the character. The Secret player can simply author the Secret, or each player can write a Secret for the chosen player to draw randomly out of a hat.

In play, each active player plays the protagonist during their turn. The active player chooses a scene guide for the scene as normal. In Moments, the Secret player can ask to create a Secret Satellite Trait if they're not the active player (but it is up to the active player to allow this) or create a Vulnerability Trait instead. Each player makes and uses Claims as normal. You are encouraged to Claim non-player characters, as it will be helpful to have a supporting cast of characters available for the audience to play. A one-protagonist game plays quicker than a standard game. If a longer game is desired, start the character with two additional coins on each Core Trait and in the Reserves.



Appendix II: Guided Play Scenarios

A big part of what makes a game of *Annalise* fun is the amount of latitude given to create any characters, flavor, and tone. However, this freedom can be a little overwhelming, not to mention time-consuming for groups that don't have much experience with this kind of game. Guided Play Scenarios are ready-made scenarios designed to pick up and play. These include a setting, four developed characters, and suggestions for important scenes. A group can simply select a Scenario, choose characters, and start playing the Laying the Foundations phase of the game immediately. These Scenarios are intended for a group that wants to give the game a spin before committing to the full cycle of play. Guided Play Scenarios also work well in four-hour timeslots of one-shot and convention games.

Each Scenario contains background information on the setting, four fully-discovered characters with coins already assigned to their Core and Satellite Traits, Claims, a list of potential key scenes to kick off the game and additional fictional information or scenario-specific rules modifications. Once play starts, the players are encouraged to make the characters their own and push to make the Scenario work for them. There is no right or wrong way to play a Guided Play Scenario, and no specific or expected ending point.

Typically, one player in the group will be the facilitator, usually the person who knows the rules of the game the best or who has played the game before. The facilitator can play a character as well, or simply guide the other players as they gain familiarity with the game (as described in



Appendix I under Facilitating the Game, **page 67**). It is assumed that the facilitator will guide the other players through the following steps:

- ♣ Understand the premise of *Annalise* and read the Background blurb.
- ♣ Describe the four characters.
- ♣ Distribute the characters to players and fill out the info on character sheets.
- ♣ The facilitator should write down each character's Secret on a card (for Scenarios with pre-determined Secrets) and hand it to the character's player; the Secrets should not be public knowledge (except to the facilitator, who should endeavor not to reveal them prematurely).
- ♣ Put the listed amount of coins on each character's Vulnerability, Secret, and Reserves.
- ♣ Each player should write down their two starting Claims and put two coins on each of them.
- ♣ If a player wishes to start the first turn, they should do so. If not, roll a die or pick a first active player by any other agreeable method.
- ♣ Feel free to use any of the suggested Key Scenes as written or as inspiration for the first couple of scenes. Use of Key Scenes is not required, and often they will become less appropriate as play progresses and the fiction of the game starts moving in its own direction.
- ♣ For the purposes of one-shot and convention play, once the nature and/or identity of the Vampire has been determined, immediately transition the game to The Confrontation phase of play.
- ♣ Have fun!



The Mysterious Voyage of the *Auspicious*

Background

The year is 1798. The *Auspicious*, a newly acquired vessel of the East India Company, had been in harbor in Calcutta for some time being provisioned and taking on cargo. The night it was to leave, it caught fire and was almost totally destroyed. Now, months later, it has been rebuilt and has just entered the open seas on its way back to England. The crew is nervous and ill omens abound, but the voyage is underway and the East India Company needs the ship to make it back to Southampton with all due speed.



The Cast

The Captain

Captain Merrylees is an experienced, middle-aged sailor and a well-regarded Captain in the East India Company. He has a laissez-faire attitude towards the day-to-day operations of the ship and leaves most details to his First Mate, Andrew Fitch. He has a fine logistical mind and as good an aptitude as anyone for navigation and avoiding the worst of the weather, as long as he's avoiding enjoying the narcotic "rewards" of the Far East.

- Name: David Merrylees
- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I am unwilling to take command when it matters.

- ☛ Secret: I can never reveal that fire obeys me.
- ☛ Starting Claims: The ship's rigging; the loyalty of the men
- ☛ Starting Traits: Vulnerability 4 (Analytic Mind 5), Secret 3 (Fearsome Temper 3), Reserves 2

The Lady

Caroline Anne Wellesley is the only official passenger on the *Auspicious*. A young lady of tender upbringing, she is the niece of Governor Wellesley, the official of the British Raj in charge of Calcutta. While nominally going to England to stay with some distant relatives, Caroline has always chafed under her uncle's control, and longs to have new experiences and make her own decisions.

- ☛ Name: Caroline Anne Wellesley
- ☛ Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I am never in control of the situation.
- ☛ Secret: I can never reveal that I don't want the ship to reach England.
- ☛ Starting Claims: A dark secret; blood running down the deck
- ☛ Starting Traits: Vulnerability 2 (Can Always Get Help 5), Secret 4 (Control the Conversation 6), Reserves 2

The Slowaway

Punit Sengupta was a street urchin in Calcutta who fell in with a revolutionary-minded gang intent on bringing down the Raj. When he tried to break from them, uncomfortable with their fervor, his life was threatened and he fled. The only option he could find on short notice was

THE SAILORS:

- ☛ The First Mate: Andrew Fitch
- ☛ The Second Mate: Jarvis Trapp
- ☛ The Navigator: Iain McDowell
- ☛ Lucas Percival
- ☛ John Innes
- ☛ John Gilmore
- ☛ John Goodfellow
- ☛ Robert Hogg
- ☛ George Bowen
- ☛ John Smythe
- ☛ Peter Everitt
- ☛ Zachary Hicks
- ☛ Roger Braddyll
- ☛ Moses Agar
- ☛ Charles Lindegren
- ☛ Godfrey King
- ☛ Richard Brash
- ☛ Chapman Bradford



hiding aboard the next ship leaving harbor. Now stuck, Punit is trying to eke out an existence on board without getting caught.

- ♣ Name: Punit Sengupta
- ♣ Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I want to be an Englishman.
- ♣ Secret: I can never reveal that I have developed a taste for human flesh.
- ♣ Starting Claims: Stern authority; sharks
- ♣ Starting Traits: Vulnerability 4 (Sneaking About 4), Secret 4 (Prodigious Strength 3), Reserves 2

The Doctor

Thomas Billingham is a young, but very skilled, surgeon from London. Fed up with the calcified intransigence of his older colleagues, he decided to take to the sea for a time in order to satisfy both a hunger for adventure and the need to take advantage of his youth and skill. Universally admired aboard the ship, Thomas enjoys a ship doctor's life, despite all of its inconveniences.

- ♣ Name: Thomas Billingham
- ♣ Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I find perverse pleasure in my job.
- ♣ Secret: I can never reveal that I am a traitor to the Crown.

- ♣ Starting Claims: Longing for home; stormy weather
- ♣ Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Emergency Surgery 5), Secret 4 (Everybody's Friend 5), Reserves 2

Key Scenes:

For the Captain: David catches a sailor smoking opium when he's supposed to be on watch. The ship's first mate, Andrew Fitch, needs Captain Merrylees to make an immediate decision while he is in opium stupor.

For Caroline: The second mate, Jarvis Trapp, demands that Caroline stay off the deck, even though she has specific permission from the Captain to observe the workings of the ship. Caroline wakes in her private cabin to find an Evil Eye necklace on her luggage.

For Punit: Punit watches while two of the crew members find his hideaway. Punit finds one of the sailors in the hold, dying and babbling about the "darkness that came over the rail."

For Thomas: Someone has stolen Thomas's best surgical knives, and the doctor discovers one of the sailors with one. Sailor Godfrey King has been complaining of weakness and palsy, and goes into a seizure in the middle of a storm.



Dracula Reloaded

by Kat Jones

Background

The story of Dracula is well known in literature and film, and Stoker's original story has been the subject of many revisions and retellings. In this Scenario, the group will retell the story themselves using some of Stoker's characters, though given a new modern flavor.

The year is 1897. Lucy Westenra is spending the summer with her guardian, Dr. Edward Seward. Lucy is joined by her friend Mina Murray, a schoolteacher on summer holiday. Dr. Seward has opened a sanatorium on the grounds of his ancestral estate. He is busy with his patient Renfield, who he hopes will make a full recovery, thereby proving that Dr. Seward's revolutionary methods for dealing with madness are successful.

The Cast

Lucy Westenra

A young woman from a noble family, Lucy was orphaned when she was young. Her guardians saw to it that she received an excellent education, for a woman. While Lucy is expected to play the





To determine Secrets, the facilitator should write down each of the following Secrets and associated Traits on a card, and then mix them up and hand them out randomly. Each player writes down the two associated Satellite Traits, and they start play with a three coins on each of them.

I CAN NEVER REVEAL THAT...

- Secret 1: I can control animals
 Trait 1: At home with animals
 Trait 2: Frustrated by formality
- Secret 2: I have memorized the Kama Sutra
 Trait 1: Delicate sensibilities
 Trait 2: Sensitive touch
- Secret 3: I love the taste of blood
 Trait 1: Handy with a knife
 Trait 2: Strong jaws
- Secret 4: I believe women should hold the same position as men
 Trait 1: Harmlessly eccentric
 Trait 2: Uncomfortable with authority (if male)/Comfortable with authority (if female)
- Secret 5: I hear voices
 Trait 1: Deep thinker
 Trait 2: Easily distracted
- Secret 6: I get pleasure from feeling pain
 Trait 1: I bow to strong authority
 Trait 2: Clumsy

role of the proper Victorian lady, she often chafes at her limited options. Now that she has finished school, Lucy will be expected to make a good marriage. Lady Westenra is beautiful and charming with a vivacity and wit that people find attractive and stimulating. She has many admirers but can be fickle in her attentions. She shows an uncharacteristic loyalty to her friend Mina whom she's known since they were both young.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I feel constrained by society's expectations.
- Starting Claims: Open windows; abandoned chapel
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Rebellious Streak 3) (Attractive Presence 4), Secret 4 (Satellite Traits 3), Reserves 2

Mina Murray

Mina is Lucy's opposite in many ways: resolute, reasonable, and middle class. After her father passed away, she and her mother were left in a precarious financial situation. Mina is on her own and she lacks the monetary advantages of coming from a wealthy family. She is kind and accommodating, always willing to lend assistance in any way she can. Mina is more serious and earnest than her friend Lucy. Lucy is extravagant with her affections and money; Mina is reserved and careful, conserving both her money and her attentions.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I am always dependent on others for financial support.
- Starting Claims: Virginal white; cloud in front of the sun
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Waste Not, Want Not 4) (Always Accommodating 3), Secret 3 (Satellite Traits 3), Reserves 2



Dr. Edward Seward

Edward Seward was the second son of a formerly wealthy family. His older brother Howard was groomed to inherit his family's lands. Edward was trained as a psychiatrist. When tragedy struck and his parents and brother perished from illness, he inherited not only his family's estates but also his older brother's responsibilities, including the guardianship of young Lucy Westenra. Dr. Seward often seems older than his years and sometimes comes off as haughty or snobbish. In reality, this attitude masks his feelings of vulnerability. Dr. Seward holds others, but especially himself, to unrealistic standards. Dr. Seward's passion is the treatment of mental illness, and he has converted his family's estate into a sanatorium for those who are both wealthy and mad. He hopes to use his revolutionary treatments to rid the world of the problem of mental illness.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I have never felt I'm good enough.
- Starting Claims: Van Helsing (the black bat); prison bars
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Perfectionist 3) (Air of Superiority 4), Secret 4 (Satellite Traits 3), Reserves 2

R. M. Renfield

A formerly wealthy and successful man, Renfield has been confined to Dr. Seward's sanatorium by his family. Renfield is very fastidious about his appearance and surroundings and he can be very affable and courteous. However, Renfield is also skilled at manipulation and dissimulation. He uses whatever means necessary to achieve his desires. Renfield is a favorite of Dr. Seward's because Seward believes Renfield is on the road to recovery. Renfield hates being confined to the sanatorium and longs to be free. He is more than willing to play along with Dr. Seward's "treatments" if they will allow him his freedom.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I must prove I've recovered to be free.
- Starting Claims: Microscope; mirror
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Good Liar 4) (Genteel Air 3), Secret 4 (Satellite Traits 3), Reserves 2



Key Scenes

For Lucy: Lucy decides to go and visit the abandoned chapel on the north edge of the estate, despite Dr. Seward's warnings to keep out. Lucy awakens from a nightmare to see two red eyes glowing outside her window.

For Mina: Mina notices activity at a nearby estate, which was formerly deserted. Mina needs to borrow money to pay off her father's debts.

For Seward: One of the patients has escaped from his/her room during a midnight storm. One of Seward's patients complains about horrible visions and attempts to harm him/herself.

For Renfield: Renfield attempts to bribe an orderly into letting him out of his room. Renfield receives one of Dr. Seward's "treatments."

The Wake of Zenas Quantum

by Jared Axelrod

Background

When Zenas Quantum, the Superpositioned Man, dies in Oubliette Asylum, the Heroic Agency breathes a collective sigh of relief. No longer do they have to protect Saga City from a man who can be everywhere at once. But not long after Zenas's death, strange goings-on remove any ease the heroes might have. Is it a copycat, a clone, a government plot, an alien? Or merely coincidence? Is Zenas Quantum dead after all, or are the members of the Heroic Agency merely jumping at shadows?

The Paladin

The being known as Banner is a super-powered alien who crash-landed on Earth during World War II, and was subsequently captured and experimented on by Nazis in Italy. The alien was rescued by the all-African-American 92nd Infantry Division, though their commander Sergeant Aubrey Banner was killed in the process. Out of respect for his emancipator, the alien took his form and called himself "Banner," and fashioned a costume out of the red, white, and blue flag he fought under. With his abilities of super strength, flight, and shape-changing, Banner has become a champion of Liberty the world over.






- Cynthia Jarndyce – Reporter for WSGC, Saga City News
- David Seeforth – Cameraman for WSGC, Saga City News
- Angela Plummer – Social worker in the 9th District of Saga City
- Guillermo de Vivar – Biographer, specializing in superheroes and villains
- Masaru Torii – Kelly’s father
- Shinobu Torii – Kelly’s mother
- Haruko Torii – Kelly’s little sister
- Maggie Haredale – Kelly’s best friend
- Micheal Varden – Police Commissioner of Saga City
- Devra Craggs – District Attorney for Saga City
- Edward Redlaw – Former boyfriend of Isabella, Assistant DA
- Sophie Tungay – Isabella’s best friend, coroner for the Saga City police
- Farley Wardle – Barry’s roommate
- Professor Fuzzlewitt – Barry’s dissertation advisor at Saga U
- Bernadette Sparkler – Temporal mechanics grad student at Saga U
- Chuck Dedlock – Temporal mechanics grad student at Saga U

- Name: Unpronounceable by humans
- Superhero Name: Banner
- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I no longer believe I am doing the right thing.
- Secret: I can never reveal that I am an overthrown dictator on my homeworld.
- Starting Claims: Super strength, skyscraper
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Philosophical Disposition 3), Secret 4 (Righteous Demeanor 5), Reserves 2

The Wild Card

Teenage science nerd and skeptic of the supernatural Koichi “Kelly” Torii found herself the unwilling recipient of magical abilities when her grandmother died. As fate would have it, Kelly was the latest in the long line of Kitsune, with heightened senses, incredible agility and strength, the ability to transform into a fox, and the ability to see the disguised oni that walk unnoticed amongst us. Forced into the role of protector of the innocent, Kelly has taken her role in stride, approaching it with the quick wit with which she met the bullies in high school. While she pines for a normal life, as Kitsune, Kelly has made quite a name for herself as a hero.

- Name: Koichi “Kelly” Torii
- Superhero Name: Kitsune
- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I cannot allow my family or friends to be affected by my hero life.
- Secret: I can never reveal that I could have prevented my grandmother’s death.

- 
- Starting Claims: Fox; demoralizing quips
 - Starting Traits: Vulnerability 4 (Much Beloved 6), Secret 3 (Lingering Guilt 2), Reserves 2

The Professional

After revolutionizing the computer industry 20 years ago at age 13, Isabella used her billions to fund charity organizations the world over. Despite her efforts, however, she watched helplessly as her beloved Saga City succumbed to crime and corruption. Deciding that one person can make a difference, Isabella devoted her magnificent mind and considerable fortune to become the ultimate urban warrior. Armed with a mastery of several martial arts, an arsenal of gadgets for every occasion, and unshakable resolve, Isabella brings the law back to the street as Archon.

- Name: Isabella Marchioness
- Superhero Name: Archon
- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I refuse assistance at all times.
- Secret: I can never reveal that Zenas Quantum is my half brother.
- Starting Claims: Utility belt; imposing glare
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 4 (Lone Wolf 5), Secret 3 (Private Knowledge 5), Reserves 2

LOCATIONS IN SAGA CITY

- WSGC TV – a TV station that does local programming in addition to syndicated shows
- The 9th District – the poorest district in Saga City, home to crime, gang wars, drug addiction, and mutated citizenry
- Kirby High – The high school that Kelly and Maggie attend
- SCPD – the Saga City Police Department
- Saga University – Home to one of the best science programs in the country

The Newbie

Right before Zenas Quantum's original reign of terror, temporal mechanics grad student Barry Hendricks was shocked to see a suit of high-tech armor materialize in his tiny apartment. Attached to the suit was a note in his own handwriting that read only "You'll need this later. -B" While not completely understanding how the suit works, Barry does know that it grants him manipulation of time, allowing him to appear to have superspeed. He is aware that the suit can do much more, but Barry can barely work it as it is. His first adventure, calling himself the Steel Cyclone, involved capturing Zenas Quantum, which earned him a membership in the Heroic Agency.

- ♣ Name: Barry Hendricks
- ♣ Superhero Name: The Steel Cyclone
- ♣ Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I have little control over my suit.
- ♣ Secret: I can never reveal that when I captured Zenas Quantum, I did it entirely by accident.
- ♣ Starting Claims: Lucky shot; time stands still
- ♣ Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Quick Thinking 4), Secret 4 (Everybody's Friend 3), Reserves 2

Key Scenes

For Banner: A frightened, unruly crowd cannot be contained by Banner's usual methods. When a news crew is taken hostage by a madman, Banner must save them while being televised live.

For Kitsune: An oni disguised as a cat moves in with Kitsune's family, hypnotizing all but her. An unknown force wreaks havoc at the Saga City Science Fair.

For Archon: Archon infiltrates a mob don's mansion to hold him accountable for murder. Saga City's chief of police has had it with Archon's vigilantism, and has the entire police force hunt her down.

For Steel Cyclone: Saga City Bridge begins to crumble... with a school bus full of children on it! When villains take over the Heroic Agency's headquarters, the Steel Cyclone must lead a tour group out of the building safely.



At The Crossroads of Sanctuary and Salvation

by Jesse Burneko

Background

It's 1947 and Sanctuary is the picture-perfect model for small town living in the American South. Everyone knows everyone's name, goes to church on Sunday, and knows that Bascomb's Diner has been serving the best grits for over thirty years. The mayor will tell you they call it Sanctuary because folks know how to keep their problems behind closed doors—and when trouble does start, people have the decency to mind their own business. All of that changed one hot and humid summer day when a mysterious traveling salesman named Quentin Drake came to town. With his felt hat, crisp wool suit, and shiny leather shoes—well, everyone knows a perfect gentleman when they see one. And while it may not come out of that fancy looking case he carries, he always has what you need. Don't worry about the cost; you needn't always pay in cash.

The Cast

Jenny Stevens

Fifteen-year-old Jenny Stevens keeps mostly to herself and spends most of her time anywhere but at home. She is fond of pulp adventure novels but





After reading the Background information—but before describing the Cast—the facilitator should ask the players to write down two things that either they themselves or someone they know did “in real life” that they consider to be morally wrong. Write each of these things on a separate sheet of paper and place them anonymously in a pile in the center of the table. After selecting a character, each player should pull one of the sheets from the pile. The character has done that thing sometime in their past and it is their Secret. The Secret can be tweaked appropriately for the character concept. Finally, the player should create a single Satellite Trait, derived from this Secret. This Satellite Trait has three coins on it, as shown in the character descriptions. The facilitator should destroy the unused sheets, unread.

This process is adapted from Ron Edward’s cold-war spy project, Spione.

hides them when others are around. Jenny has a crush on an older boy named Tommy Mather, the captain of the local baseball team. She longs to talk to him but fears that Tommy doesn’t even know she exists.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because my father is an abusive alcoholic.
- Starting Claims: Alcohol; blushing
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Eager To Please 4) (Afraid of Men 3), Secret 4 (Satellite Trait 3), Reserves 2

Ruby Goodwin

Ruby Goodwin teaches fourth grade at the local elementary school. She is well liked by her students. Ruby has no family of her own and her students fill the hole left by this lack. She has no problem speaking her mind when she wants to, and in many ways is prideful of her sense of independence. From overhearing her students she knows many things about the community but is not inclined to gossip.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I am over thirty and unmarried.
- Starting Claims: Children; midnight walks in the empty streets
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Motherly Instincts 4) (Outspoken 3), Secret 4 (Satellite Trait 3), Reserves 2

Colin Ellis

Colin is seventeen and the eldest of five children. He is boisterous, full of undirected energy, and has gotten himself into a few fights. Colin’s father owned and operated the local hardware store until last year when



he died of a heart attack. Colin's mother, Lorna, inherited the business but she is ill-equipped to run it effectively and profits have steadily declined. Colin has dreams about getting out of Sanctuary but doesn't want to abandon his family.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I am unprepared to be the man my family needs me to be.
- Starting Claims: Sibling rivalry; utility knife
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Reckless 4) (Day Dreamer 3), Secret 4 (Satellite Trait 3), Reserves 2

Reverend James Wingfield

Reverend Wingfield came to Sanctuary only a few years ago. He is generally a well-meaning man, genuinely invested in the health of his community. It has been a hard battle getting over the "outsider" stigma. He witnessed much urban corruption in his old position, which is why he left the big city for smaller and hopefully more serene pastures. He sometimes takes a more hands-on approach than his private and appearance-focused parishioners prefer.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I have lost my faith in God.
- Starting Claims: The Holy Bible; the shadows of doubt

- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Pragmatist 4) (Seen It All 3), Secret 4 (Satellite Trait 3), Reserves 2

Key Scenes

For Jenny: Tommy asks her out to the school dance. Her father flies into a drunken rage and attacks her.

For Ruby: One of her students mysteriously stops coming to class. William, a married man, strikes up a flirtatious relationship with Ruby.

For Colin: Some drifters try to rob the store while Colin is manning the counter. One of Colin's siblings contracts a life-threatening illness.

For James: A parishioner comes to James and confesses to a major crime. During a sermon, one of his parishioners denounces him as an outsider and questions his commitment to God.



Viva L.A. Revolution

by Kira Scott

Background

The L.A. Megatropolis, 2150. In the future, rock isn't just music... it's a revolution. Social movements birth and crumble with just a few chords from the sirens that dominate the global stage. Tonight, the headliners of the most important music festival in recent history are playing head to head in a deadly competition. Playing for the people of the L.A. Megatropolis by popular vote are L.A. Revolution, an infamous group of glam rockers who put Lady Gaga's historic antics to shame. Their challengers: Ten Thousand Razors, a group supported by Belova-Yodotoshi Amalgamated. Tension mounts, and although no outright

threats have been made by B-YA, the members of L.A. Revolution can feel the impending violence on the polluted air. Can they pull together as a unified band despite their weaknesses, or will they give in by selling out?

The Cast

Bass

Anton's dark hair shadows a pale complexion, with lips turned in a permanent frown. The scent of nicotine stinks up his leather ensemble, and





he's always half-jacked-in to his virtual music-composing deck. A former hacker, his demeanor is cool and calculating, but his passions lie in the mathematics of the music which he broods over in darkened corners. Over the course of his music career he has developed dark desires, a result of too many firefights broken out on stage. But despite his violent blood lust he really does want the best for his people, and works hard to make sure the band's music speaks the truth about the intense wrongs perpetrated by oppressive corporations.

• Name: Anton

• Vulnerability: I'm vulnerable because I feel inadequate after I failed as a professional hacker.

• Secret: I can never reveal that I have a perverse obsession with the spray of blood from fresh violence.

• Starting Claims: Dark goggles; programs for programs; the smooth slice of monofilament

• Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Calculating 4), Secret 3 (Violent 4), Reserves 2

Drums

Sun is of Asian descent, and her bright blue dreads and multicolored, skintight latex outfits make her stand out in a crowd. Her reflexes are usually jacked up on a variety of derms, causing her limbs to move in a blur of motion whenever she chooses. Sun is upbeat and friendly but known for being a reckless thrill-seeker. Growing up with a sheltered family life led Sun to desire more, and joining the band was as good an excuse as any to get her out into the big, wide world. But a few months ago she got scouted by B-YA operatives, and they courted her with reflex

THE L.A. MEGATROPOLIS ARENA

This enormous venue is the heart of the city that sprawls from what's left of oil drenched Alaska down to the war torn New Tiajuana. Everyone knows that this show will determine the future of all its inhabitants.

PLACES IN L.A. MEGATROPOLIS

- The Mall Ghetto
- The Media Fountain
- The Arcade
- The Arena
- Backstage
- The B-YA Skydome
- The Backstreets of Downtown

OTHER CHARACTERS

- Tatsumi Sendai - A femme fatale assassin and information broker
- Ten Thousand Razors - A rival band representing a rich and corrupt corporation
- Alex Rodriguez - A savvy businessman with an untrustworthy look
- Adrian - The lead singer of Ten Thousand Razors, a polished professional personality



derms and advanced weapon tech till she couldn't say no. Now she works for them, but there's one thing Sun hates more than anything else, and that's being told what to do.

☛ Name: Sun

☛ Vulnerability: I'm vulnerable because I'm addicted to being a daredevil.

☛ Secret: I can never reveal that my true loyalties lie with neither B-YA or my band.

☛ Starting Claims: Bag of explosives; neon lights; dark back alley

☛ Starting Traits: Vulnerability 4 (Demolitions 4), Secret 3 (Super Spy 3), Reserves 2

Keyboards

Razz is made of tan skin over perfect musculature, all of it covered with ink. His bio-tech implanted tattoos allow him perfect synthesis with his keyboard... and his fans, by emitting a low frequency pheromone enhancer. Romantic and naturally gifted with a baby face, Razz has always been an attention whore. He craves the company of other people and needs them to feel whole, especially his girlfriend Sun. Fame gives him the fulfillment he needs most of the time, but it is his intrinsic mistrust of people

that leads him to burn his relationships time and time again, turning his needs into a vicious cycle.

☛ Name: Razz

☛ Vulnerability: I'm vulnerable because I don't trust anyone.

☛ Secret: I can never reveal that I use illegal biotech to seduce unwilling fans.

☛ Starting Claims: The echo of cheering in the distance; the cracking of bones; stolen kisses

☛ Starting Traits: Vulnerability 4 (Paranoid 3), Secret 3 (Seductive Bio-tech 4), Reserves 2

Vox

Jenna's eyes are the color of genetically enhanced emeralds and her body seems too perfect to be natural. Sparkly, clingy nylon fabrics hang off her dark skin like waterfalls of molten steel. Jenna's voice is at once strong and seductive, melodic and violent, in a word: amazing. Created by B-YA as one of the first models of genetically engineered humans, Jenna is nearly perfect in every way. She was made to be sultry and dangerous, and she lives up to that by never being satisfied and always wanting more. She's had a plan ever since her time in the slums to get into the spotlight and use that power to take



control. Unfortunately, neither she nor her adoring fans are aware of her true nature. There's nothing Jenna wants more than a culture to call her own, and her fans are just the start of her regime. But she's beginning to question her motivations as her memories of what drives her start to fracture.

- Name: Jenna
- Vulnerability: I'm vulnerable because I lived in the slums of L.A. before starting the band.
- Secret: I can never reveal that my memories are under the power of another.
- Starting Claims: Metallics; sharp glass; visual illusion-making imaging system
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Tough as Nails 3), Secret 4 (Inhumanly Beautiful 3), Reserves 2

Key Scenes

For Anton: Yotodoshi himself of B-YA approaches Anton with the offer of funds for starting his own band if he agrees to sabotage the show. In the Mall Ghetto, Anton is viciously attacked by a mysterious woman. While making last minute preparations for the show Anton discovers another presence in his machine.

For Sun: BY-A has stopped all of Sun's accounts that fund her derms, ensuring the failure of her

performance if she doesn't comply. A friend from downtown stops by to convince Sun to come with her to the big firefight before the show. Sun's implanted brain chip kicks in, causing her to lose control of her actions for five critical minutes.

For Razz: Razz sees Sun with another man: a member of the Ten Thousand Razors. While attempting to seduce some fans backstage, Razz's tech goes haywire. Razz spots a heli-drone spying on his every move.

For Jenna: Jenna keeps seeing her deceased mom in the crowds of the city, then losing her. An informant threatens to blackmail Jenna by making information about her past public. Jenna discovers B-YA is a manufacturer of synthetic people.



In the Shadow of the Mountain

by Sam Zeitlin

Background

Pompeii, August 79 AD. Seventeen years after the great earthquake, Pompeii is a thriving vacation town, a home away from home for wealthy citizens looking to escape the suffocating heat of Rome in August. Far from the cities crime, poverty and politics, here food, drink, music, theater and sex permeate the air. The whole town is preparing for Vulcanalia, a festival in honor of the god of fire and invention. But in the shadow of the mountain, something old and dreadful is stirring. Soon the

elegant baths and villas will be rubble. Soon the laughing voices will be choked with burning ash. Who will escape to bear witness to the curious events that occur in these last days? And who will be swallowed up by Pompeii's secrets and by their own, buried beneath the earth until their bodies turn to dust and only an empty cavity remains?



The Cast

Lucius Terentius Asperius

This middle-aged, widowed senator comes from a family whose aristocratic lineage stretches back centuries. A stern moralist, he considers himself



unlucky to have been born in these dissolute latter days after the fall of the Republic. Two months ago, the infamously debauched Titus ascended to the Imperial throne, and Lucius steeled himself to die a martyr for philosophy. Instead, Titus seduced all his critics, while Lucius cracked under the strain, suffering a nervous breakdown. His grown children convinced him to retire to Pompeii for a few months to recover his wits—but he may never recover his dignity. A friend of the family, Lucius is staying with Publia's household.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I lose control of myself in public.
- Secret: I can never reveal that I conspired against the new Emperor.
- Starting Claims: Claudia (Lucius's adult, unmarried daughter, come to Pompeii to take care of him); smoke
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 4 (Indignant 3), Secret 3 (Friends In High Places 4), Reserves 2

Aula Sempronia

An ambitious actress in the pantomime, preparing for a starring role as Venus in the Vulcanalia. Despite the crushingly low social status of actresses (most are also prostitutes), Aula's beauty, skill and good fortune have provided her with significant public exposure and many suitors, wealthy and not. She seeks long-term security through marrying a wealthy freedman or becoming the concubine of an aristocrat—but she knows she must choose her partner very carefully. Over the past two weeks, one of her admirers has become a secretive, terrifying stalker. As the festival approaches, Aula's nerves have begun to fray under the stress of the

LOCATIONS IN POMPEII

- The Forum (public market space)
- The theater
- The amphitheater (for gladiators and circuses)
- The brothel
- The courthouse
- The thermal baths
- The villa of the mysteries
- A wealthy merchant's villa
- A bar
- A bakery
- The road
- An olive grove
- The aqueduct
- The temple of Jupiter
- The temple of Apollo
- The temple of Isis
- The temple of the divine emperor Augustus
- The temple of the divine emperor Vespasian—still under construction, as Vespasian died barely two months prior

harassment and of her upcoming performance. Aula frequently climbs Mt. Vesuvius to be alone with her thoughts. One of Aula's suitors is Marcus Modius Cato, Publia's husband.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because my sex and profession leave me with little legal or social protection.
- Secret: I can never reveal that I am a Christian.
- Starting claims: The slopes of Mt. Vesuvius; the sound of footsteps
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 4 (Manipulative 3), Secret 3 (Brave 4), Reserves 2

Publia Modia Cato

This formal socialite has lived in Pompeii all her life. She lost everything in the great earthquake which wracked the city in 62 AD, but rebuilt her life along with her city. Today she is a wealthy matron with a large household. When they married, she and her husband Marcus were truly in love. Now their ardor has cooled, and her husband devotes his attention to other women—including Aula. Publia desires a lover of her own, but fears the legal consequences of being caught. Over the past six months, she has withdrawn from public and social life in Pompeii, and from her former epicurean pleasures of food,

music and theater. Instead, she has begun to collect manuscripts, particularly philosophy and esoteric religion, and spends long hours studying them in her private library. Lucius is her house guest and an old friend of the family. Glaukos is her children's tutor.

- Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I am expected to always put my family before myself.
- Secret: I can never reveal that I have visions of the world ending in fire and dust.
- Starting Claims: Married to Marcus Cato; the library
- Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Generous 4), Secret 4 (Fatalistic 3), Reserves 2

Glaukos

This slave was born on a Greek island in the Mediterranean. He has been a slave for more than ten years and is currently in his thirties. Glaukos is the tutor for the children of the Cato household, for whom he holds equal parts affection and frustration. He is a poet of no mean skill, and has been publishing his work in secret. Around his masters he presents the reserved demeanor of a schoolmaster, but he has a terrible temper, barely kept in check. While wandering in the gardens behind the Cato



villa, Glaukos found a heavy pendant of worked gold, presumably lost by a dinner guest the previous night. The pendant is worth enough to buy Glaukos his freedom, but only if he can sell it without arousing suspicion...

- ♣ Vulnerability: I am vulnerable because I am a slave.
- ♣ Secret: I can never reveal that the pendant chose me for its own purposes.
- ♣ Starting claims: Children; alcohol
- ♣ Starting Traits: Vulnerability 3 (Respectful of his betters 4), Secret 4 (Sleight of hand 3), Reserves 2

Key Scenes

For Lucius: Lucius's sons come to town to try to convince him to sign over his estate in Rome and much of his wealth. An imperial agent comes to question Lucius about his allegiances. Marcus Cato purchases a female slave for Lucius "to lighten him up."

For Aula: Aula returns home to find her door open and the sounds of movement within. A wealthy aristocrat asks Aula to become his concubine—unseemly for a man who already has a wife, but not unheard of. On a trip up Mt. Vesuvius, Aula finds one of Publia's children trapped in a crevasse with a

broken leg. The director and cast of the Vulcanalia pantomime wish to initiate Aula into an ecstatic mystery cult to which they belong.

For Publia: While hosting a dinner party, Publia's visions strike her. A merchant offers a rare manuscript for more than she can afford. An old flame reappears, looking to rekindle the spark.

For Glaukos: Glaukos tries to sell the pendant to a fence, but he is a fish out of water in the criminal underworld. A mysterious dinner guest returns, in search of his pendant. Someone else publicly takes credit for Glaukos's anonymously-published poetry. One of the Cato children goes missing while she is supposed to be in Glaukos's care.



Colophon

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Annalise



Stories of Hunger, Pain & Redemption

My name is:

I am vulnerable because:

My connections are:

I can never reveal that:

Holds of the Vampire:

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Reserves

*Core Trait
Vulnerability*

*Core Trait
Secret*

Satellite Traits

Satellite Traits

1. The active player and scene guide generate outcomes.
2. The active player spends a number of coins out of his relevant Satellite Trait equal to the outcomes, and rolls that number of dice.
3. The active player assigns one die to each outcome.
4. Consult this chart to determine what each die assignment means for the relevant outcome.
5. Players use Claims to influence the die numbers.
6. Once the Moment closes, the active player makes required adjustments to their coins.

Achievements

You do not even come close to gaining the Achievement.

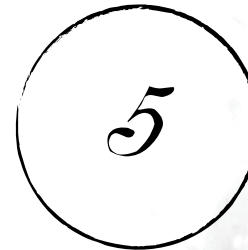
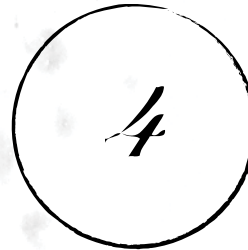
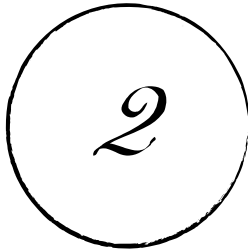
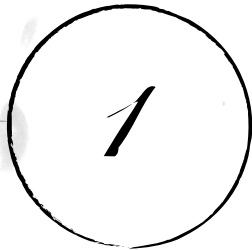
You do not gain the Achievement.

You come just short of gaining the Achievement.

You gain the Achievement.

You gain the Achievement handily. When the Moment closes you add a coin to this Satellite Trait.

Your Achievement has an unexpectedly positive outcome. If this is the initial roll of the Moment, the active player generates another Achievement and places a die with a value of 4 on it.



The Consequence happens with full force. If this is the initial roll of the Moment, the scene guide generates another Consequence and places a die with a value of 3 on it.

The Consequence happens. When the Moment closes, spend an additional coin out of this Satellite Trait. If you do not have any coins left in this Satellite Trait, spend a coin out of the linked Core Trait instead.

The Consequence happens, though not to its fullest possible extent. When the Moment closes, place a coin in your Reserves.

You avoid the Consequence, though perhaps only barely. When the Moment closes, place a coin in your Reserves.

You avoid the Consequence. When the Moment closes, place a coin in your Reserves.

You completely avoid the Consequence. When the Moment closes, place a coin in your Reserves.

Consequences

Annalise



Stories of Hunger, Pain & Redemption

Moment Record Sheet

Achievement

Consequence

Achievement

Consequence