

Steps of the Sanguine Path

A DM's Guide to Vampire Disciples

The vampire disciple prestige class is special in that it has a separate prerequisite for each level taken in the class. The prerequisite is always has two parts: learning the next step of the Sanguine Path ritual, and then performing it. The knowledge of the ritual's steps can be determined in one of two ways: The first is for the player character to find the knowledge through roleplaying, by interviewing NPCs who are knowledgeable in the subject, or by acquiring rare tomes or engravings which fully detail an entire step of the process. Because this knowledge is powerful, ancient, and purposefully obscured, such resources should never be easy to acquire. They do, however, make an excellent reward as part of an adventure, and can even be a plot hook unto themselves.

The other way for a vampire disciple to find out the secret steps of the Sanguine Path is through painstaking research, piecing together half-hinted, cryptic clues from obscure and forgotten sources. This requires a number of hours of dedicated research equal to three times the class level that the vampire disciple is trying to qualify for (so a vampire disciple trying to research the prerequisite for the third level of the class would need to spend 9 hours researching.) At the end of this time, the vampire disciple can make a single knowledge check (Arcana, History, and Religion all work, but the

DCs can vary, see below). If the vampire disciple succeeds, he learns the next step on the Sanguine Path. If he fails by 4 or less, he is unable to find any answers. If he fails by more than 5, he must succeed on a DC 5 Wisdom check or misinterpret the clues, seeing some secret connection where in fact there is none. For this reason, the DM should roll the knowledge check and wisdom check in secret. If the vampire disciple fails a check, he can make a new one once he continues his research, spending the same amount of time researching as he did on his failed check.

The First Step: Blood Sacrifice

To complete this step, the vampire disciple must offer up some of his blood to be consumed by another creature. The creature need not be a vampire, and indeed need not even receive any kind of benefit from drinking the blood, but it must willingly drink the vampire disciple's blood. The amount need not be too great: a few ounces will do.

Knowledge DC: Arcana, Religion 25; History 30

The Second Step: Sacrifice Under an Oak

To complete this step, the vampire disciple must sacrifice a living, sentient being beneath an oak tree. The tree is symbolic, and in some cases a picture or other representation of an oak tree has been known to suffice. The sacrificial death of a living, sentient being is not symbolic, and anything less than death will not complete the ritual.

Knowledge DC: Arcana, Religion 30; History 35

The Third Step: Escape from Imprisonment

To complete this step, the vampire disciple must either be imprisoned, or be in imminent danger of imprisonment, and manage to escape. He can be aided in his escape by allies or other prisoners, but being released will not satisfy the ritual. Short, or meaningless imprisonments will not suffice, either: the vampire disciple must be in real danger in order to satisfy the requirements.

Knowledge DC: History 35; Arcana, Religion 37

The Fourth Step: Torture

The vampire disciple has two options for completing this step. The first is to endure no less than four hours of physical torture. The torture must

be real, and if it does not have a strong effect on the vampire disciple then it will not meet the requirement for this step. Depending on the method of torture, the vampire disciple may take some amount of damage or ability drain during this process, as determined by the DM.

Whatever the exact method, for each hour of torture, the vampire disciple must succeed on a Fortitude or Will save (his choice) (DC 10+5 per previous save) or fall unconscious and be forced to start the entire ordeal over.

Alternatively, the vampire disciple can simply torture a living, sentient being for no less than four straight hours. This torture must also be real, and, as above, the vampire disciple will be forced to start over if his victim falls unconscious or dies.

Knowledge DC: History, Religion 40; Arcana 45

The Fifth Step: Betrothed of Fire

To complete this step, the vampire disciple need only set a large fire. The fire must be large enough to completely destroy at least one building, or else it must claim the lives of no less than five creatures. The fire can be magical or mundane.

Knowledge DC: Arcana, History 45; Religion 47

The Sixth Step: Death

To complete this step, the vampire disciple must go through a symbolic death, being buried alive in a coffin. Once the coffin is completely buried, the vampire disciple can immediately take the next level in the prestige class (assuming he is ready to level up), and will no doubt find that no longer needing to breathe will make escaping from his tomb much easier.

Knowledge DC: Arcana, History, Religion 50

The Final Step: Baptism in Blood

To complete this step, the vampire disciple must perform a ritual which will summon an avatar of Nocturne, the goddess of vampires. After a ritual exchange of phrases, the avatar will grant the vampire disciple the final benefits of vampirism upon the vampire disciple, making him a full-fledged vampire. If the vampire disciple does not exchange the ritual phrases correctly, the avatar will instead attempt to devour his soul. If the vampire disciple can defeat the avatar in combat, Nocturne will still grant him the benefits of full vampirism.

Knowledge DC: Arcana, Religion 55; History 60



Necromancers of the Northwest

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