

# Thousand Years of Night



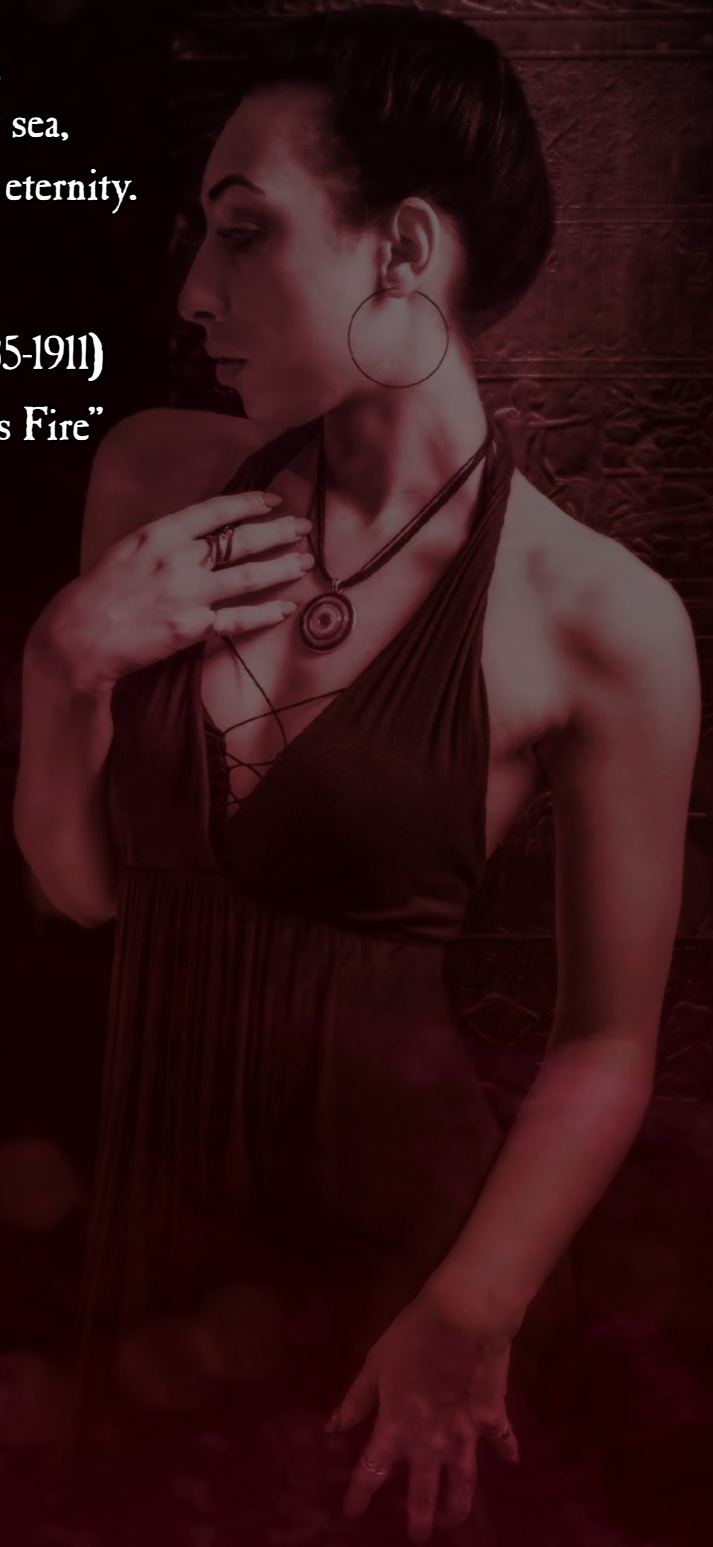
*A Sourcebook for  
Vampire: The Requiem*



In many a legend and many a shape,  
In the solemn grove and the crowded street,  
I am the Slayer, whom none escape;

I am Death trod under a fair girl's feet;  
I govern the tides of the sentient sea,  
That ebbs and flows to eternity.

-- Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall (1835-1911)  
"I Am the God of Sensuous Fire"







# table stakes

*By Eddy Webb*



The Nosferatu leered at Kincaid across the table. “Three of a kind,” he said in a thick Austrian accent, carefully placing his cards on the table.

Kincaid snorted in disgust and casually tossed her cards face-up next to his; her two pairs weren’t worthy of mention. As her opponent cackled and raked in the pot, she looked at her diminishing pile of chips and stood up, unconsciously straightening the lapels of her charcoal suitcoat. “Time for an intermission, Tobias,” she said in carefully controlled American tones. “My childe gets restless if I don’t walk him every few hours.”

“I don’t think so, Crone,” her opponent said, reaching across the table to grab her hand. “I’m just getting warmed up.” Tobias’ bodyguard carefully moved a hand to the butt of the gun sitting on her hip.

“And I’m calling for a break,” Kincaid said calmly, jerking her hand from his grip and snatching her matching charcoal cane from where it was leaning against the polished mahogany table. “You’ll be able to claim the rest of my money for the Invictus of Vienna when I return.” She walked away without waiting for a response.

Her newest childe, Nicholas — she refused to call him “Nick” — followed immediately behind. Although he had fire-engine red hair and a matching tie, his bursts of color looked muted next to the perfectly monochrome elder Daeva. His social habits were much like his attire: unremarkable, except when punctuated by bursts of garishness. “Elder Kincaid, aren’t you worried about losing to that... creature?”

She stopped suddenly, forcing Nicholas to stop as well before he plowed into her back. “His name is Tobias. And have you ever stopped to wonder why elders play games, childe?” she asked over her shoulder.

The shrug was obvious in his voice. “I dunno. I always assumed elders got bored or something.”

Kincaid spun on her heel, and poked the cane into his chest. “Then you are a bigger fool than I anticipated. Think carefully. You know I have plenty of money, as does my opponent. Gaining or losing even thousands of Euros means little to either of us, although we both pretend that it does. Why else would we play this game?”

He tried to push the cane away, but gave up when he discovered it wouldn’t budge. “No idea, elder Kincaid. Besides, no offense, but when you told me we were going to be playing against some high muckity-muck Invictus in Vienna, I figured you’d be playing chess or Go or something classy like that. Not *poker*.”

She removed the cane from his chest. Nicholas quickly straightened his jacket — an unconscious mockery of his sire’s habits — as she turned and started walking again. “Let me tell you of a particular poker game, then, and see if you can’t glean something from that.”

### ***New York City, 1870.***

Kincaid walked two steps behind her sire, trying to keep her long black dress from dragging through the mud and manure clumped on the cobblestones. Although

she had been one of the Kindred for well over a century, Moyo still treated her like a neonate, even telling her what dress to wear for the evening. “Pardon my boldness, elder Moyo...” she watched the back of his head for the nod before she continued. “... but does it seem wise to walk openly like this? While I do not doubt your power, it was only a few years ago that the President of this country freed the... uh...”

Moyo spun, a broad smile on his ebony face as he walked backwards in the filthy street. “The words you are looking for are ‘African slaves,’ Kincaid. And as I am not and have never been a slave, there should be little issue with me taking in the evening air to meet an old friend for a quiet game of cards.” He spun around again, facing forward. “Why do I play cards, Kincaid?”

“I can only assume it’s a shell, something to hide a deeper meaning. Despite the rumors that swirl around you, sire, such frivolous pastimes must be beneath you and the work you do for the Circle.”

His laugh was rich and full. “Some would say that frivolity is all I have these nights. Perhaps all I seek is a thrill in order to feel something again.” He pointed to one of the run-down buildings. “Here we are. Now be quiet and watch what happens.”

Inside looked nothing like the outside; luxurious wallpaper and plush seats surrounded them, and several of the paintings hanging within were probably worth more than the building itself. She was introduced to Simon Kelly, an Invictus Ventrue of some apparent clout in the New York domain. He offered only a bare minimum of conversation, as Moyo asked Simon his thoughts on the growing Tammany Hall situation. After a few minutes of polite evasions, the Ventrue motioned to one of his servants, who started setting the table for a game of cards.

“I admit I was surprised to hear that you wanted to play poker instead of our regular game of chess, Moyo. Has your time amongst us Yankees dulled the refinement of your palette?”

Moyo laughed again. “Hardly, Simon. I just get so bored these nights, and anything to add some variety is welcome. I only purchased a copy of Hoyle’s last night, so go easy on me. I’m still learning.”

The Ventrue nodded graciously, but Kincaid immediately spotted the lie. Moyo had been playing poker with a wide variety of mortals over the past several months, and had lost a considerable amount of money in the process. Between her and her sire, they had a considerable amount of carefully-secured wealth, but she had to admit that Moyo was clearly not a good card player. If there was some goal beyond frivolity, she couldn’t see it.

She carefully opened her bag, setting several stacks of bills onto the table. When she finished putting up her sire’s stake she closed the bag again, repressing a desire to caress the wooden stake hidden at the bottom.

• • •



"What?" Nicholas' surprised outburst interrupted Kincaid's story. "You came to stake a Ventrue?"

"I did no such thing, childe. It was my sire's wish that I bring the stake, and I obeyed. I hope the subtext of that statement isn't lost on you."

"No, of course not, elder Kincaid," he said, momentarily abashed. "But I think I know the rest of the story. Your sire sharked him, right?"

"Essentially, yes, although neither I nor my sire's opponent could have known that at the time. You see, I was under the naïve understanding that in order to beat your opponent, you had to win the game."

"But you do. That's how games work. You have to win in order to... well, *win*."

"If the individual hands of poker were the objective, perhaps. But that was never the goal."

Nicholas snapped his fingers. "Ah, right. Your sire...."

Kincaid gave a slight cough. "Grandsire Moyo, you mean."

"*Grandsire Moyo* was losing because he wanted to get each player's tells. He wasn't playing the cards — he was playing the other players."

She rapped her cane on the floor. "Again, your perspective is too limited. But let me continue my story. If you are able to remain silent for that long, of course."

Her childe lowered his head, and she continued.

• • •

Hand after hand was lost as the evening grew darker. Simon was not a stupid Kindred, but he was avaricious, and swiftly fell for Moyo's ploy. Then, as the first rays of dawn threatened, Simon raked in the last of Moyo's chips.

"A bad run, I'm afraid. Perhaps poker isn't the game for you, old friend."

Moyo looked abashed. "So it would seem. I know the night draws to a close, but perhaps one more hand...."

The Ventrue stood up. "I'm sorry, but I wouldn't feel comfortable with that. As you say, it is getting late, and I've taken enough from you tonight."

The elder Daeva snapped his fingers, and Kincaid carefully put the wooden stake on the table. "There is still more you could take from me. Or I from you."

Simon slowly sat back in his seat. "You can't be serious...."

"But I am. One more hand. If I lose, you can stake me. If I win, I get my money back, along with yours."

"If all you wanted was money, you can have it. I have plenty more where that came from. But this...."

Moyo leaned over the table, closer to Simon. His chest bumped into the stake, which rolled across the felt-covered table. "We're past that now, surely. One hand of cards, and I could be completely helpless. Within your power for... a day? Two?" He sat back, and waves a hand at Kincaid. "I'll even send my childe away. I would be utterly helpless."

The Ventrue's hands shook as he dealt the cards. When it was over, Moyo held a flush, while Simon merely had three of a kind. He looked shocked as the Daeva leaned over to push the pile of chips into his bag.

"It seems my bad run has ended, old friend."

Simon grabbed Moyo's wrist, hard. "You cheated. You must have."

Moyo looked directly into Simon's eyes. "Do you know what the best part of losing is?" He slapped Simon's grip from his wrist. "No, I don't suppose a Ventrue would. If I come to the table expecting to lose, I can focus on what's really going on. Like the fact that you've been cheating most of the night."

Simon stood up. "How dare you—"

"And oh, how your eyes glittered when I put that stake down," Moyo continued, cutting off the Ventrue's protestations. "You thought you had your chance. Here was another elder, ready for your diabolical thirst, practically offering this throat to you. How could you refuse? All you needed to do was win a single hand of cards."

The Ventrue sat back down. His hands were shaking as Moyo spoke relentlessly. "I spent months being fleeced by mortal criminals. How better to learn how to cheat yourself than to be cheated? That's on top of all the time I spent spreading rumors of my own debauchery and ennui, seeking the latest thrill. All to get me here."

Simon moved his hands off the table and stared down at them. "Why? Why do all this?"

The Daeva smirked. "I owe your Prince a favor. I don't like the woman, but she's a member of the covenant, and she's done some services for me in the past. And it turns out, she's not happy with your mortal political ambitions, but can't justify punishing you just because you had that idiot Tweed forcibly seize the local government. A potential diablerist, on the other hand... that, *old friend*, is definitely a horse of a different color."

"I suppose you're going to kill me while your childe watches, then?"

Moyo's laugh was rich and full. "Of course not. I'm going to hold you down while she kills you. And then I'm going to drink your soul. That's why I told her to wear a black dress. It hides the blood and ash better."

• • •

Kincaid stopped when she couldn't hear Nicholas' footsteps behind her. She turned to see that he was staring at her in shock.

"You're... you're going to kill Tobias?"

She waved a dismissive hand in the air. "You're jumping to the end. My point in telling you this is to show that elders such as myself have to think on several levels at once. Not only do we have to make plans, but we have to seem as if we are not making any plans at all."

"You're going to *have me* kill Tobias!"

He never saw the cane swing. He only felt the crack of it against his skull before he was flung against the wall and



slid to the floor. Before he could blink the stars out of his eyes, she was crouching over him. Her eyes blazed with intensity. "You are a fool, but I didn't realize you were suicidal as well. There are easier ways to die than speaking openly of murder in a Nosferatu's domain. And if you keep running your mouth like that, I'll show you some of them."

"But..." Before he could say anything more, the cane cracked across the other side of his head.

"Pain, childe. Pain teaches, but some are slow learners. Tell me, do you need another lesson?"

Nicholas coughed. "N... no, sire."

Kincaid stood up. "Then clean yourself up. I have more money to lose."

• • •

"What happened to him?" Tobias asked, pointing a stubby finger at Nicholas.

Kincaid shrugged. "I did mention that he gets restless, yes? I simply had to 'walk' him."

The Nosferatu's laugh was ugly. "I approve of a little violence now and then. Keeps the troops in line. Now, let's get back to our game."

She sat carefully into the chair, and pushed all of her chips in. "Let's make this a little more interesting, shall we?"

Tobias sat back. "Oh? How so?"

"One hand, winner takes all. In addition, I want you to stake something more valuable than mere Euros."

"I'm intrigued. What do you want?"

Kincaid crossed her legs, brushing imaginary dust off of her knee. "Moyo Balewa. I understand that he has recently defected to your covenant. I want him."

"He's your sire, correct? Why can't you just call to him? I'm sure he'd love to catch up."

"I doubt that. However, it seems he's picked up a nasty diablerie habit. He found out that my peers within the Circle of the Crone were going to hand him over to a key prince so she could help consolidate her domain." She smirked at the Nosferatu. "Of course, you already know all that, Tobias."

"You know, of course, that the First Estate would never condone such a criminal lurking within its ranks. But let's say for the moment that I would have such information, and I were able to stake it. What's *your* angle? What are you offering?"

She grabbed her cane in both hands, and twisted the middle section. The top half came off with a small *pop*, and she set the carefully sharpened wooden half on the table. "Me. You can put this through my heart, and my childe will help you carry my body anywhere you want. I expect your hypothetical diablerist might want a taste of some finely-aged vitae."

That ugly laugh again. "That's what I like about you, Kincaid. You have balls." She arched an eyebrow, but let

him continue. "All right, one hand of cards. Everything on the table."

She nodded, and started to reach for the deck. The Nosferatu's heavy hand fell on hers. "No. We're putting *everything* on the table. Hands are face-up." He smirked. "Wouldn't want to have any cheating, now would we?"

Kincaid slowly pulled her hand away, and nodded. "Of course. Deal away."

Tobias stared here in the eyes as he flipped five cards to each of them, face up. Kincaid watched his hands carefully, but if he was cheating, she couldn't see it. She had a 5, 6, 7, 8, and a queen, while he received two 3s and two 5s.

"Oh my," he said with sarcasm. "It looks like I have two pair, and you don't have anything. Tough break. How many cards you want?"

She stared at her cards carefully, and then slid the queen across the table. "One, please."

A smirk. A flip. A seven.

Kincaid nodded, and put the stake on the table, as Nicholas jumped to his feet. "This is *bullshit*. Sire, you can't just..."

Without turning, the Daeva elder stood up. "Be *silent*, childe," she said, her voice steel. "Or I will destroy you myself before that stake reaches my heart."

"Indeed. Settle down, whelp," Tobias said. "Besides, I haven't taken my cards yet."

Nicholas fell back into his seat. "Your... cards...?"

Kincaid watched silently as the Nosferatu flicked away his two pairs and dealt himself four new cards. "Oh damn, looks like I have nothing. That doesn't beat your pair of sevens, Kincaid."

"I suppose it doesn't," she said quietly, slipping the stake back into her cane.

Tobias stood up. "I can't stand cheaters. Not at cards, and not in the Danse Macabre. You played fair with me, Kincaid, so I'll play fair with you." He tossed a business card on the table. "Meet me there tomorrow night. I'll have your winnings for you." He nodded to the two Daeva, and walked out of the room.

Nicholas watched him go, as Kincaid stood up. After a moment, he turned to look at her. "What the *fuck* just happened?"

She poked him in the chest with her cane. "You're still a fool. I already explained — if you're playing to lose, you can see what's really going on. And I knew that Tobias played fair. Scrupulously so. If I tried to cheat him, I would have won the game but lost everything of value."

Kincaid walked up and straightened the lapels of Nicholas' jacket. "Now get some vitae and clean yourself up, childe. You get to meet your grandsire tomorrow." As she walked past him, she called over her shoulder. "And wear all black."



## *Credits*

**Writers:** Matthew Dawkins, Steffie DeVann, Meghan Fitzgerald, Liz Grushcow, Lauren Roy, Christopher Spivey

**Developer:** Danielle Lauzon

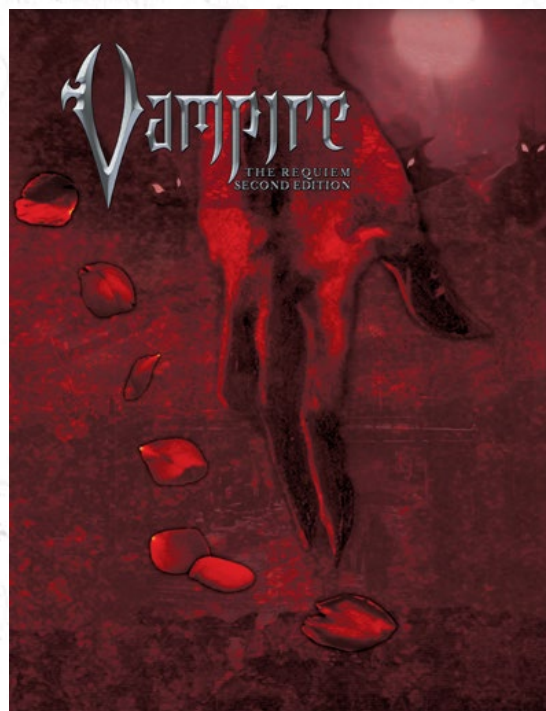
**Line Developer:** Rose Bailey

**Editor:** Carol Darnell

**Artists:** Pat McEvoy, Felipe Gaona, Sam Araya, Mark Kelly, James Van Der Mewe

**Art Direction and Design:** Michael Chaney

**Creative Director:** Richard Thomas



*Requires the Use of  
the Vampire: the Requiem  
Second Edition Core Rulebook*



© 2017 White Wolf AB All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden, except for the purposes of reviews, and for blank character sheets, which may be reproduced for personal use only. White Wolf, Vampire, and The Chronicles of Darkness are registered trademarks of White Wolf AB All rights reserved. Storytelling System, Vampire the Requiem, Mage the Awakening, Werewolf the Forsaken, Chronicles of Darkness, and Vampire the Requiem Second Edition are trademarks of White Wolf AB

All rights reserved. All characters, names, places and text herein are copyrighted by White Wolf AB

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. This book contains mature content. Reader discretion is advised.

Check out the Onyx Path online @ <http://www.theonyxpath.com>



# Table of Contents

<b>Prologue: Table Stakes</b>	<b>3</b>	The Lancea et Sanctum	34
		The Ordo Dracul	35
		The Cerberus Pact	36
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Chapter Two: The Long Solo</b>	<b>39</b>
Themes	11	<b>Transcending History</b>	<b>39</b>
Love Old and New	11	Time Changes Us	40
Everything Changes (and Stays the Same)	11	We Change History	41
<b>Dark Metamorphosis</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Turn Back the Clock</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>How to Use This Book</b>	<b>11</b>	A Solitary Past	43
<b>Chapters</b>	<b>12</b>	Alteration	44
<b>Inspirational Media</b>	<b>12</b>	Control	44
White Wolf Books	13	Corruption	45
<b>Chapter One: Opening Movement</b>	<b>15</b>	Creation	46
<b>Creating an Elder</b>	<b>15</b>	Culture	46
Step One: Concept	15	Destruction	47
Step Two: Attributes	16	Discovery	48
Step Three: Skills and Specialties	16	Embrace	49
Step Four: Add Kindred Template	16	Faith	49
Step Five: Merits	19	Fear	50
Step Six: Determine Advantages	19	Frenzy	51
Step Seven: Spending Experiences	19	Grief	52
The Archaeologist	20	Heroism	52
The Architect	20	Horror	53
The Artist	20	Innocence	54
The Athlete	20	Intrigue	55
The Brute	20	Love	56
The Conspirator	21	Masquerade	57
The Entertainer	21	Paranoia	57
The Entrepreneur	21	Politics	58
The Parasite	21	Survival	59
The Puppetmaster	21	Triumph	60
The Scholar	22	The Unknown	60
The Shepherd	22	Vengeance	62
The Soldier	23	War	62
The Traitor	23	A Chronicle of Flashbacks	63
<b>Portrait of an Elder: Clans</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Chapter Three:</b>	
Elder Clan Banes	23	<b>What We've Learned Along the Way</b>	<b>65</b>
Daeva	23	<b>Who I've Come to Be</b>	<b>65</b>
Gangrel	24	Intelligence	66
Mekhet	25	Wits	66
Nosferatu	26	Resolve	66
Ventrue	27	Strength	66
Lost Clans	28	Dexterity	66
<b>Portrait of an Elder: Covenants</b>	<b>31</b>	Stamina	66
The Carthian Movement	31	Presence	67
The Circle of the Crone	32	Manipulation	67
The Invictus	32	Composure	67



<b>What I've Come to Know</b>	<b>67</b>	<i>Receptive Mind</i>	84
Preternatural Skills	68	<i>Savior of the Lost</i>	84
Keeping Up with the Times	68	<i>Special Treat</i>	84
<b>What I'm Becoming</b>	<b>69</b>	<i>Spectral Communion</i>	85
Waking from Torpor	70	<i>Undeniable Aura</i>	85
Revelations	70	Carthian Law	85
Jewels in the Crown	71	<i>Stare Decisis</i>	85
<b>New Devotions</b>	<b>72</b>	Dynastic Merits	85
Annals of Death	72	<i>Dynasty Progenitor</i>	85
Bones of the Mountain	73	<i>Oath of Dynasty</i>	85
Celebrity	73		
Consumption	74	<b>Chapter Four: The Company We Keep</b>	<b>87</b>
Crush of Years	74	<b>Spinning the Web</b>	<b>87</b>
Legion	74	Prologue or Interlude	88
Malignant Smog	75	Divergent Lessons	89
Pass into Yesteryear	76	Filling the Void	89
Preternatural Instinct	76	The Long Sleep	89
Spontaneous Ignition	76	Long Live the Queen	91
Unbridled Force	76	The Anachronism	91
<b>Elder Blood Sorcery</b>	<b>77</b>	The Vicious Cycle	92
Learning and Creating Rituals	77	High Contrast	92
Crúac	78	The Reunion	93
Crúac Rites	78	Footprints of a Giant	93
Manananggal's Working	78	Elder Banes	94
Gwydion's Curse	78	<b>Touchstones</b>	<b>94</b>
Scapegoat	78	<b>Ships Passing in the Night: Mortals</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Theban Sorcery</b>	<b>79</b>	The Telltale Heart	95
Theban Sorcery Miracles	79	Ancient Ties	95
Curse of Isolation	79	Dark Appetites	96
Orison of Voices	79	Broken Silence	97
Sins of the Ancestors	79	Adoring Masses	97
<b>Elder Mysteries of the Dragon</b>	<b>80</b>	Mortal Souls	97
Coil of the Quintessence	80	Hearts of Stone	98
Forever Mine	81	Immutable Habits	98
Home Turf	81	Love Beyond Death	99
Smother	82	<b>The Halfway Port: Ghouls</b>	<b>100</b>
In the Motherland's Arms	82	Chains of Love	100
Fingers on a Dead Pulse	82	Ancient Bonds (Simulacrum)	100
Sample Scales of the Quintessence	82	Communal Assets	101
Codependency	82	The Vitae Jar	101
Cold of the Grave	82	<b>The Death Barge: Revenants</b>	<b>102</b>
New Merits	83	The Source	102
Around the Block	83	The Curse	102
Beloved	83	The Samaritan	103
Call the Beast	83	The Fluke	103
Civilization Stalker	83	<b>Barren Shores: Kindred</b>	<b>104</b>
Heart of Stone	83	Sharing the Curse	104
Major Domo	83	The Sanctity of Elysium	105
Married by Blood	83	Eternal Marriage	105
Mentor in Immortality	83	Predator's Allure	106
Mother-Goddess' Altar	84	Blood in the Mirror	106
Practiced Puppeteer	84	The Last One Standing	107
Prima Donna	84		



## Chapter Five: Wolves at the Gate

### Creatures of Legend

#### Inamorata

*Daniel Howell*

#### Draugr

*Jack*

#### Empusa and Lamia

*Bethenelle (Empusa)*

*Melina (Lamia)*

#### Methuselahs

#### Ann Harlow, The Barrow Queen

*Ann Harlow*

#### Ezekiel of Sodom

*Ezekiel of Sodom*

*Elizabeth Whateley*

#### Lost Clans

#### The Julii

*Priscus*

*Patrizia*

#### Pijavica

*Vlastislav*

#### Eternal Allegiances

*Conspiracies*

*Body of a Nation*

*Rosamund, The Head*

*Doyle, The Mouth*

*Svetlana, The Fist*

#### That Which Does Not Die

109	Deborah (Modern Dvora)	124
109	Deborah	125
109	Asher "Crusader" Harel	126
110	King Kitamba	126
111	King Kitamba	127
112	Sons of Phobos	128
113	Rituals	129
113	Zack "Taxman" Wilson	130
114	Crossovers	131
114	Mage: The Awakening	131
114	Promethean: The Created	131
115	Changeling: The Lost	132
115	Beast: The Primordial	133
116	Geist: The Sin-Eaters	133
116	Demon: The Descent	134
117	Appendix: Conditions	135
117	Anchored Heart	135
117	Beast's Bargain	135
117	Beloved Enemy	135
118	Children of the Blood	135
118	Crushed	135
119	Curated	136
119	Forgotten	136
120	Immutable Heart	136
120	Imprisoned Echo	136
120	Leveraged	136
122	Living Legend	136
122	Lost Lineage	137
122	Quiet Echo	137
123	Synchronized	137
124	Vitae's Resoluteness	137
124	Weak Vitae	137







# Introduction

*“Nothing Human Loves Forever”*  
– *The Hunger*, directed by Tony Scott

## *Themes*

*The night doesn’t end at dawn – it merely retreats and slumbers; it waits as humanity takes false comfort in the light of their sun. But, there is no escaping darkness, and when the night returns, so do you: ancient, unstoppable, and hungry.*

**A Thousand Years of Night** is about coming full circle – from terrified child to the thing everyone dreads.

**A Thousand Years of Night** is about being untouchable, yet still completely vulnerable.

**A Thousand Years of Night** is about finding a reason to get up every night, even when a thousand have passed already.

## *Love Old and New*

She sits on the deathbed of her grandchild, holds his hand as he draws his last breath, and then does the same for his grandchildren. She sees her kingdom fall to dust, the gods she worships pulled out of their temples and torn asunder on the market square. Time itself conspires against her, tearing away everything – *literally everything* – she cares for. Still, she goes out for more – more to love, and more to lose. She joins a band, they travel and she sees new places (the world still has a few of those left, even for her). She celebrates her great, great, gr – *oh, she lost count* – her descendant’s baby shower. Because if she doesn’t, if she allows herself to be swallowed by the loss, *if she stops caring?* That’s when the blood grows heavy. She won’t win the battle forever. One night she can’t shake the loss, the rising depression, and the mounting apathy. Torpor sinks its claws into her and she finally gets a chance to sleep and rest. When she wakes up again though? She’s gotta go right back into that ring.

## *Everything Changes (and Stays the Same)*

He remembers the slave uprising that murdered firstborn sons in their cradle. He kissed the lips of Antoinette as her body still lay twitching. He soothed the youngest Romanov child while an unnamed revolutionary put a rifle to her head. These are more civilized times, people take to “democracy” to express their discontent. It won’t help though: the rich don’t listen, lulled into complacency by the illusion of their wealth and power, until one day the peasants realize that numbers are on *their* side. He knows what happens next, and he’s on hand to witness it. The world changes, but people never do.

## *Dark Metamorphosis*

They *are* the city. Their body sits motionless on a basalt throne in a steel tower that dominates the downtown center. Their mind, however, is constantly moving from one brick to the next. A woman slips and falls, scraping her hand on the pavement, and the stone quietly absorbs the blood. Two men in suits fight about money, and one ends up dead in a landfill. The rubble quietly swallows the body, drains it of blood and spits the flesh back up. They have transcended the confines of their body, become alien and beautiful. A young man reminds them of their lover, so they follow him around with stone eyes. They weep when the man is mugged and killed, sending rivulets of thick red blood up through the pavement, then follow the killer to his home. The building collapses that night. They are still utterly human.

## *How to Use This Book*

This book is devoted to elder vampires for **Vampire: The Requiem**. **Requiem**’s elders aren’t stodgy and outdated creatures locked into an obsession with a time that came

before. Well, some are to an extent, but elders are also full of vitality. They are ruthless, extremely lucky, or very cunning to have made it this far. They have centuries’ worth



of experiences, allies, and enemies. They still *hunger* for new passions, like a junkie for her fix.

This is a book about how people go on being people no matter how long you give them to do it. Elders still hold rivalries, they still have feelings, and they still fall in love. Some grow and change and flower, while others become so transfixed in their habits that they become icons of horror like the lurker at the threshold, or the monster under the

bed. The elder stories in this book are designed to showcase those changes (and non-changes) at their fullest.

Most of all, **Requiem's** elders should be *played*. They're not ancient masterminds who sit around petting a fluffy cat while sending the player characters on one quest after another. They *are* the player characters. The machinations are their own, and they take center stage.

## Chapters

- **Chapter 1: Opening Movement** covers character creation for elders. It takes a closer look at the aspirations elders have, and what their Masks, Dirges, and Touchstones look like. This chapter also delves into different elders across the clans and covenants. Lastly, *Opening Movement* offers a guide to running cyclical dynastic campaigns, that devil's bargain elders strike so they can to rule and rest in turn.
- **Chapter 2: The Long Solo** explores what it means to transcend history. It shows how different elders do it, and offers drama-packed scenes for players to build into their characters' story. Storytellers and players can use these to create a prelude session, or as ready-made backgrounds.
- **Chapter 3: What We've Learned Along the Way** is all about power. It looks at Devotions, painstakingly tailored to an individual elder and almost alien in their scope, and elder rituals for Crúac, Theban Sorcery, and Dragon Coils.

This chapter also explores what Attributes and Skills look like at these super-human levels.

- **Chapter 4: The Company We Keep** looks at Touchstones — the people and places that keep elders grounded — as well as servants, cults, and lovers collected over the long night. This chapter offers an alternate Touchstone system for elders, and a new Climbing the Ladder for weaving a group of player characters together across history.
- **Chapter 5: Wolves at the Gate** offers a smorgasbord of long-lived antagonists for any campaign. It delves into the Sons of Phobos, Methuselah, lost clans, and even the infamous Inamorata. This chapter also checks in with other creatures stalking the Chronicles of Darkness: immortal mages, life-stealing demons, ageless Changelings, and reincarnated Beasts.

## Inspirational Media

- **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** shows a ton of great elders. The Requiems of Angel and Spike make great contrasting portraits: from drunken asshole to repentant lover, and from bashful poet to brazen killer.
- **Dracula: Love Never Dies** is the story of an elder who has lost his Requiem. He sits in his castle with his brides (who are mostly irrelevant to him), until something stirs his ancient heart: a picture of his wife. Or, at least, of a woman who looks like his wife. He travels all the way to England, in a mad obsessive quest, because that's how important Touchstones are.
- **From Dusk till Dawn: The Series** shows us elders with fingers in dozens of (illegal) pies. They're driven by revenge, greed, and hunger; and even after all these centuries, Santanico still feels the pangs of humanity when confronted with women like her.
- **The Hunger** gets a shout out in the core book, but it also makes a great movie to watch for elder inspiration. Miriam

developed mad skills over the centuries (with Specialties in home fortification and body disposal), but those don't save her from her own need for companionship.

- **Interview with the Vampire** and **The Vampire Lestat** show all stages of the Requiem. Elders play their games, Embrace to alleviate their own loneliness or guilt, and their childer are left holding the pieces. The second book even shows us what happens when new passions stir an ancient heart.
- **Let the Right One In** portrays an elder on the move. She didn't build an empire — she simply survived from night to night. Even ancient nomads need Touchstones though, and that's this story. The small setting and claustrophobic tone make great personal horror.
- **Only Lovers Left Alive** tells the story of two elders bound together for eternity. They've set up a great Masquerade, but he begins to struggle with his Requiem. They no longer fit in this world, but they still have each other.



## *White Wolf Books*

This book needs **Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition** to play. Storytellers who want to dig deeper into the rules can pick up **The Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook** as well.

- **Dark Eras** and the **Dark Eras Companion** make natural additions to an elder campaign. They offer great ideas for historical campaigns, allowing players to experience their characters when they were still neonates.
- **Secrets of the Covenants** takes a closer look at the ancient organizations that comprise the All Night Society. A must

for any elder who wants to come out on top.

The clan books are mostly presented from the view of neonates and ancillae, but the machinations of elders shine through between the lines:

- **Ventrue: Lords Over the Damned**
- **Daeva: Kiss of the Succubus**
- **Gangrel: Savage and Macabre**
- **Mekhet: Shadows in the Dark**
- **Nosferatu: The Beast that Haunts the Blood**









# Chapter One

## Opening Movement

*Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future /  
And time future contained in time past.*

— T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

Raise the baton again. It's the same piece he's been playing for a thousand years and he knows it by heart. The players change, but he's always there, giving the cues and keeping the tempo. He's put off the climax for so long, he thinks he might never reach it — just an endless coda, stretching into eternity. Could he give it all up? Lift the curtain to let in the sun and sing his swan song in a blaze of glory? He's thought about it, but no. He's come too far for that now. He'll play until the stars go dark. And what then?

Best not to think about it.

Some things only get better with age. Any Kindred who survives his first century or two is someone others fear, respect, and envy. He's lasted a long time in a blood-soaked world where life is cheap and death is even cheaper. Every vampire talks a big game about being immortal, but he's proof positive that it's true. Every vampire waits her whole unlifed to be him.

Lucky you. It's your turn to do exactly that.

### *Creating an Elder*

Elder Kindred have been around for centuries, and in those years, the Blood has grown thick within them. They've spent countless nights haunting the edges of the living world, and just as many immersed in the backstabbing conspiracies of their kin. All vampires are predators, but elders are as close as anything comes to being the apex while still clinging to a human skin. Other Kindred speak of them in whispers, knowing that prying too deeply into their affairs may lead to Final Death. It is *never* a good idea to fuck with them. This section explains how to make one of these implacable titans as a character, and how to assign dot values to something with unimaginable power and centuries of experience.

First, you'll create your character as she was during the early nights of her Requiem, as you would any other vampire. See **Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition**, p. 79, for the complete character creation rules.

Next, you'll spend a lump sum of Experiences as you see fit, reflecting all the drama and conflict your character has withstood over the course of her many, many nights. Use these Experiences to tell the tale that describes who she is tonight.

### *Step One: Concept*

Since you're starting with the neonate your character once was, don't worry about establishing centuries of background up front. Instead, figure out first who she was at the beginning, in her mortal life and in the first few years of her unlifed. The

Embrace burns that time and place into her Blood, and even the most adaptable elder carries remnants of the cultural and social context she once occupied. A neonate Embraced in Elizabethan England is a completely different animal from one Embraced in Mughal-ruled India, even if they share the same clan and covenant. How much of that context remains a part of your character's Requiem? Does she still cling to it, or does she like to think she's left it in the dust? If the latter, how does it come back to haunt her against her will?

Think about how her first few decades as a vampire changed her, as well. As a neonate, she found herself thrust into a society ruled by monsters. Hunting, feeding, taming the Beast, stepping lightly in the shadow of terrible giants; these ordeals and more she endured, or crushed decisively under her stiletto heel. How did she handle those early nights? What did she do to survive? How did she carve out a niche for herself? Who did she have to cross to get there and how many of them survived long enough to care? What routines did she develop to help her cope?

With all this in mind, come up with a short phrase that describes the core of who your character is. Whatever you come up with as your concept now will still be relevant by the end of the process, even though it reflects the beginning of a centuries-long story. No matter how awful and alien an elder becomes, who she was then is still who she is now. She may deny it, hate it, yearn for something more, or try to slumber her way into being someone else, but she never can. Use this starting concept as a guideline when you get to step seven: Spending Experiences. It will help you avoid choice paralysis.



## *Aspirations*

Normally, this is also when you would choose Aspirations. For elders, it's usually easier to do so gradually over the course of the character creation process, letting inspiration strike as you work out how your character's long and tortured history has unfolded. That said, if you have a strong direction in mind already and you want to figure out some character goals up front, feel free.

Crafting elder Aspirations can be challenging, since the sorts of intrigues an ancient horror gets up to barely resemble the petty games of the ancillae far beneath them. You can realistically expect your character's exploits to define a domain for years to come, and the stories you can tell with a vampire this powerful open some strange doors. The usual kinds of Aspirations are still applicable, of course; you might decide you'd like to see your character reconcile with an old enemy, Embrace a new childe, or learn a new Devotion. But, you can also think bigger and longer-term.

Elder games often span centuries of time, as the characters fall into torpor, spend decades of downtime on business as usual, and fall prey to ennui. Years may pass for the vampires in between game sessions. If your Storyteller plans to skip time this way during the chronicle, you can choose grandiose Aspirations like "Fail to halt the end of an empire," "Use my own descendants as a social experiment," or "Fulfill the false prophecy I myself wrote five hundred years ago." You might also consider Aspirations that wouldn't make sense for anyone with merely mortal means available to them, like "Walk from Los Angeles to Hawaii," "Cure cancer," or "Manipulate humanity into starting World War 3." Ask your Storyteller if he plans to run flashback scenes for your troupe, as detailed starting on p. 43. If so, whenever you know you'll be playing in a flashback, you can choose Aspirations based on things you know your character already did in the past, like "Lose my first Touchstone," "Murder my last mortal relative," or "Become Prince of Paris." Finally, if your troupe decides to walk through *Spinning the Web* (p. 87), the relationships and organizations you create there can suggest Aspirations that operate on the kind of scale and scope you'd expect from an ancient vampire.

## *Step Two: Attributes*

When you assign your starting Attribute dots, think specifically about which abilities help your character come out on top in the endless jockeying that defines the All Night Society. Does he have a poker face that intimidates even other Kindred? Does his intellect ensure he's constantly two steps ahead of his rivals? Is he simply so big and mean that no one dares fuck with him? Once you've figured out his overall strategy for beating the odds and establishing himself as a major power, assign your dots accordingly.

## *Step Three: Skills and Specialties*

Times change, and so do the Skills a vampire needs to keep up with them. The Danse Macabre is a ruthless teacher, but anyone

who succeeds in it is damned good at what he does. Think back to your concept first and what it implies about where your character began and how he evolved over time. A vampire who's good at language and logic might be an astrologer, a translator, a codebreaker, a mathematician, and a programmer, all in the same Requiem. For more on how Skills translate across eras of history, see p. 69.

As you assign Skill dots and Specialties, keep in mind that your character's active tonight, regardless of when he was Embraced. Antiquated Specialties and disparate Skill choices can help define what's unique about your vampire's long story, but don't feel like you must account for his entire history with these dots. Remember that vampires adapt, just like everybody else, and even the most hidebound Kindred is capable of learning how to search Google and drive a car. In exchange, he'll inevitably have forgotten some things he used to know.

For now, as with younger characters, no Skill can exceed five dots. You can fill out your character's superhuman capabilities when you spend your Experiences.

Elder vampires start with two extra Specialties to assign, for a total of five Specialties.

## *Step Four: Add Kindred Template*

Here's where the shadows grow longer.

## *Clan*

A vampire's clan is her one constant, even if she pulls up roots, moves halfway around the world, and rewrites her own memory completely. An elder's clan is a crucial part of her identity, the cornerstone of her self-image — she's been Kindred for a *long* time, and her fleeting human life feels like a brief preamble to the real story, even if that preamble was the paradise before Purgatory.

The clans themselves aren't immutable, though. They've all seen the rise and fall of notable offshoots, bloodlines, and stranger lineages that sit on the cusp of a new clan entirely. While these are rare in modern nights, they pepper history liberally, and some surviving elders are the last of their kind. And of course, the so-called lost clans may not be as lost as everyone believes. If you're interested in playing a vampire from a lost clan or "dead" bloodline, discuss it with your Storyteller and consult the "Lost Clans" section in this chapter for a few playable options.

## *Covenant*

Think about your character's loyalties, and how those may have changed or intensified over the years. While some Kindred remain dedicated to the same covenant for centuries and rise to positions of unrivaled power, others seek new purpose as their peers turn to dust and they tire of the tedious games. Kindred don't make these decisions lightly, especially if the local covenants are at odds; but the possibility of renewing her enthusiasm for her own Requiem is a powerful motivator to an elder.



On the other hand, she may grow weary of the whole ordeal, forsaking any covenant in favor of her own inscrutable pursuits. Younger vampires rarely have the luxury of striking out completely on their own, but an ancient doesn't need to care what others think of her and doesn't need what they have to offer. Elders who trade the power and influence of a covenant for the freedom and mystique of independence give up access to most covenant-specific Merits, at the Storyteller's discretion, but in exchange they qualify for the Prima Donna Merit (p. 84).

Finally, some elders belong to secret societies known only to those who have survived long enough to receive an invitation. These intimate, elite covenants extend a hand to only the most venerable, the most potent, or those who know too much. Some are secluded factions inside the larger covenants, while others exist fully independently. They have missions and philosophies ranging from the benign to the apocalyptic, and what they look for in their recruits is just as diverse, but all of them offer secrets and power no ancilla could imagine. The Cerberus Pact is one example of such a group; see p. 36 for details. If you want your character to belong to a hidden elder sect instead of — or in addition to — one of the usual covenants, work with your Storyteller to decide what kind of group she joined and what it exists to do. You can use the Mystery Cult Initiation Merit (**Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition**, p. 121) to model it.

### *Anchors*

Elder vampires remember eras humanity left behind long ago, and often long for simpler times; but over the course of their Requiems, they reinvent themselves many times over. The alternative is stagnation and irrelevance: death sentences. How do your character's anchors reflect centuries of shifting priorities to stave off despair?

### *Mask and Dirge*

An elder may don multiple Masks over the course of his Requiem. Sometimes, it's a matter of survival; his surroundings change so much they force him to choose between his role and his Requiem. Sometimes, a vampire is just sick of who he's pretending to be, and puts on a different persona once no one alive knows about the old one. The Mask you choose for your character tonight may not be the same one he wore when he made the papers way back when or first met the mortal who would later become his childe. Think about what might haunt him from a past when he masqueraded as someone else. You can use this as inspiration for an Aspiration.

By comparison, a vampire's Dirge is longer-lasting. If it changes, it does so at key points in a character's history: moments of personal trauma, periods of self-discovery, and crises of faith. A gain or loss of Humanity is a good milestone for such a change. Is your character a different kind of monster now than he was when he first joined his coterie, or made his favorite ghoul? Who did he piss off when he turned his back

on who he was? Does his ancient lover miss the way he used to be, or was she the one who insisted he change in the first place? This is another good source of Aspirations.

The following are a few elder-appropriate sample archetypes.

### *Collector*

A collector can't let a decade slip by without accumulating its detritus. She hoards fashions, entertainment, art, music, even people — anything she can get her hands on, from every era.

**Single Willpower:** Go out of your way to acquire something characteristic of the time and place you occupy.

**All Willpower:** Choose adding to your collection over your own safety or over the Masquerade.

### *Meddler*

A meddler isn't satisfied unless she's the one behind whatever's happening. Whether blatant or subtle, she can't let events unfold without her fingerprints on them.

**Single Willpower:** Involve yourself in someone else's business without being invited.

**All Willpower:** Interfere in a precarious or dangerous situation so you can take credit for whatever happens.

### *Provocateur*

A provocateur pushes buttons and fans flames so she can watch everything burn, or "for their own good." She isn't satisfied unless she's causing trouble for other people — but never for herself.

**Single Willpower:** Provoke dissension among others for no reason other than to do it.

**All Willpower:** Cause conflict among others when you know lives and futures are on the line.

### *Touchstones*

Your elder's original Touchstone is long dead, and he's cultivated a series of others to replace it over the centuries. See p. 94 for more on the various ways this can shake out. Select and assign your character's Touchstones, including any from the Touchstone Merit. If his starting Humanity score is lower than 7, place the first Touchstone one level lower than where he begins.

A vampire who survives long enough must face facts: her Touchstones are impermanent. When her bond with a Touchstone persists beyond his death, it haunts her. She chases new Touchstones that remind her of him — people who look just like a dead lover, or share a hated rival's philosophy. She'll take "bittersweet" over nothing. After a while, this ceaseless merry-go-round becomes a blur that still bears his name. When it blurs enough, she gains what elders call a *faded Touchstone*. The vampire moves on, but the memories endure the wear of centuries and the



nightmares of torpor. Every now and then, something reminds her of him strongly enough to take her back there — the scent of rosewood, the naked defiance in a victim's eyes.

Name one of your character's previous living Touchstones as her faded Touchstone. This one isn't assigned to any specific Humanity level, so write it on the opposite side of your character's Humanity track. The intense memory serves as a bulwark against detachment, so thoroughly ingrained that your character can only lose this Touchstone if she drops to Humanity 0. Once per story, you can call out something that reminds your character of her faded Touchstone, granting her a brief moment of stability and clarity. Her next detachment roll receives two bonus dice in addition to the bonus from attached Touchstones.

### *Anachronisms*

People cling to things that remind them of times gone by. Elder vampires do the same, but when they wax nostalgic it's because they *need* to. Old, familiar rituals allow an elder to reassert himself in the face of a swiftly-turning world, and help him remember that a time existed before the Curse. One ancient refuses to dress in anything but the high fashion he wore as a young gentleman in Venice during the Renaissance. His juniors think he's a relic, but to him, the clothes are a symbol of his true identity. Another writes letters to his lover on handmade hanji, and keeps them in a cedar chest at the foot of his bed. His lover has been dead for a thousand years, but writing to her as though she weren't keeps him grounded.

These reassuring behaviors are Anachronisms, and they're sources of strength and stability for the elders who practice them. Once per chapter, an elder character may regain a point of Willpower by performing her Anachronism. It always involves familiar, ritualized behavior, and takes anywhere from a few minutes to an hour or more — for instance, donning an elaborate suit of clothes, eating a specific breakfast with a friend, or performing calculations on an abacus. If the character gets distracted, rushed, or interrupted, the experience is more stressful than rewarding, and she loses the Willpower.

Choose one Anachronism for your character based on the period, culture, and lifestyle in which she was Embraced.

### *Disciplines and Devotions*

Elders devote a great deal of time to cultivating their fell prowess, and possess correspondingly powerful abilities. When assigning dots to your character's Disciplines, think about her ongoing role in the Danse Macabre, and what other Kindred think of when they think of her. How does she protect herself? How does she exert authority over others? An elder who made a name for herself as an unstoppable killer probably has a high rating in Vigor, while an infamous bogeyman has undoubtedly mastered Obfuscate.

Elders often cultivate a broad foundation of Disciplines, seeking out teachers from other clans. These attachments are part of an elder's social network, sources of long-standing

partnerships and mutual arrangements. Similarly, elders may pick up knowledge and rituals from multiple covenants. A character belongs to the Carthian Movement now, but three hundred years ago, she was a die-hard Dragon, and she still remembers the Coils she learned as part of her old obsessions. Did your character follow a similar course?

With Storyteller permission, you can use your third Discipline dot at character creation to start with access to Crúac, Theban Sorcery, or the Mysteries of the Dragon without any current Status in the appropriate covenant. Of course, while the covenants are loath to cross a powerful elder, they don't look kindly on Kindred who take secrets along with their leave. Ancients who carry a covenant's knowledge with them when they burn bridges should take care to watch their backs when they lie down for the long sleep and wake less potent. By doing this, you're reinforcing to the Storyteller that you want your character's story complicated by vendettas over stolen secrets, and you can mine these relationships for specific Aspirations as well.

An elder character may begin play with one free Devotion, as long as it has five or fewer total dots of prerequisite Disciplines and the character meets all the prerequisites after step seven: Spending Experiences. See Chapter 3 for new elder-appropriate Devotions.

### *Blood Potency*

Due to the nature of torpor, age isn't synonymous with Blood Potency. Elder vampires grow in power over the course of decades, only to weaken again when they slip into torpor for years. Thus, a venerable ancient might be only marginally more powerful than the average neonate, even if she doesn't stay that way for long. High Blood Potency is a double-edged sword, and some elders choose torpor deliberately to return to the good old nights when they could feed from mortals and keep a low profile.

Nevertheless, the monstrous matriarch brimming with devastating power is the stereotype for a reason, and at some point in every elder's Requiem she pulses with unnatural might. Blood Potency higher than five forces a vampire to see other Kindred as prey, turning nightly intrigues into existential crises. Neonates are about as impressive to her as walking, talking snacks. In her areas of expertise, she is unimaginably superior, performing impossible feats as easily as other vampires outclass the kine. Her appetite is nigh-insatiable, as her capacity for Vitae grows to hellish proportions. She can play fast and loose with pouring blood into rituals and Devotions, opening the floodgates to crush whoever is unfortunate enough to stand in her path. Keeping up with the Masquerade like this is a bitch, but it's getting tougher to care with every year that passes. Of course, *other* people care, so it's a good thing she's badass enough to take on all comers. All it takes to maintain this ghastly dominance is a little cannibalism. Okay, a *lot* of cannibalism. But you should see her dance.

By default, elder characters begin with Blood Potency 5; you can spend Experiences in step seven to boost it higher. Players who would rather start with lower Blood Potency can, reflecting time their characters spent in torpor. If the troupe agrees, players can instead let the dice decide for them how their



coterie's potency roulette played out and spin events from there; roll a die and cut the result in half, rounding up.

Keep in mind that Blood Potency determines your character's maximum ratings for Attributes and Skills, so if you want to reflect areas of superhuman prowess when you spend your Experiences, you need enough Blood Potency to accommodate them.

### *Step Five: Merits*

The Merits in the **Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition** are as valuable to elders as they are to neonates. Merits such as Haven, Herd, Feeding Grounds, and Followers represent resources that a character can depend on even if he falls into torpor and has to pick up the pieces when he wakes up again. These resources double as signs of status in the Kindred community. If an elder claims a patch of nightclubs as his own exclusive feeding ground, he reserves the right to punish anyone who tries to poach from him.

You can find new elder-appropriate Merits throughout this book.

### *Step Six: Determine Advantages*

Elder vampires determine advantages the same way others do, with one major exception.

#### *Humanity*

A neonate is isolated from humanity by virtue of what she is, but the world she lived in is still there. Her mortal friends and family are still alive. She can walk the streets and find all the places she used to go. Maybe she even still works the same job. As the years tick by, these things drop away, and as they do, it gets harder and harder to care. The Beast's face comes into clearer focus in her internal mirror with each passing century. For a young vampire, retaining Humanity is like balancing on an I-beam. For an elder, it's like balancing on a wire.

Don't use the rules for starting Humanity in the **Vampire** core rulebook. Instead, think on your character's experiences, and answer the following yes-or-no questions:

- Does she have a close personal relationship with a living mortal?
- Does she still interact with kine outside of her personal sphere of influence on a regular basis?
- Does she remain up-to-date with the culture and active in the society of the humans around her?

Your character starts off with a base Humanity score of 3, with an additional dot for every question you answered "yes" to. It's usually a good idea to invest in a Merit or two to reflect these answers, as they'll help your character preserve what Humanity she's managed to cling to thus far.

### *Step Seven: Spending Experiences*

Walk the young vampire you've made through her terrible transformation into an elder. Decide first how long she's been kicking. Your troupe should reach a consensus about a rough age group for the characters. Consult the chart below to see how many Experiences you have to spend based on that age group. The ages listed are approximate and Storytellers should feel free to adjust based on the kinds of elder stories they plan to explore; the exact number of years doesn't matter as much as the relative influence and power the characters wield compared to everyone around them.

Rank	Bonus Experiences
Rank elder (200-500 years)	25
Mover and shaker (500-800 years)	35
Urban legend (800-1,000 years)	50
Methuselah (1,000+ years)	100

If you know exactly what you want out of all these Experiences up front, feel free to spend them on whatever you like. If, on the other hand, the sheer breadth of options is overwhelming, you can break it up into manageable portions of your character's history with traits associated with each one.

First, this is a good opportunity to embark on Spinning the Web (p. 87) with your troupe. Each node of the Web represents a milestone in your character's story; spend Experiences to purchase a few traits that she gained during or after each. You could also hold onto some of your starting Experiences, spending them in similar milestone fashion whenever you play through a flashback scene, such as those found in Chapter 2.

You can also choose one or several of the following generic arcs to plug in to your character's timeline, in any order, and gain all the arc's traits in one easy block. These arcs represent spans roughly equivalent to a human lifetime, during which your vampire took a break from constant active participation in the All Night Society's affairs to pursue her own interests. You can select most arcs more than once to represent multiple instances or more invested time, stacking the traits until you reach your maximum in each. Decide on the story details up front or leave them open so you can explore them in flashbacks later. Some arcs may take place in a period when certain Skills didn't exist, like Computer; see p. 69 for more on how to deal with archaic Skills. You can intersperse these arcs with the events in the Web you've Spun to form a cohesive picture of the group's collective history.

When you select an arc and spend the requisite Experiences, you gain everything listed except Specialties; the Specialties here are simply suggestions to add to what's in the **Vampire** core rulebook. Instead, choose any two Specialties, or one as an Interdisciplinary Specialty.



## THE ARCHAEOLOGIST (36 EXPERIENCES)

You traveled far and wide seeking an understanding of human history. You studied every culture, learned every language, surveyed every ruin you could find, and visited every major metropolis on Earth. Knowing you might survive to see the rise and fall of whole civilizations, societal evolution fascinated you. By learning about humanity's distant past, you put your own long history into a larger context. Did it help you cope with your longevity, or just make you feel small?

**Attributes:** Intelligence +1, Stamina +1, Wits +2  
**Skills:** Academics +1, Investigation +2, Survival +2  
**Specialties:** (Particular Region/Culture/Period), Daylight Sheltering, Excavation, Human History, Kindred History, Linguistics  
**Merits:** Civilization Stalker (p. 83), Contacts, Multilingual, Trained Observer •, Unnatural Affinity +•

## THE ARCHITECT (34 EXPERIENCES)

You put down roots and built something from the ground up — a brood of childer with a massive estate, a city, a corporation, an amusement park, an elaborate tomb — the sky's the limit. You invested all your time, energy, and resources into this single massive project, and it paid off in spades. It flourished and you spent decades perfecting and expanding it. Whether it went on without you or you still pay the bills and stalk the halls, you made your indelible mark on civilization.

**Attributes:** Composure +1, Manipulation +1, Resolve +2  
**Skills:** Crafts +1, Politics +2, Socialize +1  
**Specialties:** Carpentry, Diplomacy, Stonework, Urban Planning  
**Merits:** Allies +•, Alternate Identity +•, City Status +•, Feeding Grounds +•, Haven +•, Mentor in Immortality +• (p. 83), Resources +•, Safe Place +•

## THE ARTIST (33 EXPERIENCES)

You dedicated yourself fully to your craft, a prolific creative genius with more worldly experience than any mortal artist could bring to bear. You cultivated your own unique style and set trends for centuries to come, looking forward to the night you would be a beloved household name, just like Shakespeare or

Picasso or Mozart. Now the world calls your works “classics” and students everywhere study them. Do you see your masterpiece in a museum and smile, or does the strangeness of it all haunt you?

**Attributes:** Resolve +2, Wits +2  
**Skills:** Empathy +1, Expression +2, Persuasion +1, Streetwise +1  
**Specialties:** Nightmare, Painting, Sculpture, Underground Movements, Writing  
**Merits:** Cacophony Savvy +•, City Status +•, Distinguished Palate, Fame +••

## THE ATHLETE (36 EXPERIENCES)

Unlike the kine, who deteriorate like rotting fruit as they age until they wither and die, your body only becomes more capable and your victories more complete. You honed your A-game until it was flawless. You were unbeatable at everything you tried: boxing, fencing, gymnastics, football, skateboarding, all of it. You won gold medals and trophies until you couldn't keep the charade up anymore and had to gracefully bow out. Do you still compete in underground arenas and third-string leagues, or have you sated your competitive Beast for now?

**Attributes:** Dexterity +1, Resolve +1, Stamina +1, Strength +1  
**Skills:** Athletics +2, Brawl +1, Expression +1, Intimidation +1, Weaponry +1  
**Specialties:** Duels, Running  
**Merits:** Alternate Identity +•, Fame +•, Fleet of Foot +•, Kindred Dueling +••, Parkour +•

## THE BRUTE (36 EXPERIENCES)

You eschewed human civilization to explore the wilderness, preying upon nature's predators and meditating on your endless existence without all the distractions of the nightly grind to get in the way. You didn't see any other people or Kindred for years at a time. You learned to tough it out, sipping animal blood and scrambling for shelter from daylight where no human structures stood, until you could no longer sustain yourself and the silence grew unbearable.

**Attributes:** Composure +1, Stamina +1, Strength +2  
**Skills:** Animal Ken +1, Athletics +1, Brawl +2, Stealth +1, Survival +2  
**Specialties:** Daylight Sheltering, Hiding, Wild Animals  
**Merits:** Acute Senses, Bloodhound, Fleet of Foot +•



## THE CONSPIRATOR (36 EXPERIENCES)

Mortal affairs? Yawn. Clinging to humanity was for the weak, as far as you were concerned, so you didn't. It was all Kindred intrigue all the time, and you became the virtuoso of double- and triple-crossing other vampires without leaving your fingerprints on any of it. You topped every Who's Who list in the All Night Society and went to all the best parties. In the end, did it all come crashing down around your ears, or did you slip out quietly one night when no one was looking?

**Attributes:** Composure +1, Manipulation +2

**Skills:** Occult +1, Politics +1, Socialize +2, Streetwise +1, Subterfuge +2

**Specialties:** Auspex, Dominate, Elysium, Fitting In, Infiltration, Long Cons, Vampiric Banes

**Merits:** Cacophony Savvy +••, City Status +•, Clan Status +•, Covenant Status +•, Etiquette +•••

## THE ENTERTAINER (36 EXPERIENCES)

You indulged in all your rock star fantasies, preening and showing off for adoring crowds, while claiming it was just stage makeup and a great workout regimen that kept you looking young for decades. You toured the world, made a hundred movies and a zillion bucks, and then faked your own spectacular celebrity death that made every tabloid. Do you pretend it was someone else, or do you still play the dive bar down the street as your own impersonator every Friday night?

**Attributes:** Dexterity +1, Presence +2

**Skills:** Drive +1, Empathy +1, Expression +2, Persuasion +1, Streetwise +1

**Specialties:** Dominate, Nightclubs, Nightmare, Publicity Stunts, Stand-Up Comedy

**Merits:** Barfly, Cacophony Savvy +•, City Status +•, Fame +•, Herd +••, Resources +•, Retainer +•, Staff +•

## THE ENTREPRENEUR (36 EXPERIENCES)

Your wheeling and dealing were legendary when you were at the top of your game. You started your own wildly successful business, or served as CEO of a huge corporation for decades. You peddled handmade wares across the world, or invented fresh new ways for humanity to empty its pockets into yours. You influenced the economies of empires, manipulating stock markets from behind

the scenes, or Dominating all the tax collectors in the land. Did you hoard all your earnings to set yourself up for a cushy eternity, or invest it in other projects once you tired of your capitalist games?

**Attributes:** Composure +1, Intelligence +1, Manipulation +1, Wits +1

**Skills:** Academics +1, Intimidation +1, Persuasion +1, Politics +1, Subterfuge +1

**Specialties:** Blackmail, Dominate, Economics, Long Cons, Negotiation

**Merits:** Covenant Status +•, Dynasty Membership +•, Haven +•, Herd +•, Resources +•, Retainer +•, Safe Place +•, Status (any) +•

## THE PARASITE (36 EXPERIENCES)

"Leech," some called you, and "parasite." They were right, of course. You needed to prey on humanity to survive. So why not go all the way? You came to view mortal society as a banquet laid out before you, ripe for the plundering. You took anything you wanted, followed no rules but your own, and laughed all the way to the bank. Has your cavalier attitude changed, bringing you remorse and a renewed sense that kine are people too, or do you fondly remember the nights when you took full advantage of the Masquerade?

**Attributes:** Composure +1, Dexterity +1, Manipulation +1, Wits +1

**Skills:** Computer +1, Firearms +1, Larceny +1, Stealth +1, Streetwise +1, Subterfuge +1

**Specialties:** Dominate, Long Cons, Moving Quietly

**Merits:** Acute Senses, Anonymity +•, Around the Block (p. 83), Fast Talking +•, Feeding Grounds +•

## THE PUPPETMASTER (34 EXPERIENCES)

What good was it to persist for lifetime after lifetime, watching humanity make the same stupid mistakes over and over again, if you didn't intervene? You knew what was best for them, and you dedicated yourself to forcing it down their throats even if they didn't want it. Mortal institutions of all kinds, from universities and religions to kingdoms and crime syndicates, danced to your tune. A whisper in the right ear here, a timely demise there, and you had history in the palm of your hand. Is your influence still coursing through the institution's veins tonight, or did you drive it into the ground and bury it long ago?





**Attributes:** Intelligence +1, Manipulation +1, Presence +1

**Skills:** Persuasion +1, Politics +1, Socialize +1

**Specialties:** Academia, Religious Politics, Riots, Subversive Tactics

**Merits:** Civilization Stalker (p. 83), Etiquette +•, Fast Talking +•, Herd +••, Inspiring, Mystery Cult Initiation +•, Practiced Puppeteer (p. 84)

## THE SCHOLAR (35 EXPERIENCES)

With all the time in the world, what better pastime than to learn everything there was to know? Knowledge is power, but really, you were just in it to sate your boundless curiosity. You've explored every major library and archive in the world, earned multiple doctorates, and delved into the deepest, darkest secrets of the occult. Did you stop because you finally learned something you wished you hadn't, or does the siren song of the unknown still call to you?

**Attributes:** Intelligence +2, Resolve +1

**Skills:** Academics +1, Computer +1, Expression +1, Occult +2, Science +1

**Specialties:** Auspex, Bloodlines, Dhampir, Divination, Urban Legends, Writing

**Merits:** Area of Expertise, Around the Block (p. 83), Covenant Status +••, Library +••, Mentor +•, Multilingual, Unnatural Affinity +•

## THE SHEPHERD (36 EXPERIENCES)

As you grew older and, you assumed, wiser, you took humanity on as your personal charge. You became a caretaker of the kine, keeping them safe and happy — blissfully ignorant — in fact. You only ever did what was best for them, even if that meant a little tough love now and then. Subjugation worked wonders, too. Did you retain your suffocating love of humans, or did you eventually resent their ungrateful terror whenever you let the Mask slip a little?

**Attributes:** Composure +1, Presence +2, Strength +1

**Skills:** Brawl +1, Empathy +1, Medicine +1, Persuasion +1, Subterfuge +1

**Specialties:** Auspex, Dominate, the Masquerade, Nightmare

**Merits:** Bloodhound, Herd +•, Practiced Puppeteer (p. 84), Status (any mortal) +•, Touchstone +•



## THE SOLDIER (36 EXPERIENCES)

You watched the face of war change drastically over the course of human history, as technology gave people increasingly efficient ways to murder each other. Weapons and causes evolved, but as far as you were concerned, it was always the same. Spilling blood was spilling blood, and you loved being there to lap it up. Whether you charged in on the front lines or led troops from behind the scenes, you took a grim satisfaction in the widespread carnage. They were just kine, after all.

**Attributes:** Composure +1, Dexterity +1, Stamina +1, Wits +1

**Skills:** Drive +1, Firearms +1, Intimidation +1, Medicine +1, Weaponry +1

**Specialties:** (Specific Wars), Battlefield Tactics, Fighting Outnumbered, Nightmare, Piloting

**Merits:** Mentor + •, Practiced Puppeteer (p. 84), Status (military) + •, Trained Observer • • •

## THE TRAITOR (36 EXPERIENCES)

You went through a self-loathing phase just like any other ancient dead thing, but you snapped and did something about it. You obsessed over killing any supernatural creature you could get your hands on — Kindred, werewolves, witches — didn't matter. You and everything like you was a cancer upon the Earth, and you were determined to cure it. What eternal rivalries and vendettas did you spawn during your slaughter spree? Do you regret it or was it all worth it?

**Attributes:** Dexterity +1, Strength +2, Wits +1

**Skills:** Athletics +1, Brawl +2, Firearms +1, Weaponry +2

**Specialties:** (Particular Types of Supernatural Creatures), Auspex, Finding Weaknesses, Wooden Stakes

**Merits:** Anonymity + •, Bloodhound, Parkour + •, Unnatural Affinity + • •

## Portrait of an Elder: Clans

If the atrocities she perpetuates nightly once shocked or horrified her, it's too late for that now. Any existential terror she used to feel about what she is exists buried under a host of rationalizations and defenses. The kine respond as they always have: they submit, they succumb, they run, and they die. No vampire who's survived this long can afford to take long, hard looks at her place among humans anymore. She is what she is, they are what they are, and the Danse twirls on. Only in those few private moments, when the hypnotic sound of the ocean waves reminds her suddenly of the last time she felt sun-kissed, or the breathless whisper of a lover who thinks his love for her is real sounds like the first oath she ever broke, does she let herself regret and mourn the death of her better self. Her human self. The rest of the time, it's all blood and games, the familiar refrain that keeps her going. The tune of that refrain comes from her clan lineage.

### Elder Clan Banes

A vampire is ever more herself as time goes by. The Blood calls more strongly and the Curse deepens. Each clan's bane intensifies and gains new dimensions for elder characters who reach three dots of Humanity. Regaining the fourth dot doesn't reverse this transformation.

### Daeva

Smile. Lie. Cheat. Own. You're a paragon of greed and hypocrisy, of naked desire parading as a person. You're insincere because you don't

know how to be anything else. And despite all that — or perhaps because of it — they love you. They worship you and cry out for more abuse at your hands. It doesn't matter what you say, what you do. You commit outrageous crimes in their name, you profess your hatred for them, you mock and belittle them — they don't care. You're a spectacle, and nothing is as addictive to the kine. Their unspoken need for someone just like you to show them that their worst urges are okay makes them come back to you again and again. You've been at this so long you've forgotten what real relationships are like. But, who cares about that? Bring in the next mindless crowd to please.

Elders of other clans tread carefully around their Daeva Kindred, wary of the ease with which they command the heart. Most ancient vampires closed their hearts off long ago, tired of the endless cycles of betrayal, longing, and loss. They can't imagine doing it the Daeva way: staying vulnerable century after century, laying bare all the hurt and shame, the love and lust, over and over. Elder Daeva are the most likely to continue engaging in perversion with other vampires, never having learned their lesson.

Elder Serpents don't need to bother with direct seduction anymore. The thousand-year-old Daeva can sit back and let the food come to him. The hunter becomes the hunted, but the pursued is still the predator. This effortless attraction turns the elder into an absurd study in self-absorption to the point of complete solipsism. People are just little bundles of reactions and buttons to press. He orchestrates everything he does to provoke the biggest, most extreme reaction, and he's been doing it for so long it's second nature, giving elder Daeva a reputation for being bombastic drama queens even when they barely give a damn about what's happening.



The master of Majesty always seems into you, but he's heard that pickup line literally a thousand times. When he takes you up on it, he appears attentive but his mind is on anything but you. Even when he's addicted to you, it has nothing to do with who you are, or what you can offer, and everything to do with what's in your veins.

### *Coping with Change*

Daeva are social predators. Successfully blending in with the herd can mean the difference between a successful feeding and a miserable night. Their obsessive nature is a mixed blessing — they exist from desire to desire — and it's easier to adapt when they're not too hung up on the past or worried in abstract terms about the future. But, some elder Serpents are in this "eternity" business more for that wild ride than for the hunt itself, and time moves too slowly for their tastes. They're going to see the future, and hell if they won't have the time of their unives doing it. Choosing the right perfume, dropping the right words into the right ear, it's all so insignificant. Bring on the next decade already! Some Daeva deliberately only stay active a few years at a time, growing bored easily and dropping into torpor to "fast-forward" to the next big change.

Other elder Daeva obsess over the wrong things, too focused on the way they've always played the game and struggling to see modern society as anything other than a passing fad. To them, ever-changing culture is like a rushing river, and worrying about trends, fashion, mannerisms, dialects, and etiquette is as pointless as worrying about the fate of a few water droplets. The details change, but human nature never does. At best, they come across as quirky and retro; at worst they seem mired in constant mid-life crisis mode, relying on their Disciplines and habits to get by in a world that leaves them behind more rapidly all the time.

On the other hand, many Daeva purposefully cling to old-fashioned habits from eras they remember fondly to draw attention to themselves. Few humans nowadays take the time to write letters at all, much less do it in stunning calligraphy, so the vampire who sends his chosen pet an exquisite hand-penned missive in a parchment envelope sealed with wax quickly earns a reputation. Such foibles lend him an air of mystique, which has been a reliable way to draw in new prey since the earliest Kindred walked among the kine.

The most attentive elder Serpents go overboard in their desperation to keep up. They express themselves through modern technology, using current trends and gadgets to exclaim to the world just how chic they are. This Daeva always sports the latest iPhone, the sleekest car, and a posh penthouse apartment decked out with touch screens and networked smart appliances, all protected by top-notch security systems. He wears only the current season's fashions and overhauls his wardrobe every few weeks. He's the talk of the town, and he likes it that way.

### *The Captivating Curse*

In elder Daeva, the Wanton Curse becomes the Captivating Curse. On top of the effects the vampire suffers when he drinks

from mortals, he becomes unable to resist the charms of his fellow Kindred either. He is no longer immune to other blood bonds after he reaches the third stage with one regnant. High Blood Potency Daeva who can only sustain themselves on Vitae end up entangled in ridiculous webs of jealous immortal lovers.

### *Gangrel*

*They say your obsession with survival at all costs has defeated the purpose of immortality, dulled its luster. They claim you've forgotten what it means to be Kindred. They look down their noses when you finally deign to show up to Elysium. They expect you to feel ashamed, but they can go fuck themselves. You say what you want regardless of whose delicate sensibilities you might trample. So what if it's been so long since you felt civilized that you don't remember what's so great about civilization anyway? Not like it matters. Not like it changes what you are, and painting it with a veneer of humanity just makes them less honest than you. You've spent centuries being true to yourself. That's worth more than all the pretty words in the world.*

Little can shake up an elder Gangrel's self-image. She commands great respect from her peers not just because she's unkillable and vicious, but because so many of her brethren wish they could be so laissez-faire and arrogant. Most elder vampires consider immortality a curse at some point in their unives, or at least question why they exist and what they should do with themselves for the next millennium. Ancient Gangrel rarely struggle with such doubts, making peace with endless night as they made peace with the Beast: by embracing it fully and never looking back. They question whether "unnatural" is a word that should apply to them.

The raw hunt is so much a part of a Gangrel elder that people — and vampires — are no more complicated or important individually than clay pigeons on a shooting range. She's the apex predator among predators. She's been running with the Beast for centuries, and doesn't care to remember what her life was like before her copilot joined her. Violence and intimidation are second nature; she's used to being the biggest, meanest thing on her turf. On the few occasions when she isn't, she deals with it poorly, lashing out or going to ground without a plan or any concern for how her behavior affects others. Unfortunately, the nature of the Beast is to decay when starved, and torpor is unkind. No Gangrel who survives to become an elder has truly succumbed to mindless instinct, though, and these supreme hunters can learn to swallow their pride until they regain the edge.

The master of Protean sheds notions like "limitations" and "obstacles" after centuries of being whatever she wants and going wherever she pleases at any time. She hasn't wanted for anything in ages. She has shelter, weapons, armor, mobility, and disguises all right there within herself. She's a paragon of self-sufficiency and forgets how to ask for help or appreciate it when it's given.

### *Coping with Change*

Of all elder Kindred, the Savages worry the least about shifting tides of societal change. Most of their interactions with



human culture are the kind to leave people in pieces, and even sociable Gangrel don't sweat niceties and trends. Nevertheless, the need to stay grounded is a constant across all the clans, and wise ancients recognize the need to cultivate Touchstones if nothing else. They can't afford to ignore humanity's progress, even when they'd like nothing better.

Gangrel adapt to their circumstances all the time, and once they get their bearings, they usually keep up well enough to get by without much trouble. Who cares if they come across as old-fashioned or primitive? But, reliance on their natural adaptability can make them overconfident, especially in modern times when technology-driven change is so rapid it can overwhelm the instinctive transformations they perform so well. An elder expecting to ride out a new century on the strength of her ability to run with wolves and raid towns is in for a rude awakening when she finds a massive concrete paeon to urbanization where her forest once stood. Underestimating how far communications technology has come can turn a routine hunt into a serious Masquerade breach in minutes.

Some Gangrel elders view the natural world as their true origin, dismissing the kine as merely the vehicle for their metamorphosis into a purer kind of dominant species. These ancients take great offense at the horrors humanity visits upon its home planet and take it upon themselves to enact bloody vengeance on behalf of extinct species they remember from their early nights and vampires who perished when they lost their daylight shelters to deforestation and erosion.

Those elder Savages who keep up with the times just fine are the metaphorical sharks in the water, whose ageless jaws snap shut on ailing businesses and pick off the victims of urban decay effortlessly. They've seen all the lifecycles before — politics, economics, religion — and know exactly which movements to devour before they grow too large, and how to keep mortals at each other's throats to foster the fear and isolation that make them easy pickings for Kindred.

### *The Visceral Curse*

No clan plays faster or looser with the Beast than the Gangrel, and as they age, their Feral Curse becomes the Visceral Curse. In addition to her usual susceptibility to frenzy, an elder Gangrel no longer suffers the Bestial, Wanton, and Competitive Conditions only once per month. Every time her Beast would rise to seethe just below the surface, her humanity shifts aside to let it.

### *Mekhet*

*Know and never be known. See and never be seen. For so long you've watched and learned, and the burden you bear is the sins of everyone who's lived and died and risen again in your time, millennia of reinventing vice. You couldn't let them crush you, so you forged them into blades. You dig up dirt on people and then make them your enemies just to have an excuse to use what you know. You fling it back into their faces to draw attention away from your own dirt, a grime that grows thicker*

*and blacker with each passing century. They should have pinned your sins on you back when they had a slim hope of success. Now that you've come this far, they'll never have the chance again.*

While the other clans are busy spiraling into solipsism and self-aggrandizement as they age, the Mekhet struggle against the opposite. Spending night after night as a silent, all-seeing observer wears away at a vampire's sense of identity and urge to interact with others. If he vanished for real, would anyone notice? Would anyone care? Wouldn't it be so much easier to let go and linger only as a complete absence of thought and emotion, an empty vessel he could fill with the dreams of the living? What would happen if he hid every part of himself until the only thing left was the negative space where he used to be?

To elder Mekhet, it's a sweet temptation, but most recognize it as a trap. Wading neck-deep in mystery and occultation makes it even more important for them to keep one foot in the world of sensation and sound. They cling tightly to their Touchstones, and establish themselves firmly in the intrigues of the All Night Society. The more Kindred with which they surround themselves, the more might notice if they dig too deeply and suddenly stop turning up to Elysium.

The master of Auspex falls easily into roles like lorekeeper and spymaster for any group he associates with. He's been dealing in secrets for so long that everyone acknowledges him as an authority on every subject and every player, regardless of what he actually knows. It's convenient for his reputation but less convenient for subtly seeking mentors or new leads. Then again, the ease with which he can pry into the business of his fellow Kindred makes them fearful, leading some to work to appease him proactively. He can leverage his networks for information without resorting to blackmail or threats better to head him off at the pass, they think, than to risk him digging up the really good stuff. Of course, he's going to find it anyway. It's just a matter of how.

### *Coping with Change*

Of all the clans, the Shadows have the easiest time keeping up with the speeding bullet train of human progress. As sponges for news and keen observers, they're the first to pick up on slow shifts in public opinion, new inventions that will revolutionize the world in a few decades, and early warning signs for impending wars and societal collapses. They're uniquely suited not only to predict and witness change, but even to meddle in it and guide its direction from behind the curtain.

The elders who have trouble are those who let centuries of observations build up into a tidal wave that overwhelms them. If they don't let go of some of what they used to know to make room for new ideas, they crumple under the full weight of history, all of which lays itself open to them like a never-ending avalanche. Some turn to torpor for escape and let their nightmares sort it all out, while others succumb to involuntary memory loss and other coping mechanisms. Mekhet elders are the most likely to suffer pangs of existential horror and feel unmoored in time's eternal current.



Ancient Shadows see more similarities between old-fashioned means of communication and those of the Information Age than other vampires do. They recognize the same underlying patterns and understand why human nature responds the way it does to developments that seem new and unprecedented to younger Kindred. Modern internet culture is as much a culmination of many disparate pasts as it is the wave of the future; easy for an elder to decipher according to all the old philosophies and customs he remembers. The Mekhet who uses the web to his advantage finds countless new ways to hide in plain sight among the anonymous herd, the perfect maw for devouring the millions and millions of data streams falling right into his lap.

### *The Primeval Curse*

Elder Mekhet survive to see their Tenebrous Curse become the Primeval Curse. Harkening back to their hazy origins in the shadows of the dead, any bane a Mekhet suffers can be used to ward a location against him or bind him in place, as though he were an ephemeral being. This includes fire and sunlight.

### *Nosferatu*

*Boo! You hiss and they run. You creep out of the underbrush and they shudder. Maybe you were sad about it once, but to keep your sanity you buried your self-pity after a hundred years of wrestling with it. Surviving this long was how you learned to stop worrying and love their screams. Everything you do carries inherent shock value, and you get off on it. You delight in watching them scramble all over themselves to make you disappear, knowing you're eternal and you never will. You used to wish you were different, but you got over it; after all this time, you are spite personified and you wield that spite like a club against all the insignificant little pricks who dare to pretend the night doesn't crawl with things like you.*

Young Nosferatu are one giant step removed from humanity, and it only goes downhill from there. As a Haunt's Blood thickens, she becomes increasingly unsettling, which often translates to more withdrawn. Even other Kindred avoid her now, though for different reasons; elder Nosferatu are notorious for turning their backs on humanity entirely. Kindred tell horror stories about creatures that used to be like them, and more often than not, the monster was allegedly some lonely or misanthropic Nosferatu.

Some elder Haunts live up to the tales spectacularly. They eke out their vindictive existences on the edges of Kindred society, little more than urban legends to their own kind. Such a vampire might focus on a solitary pursuit for centuries, like refining her mastery of the Blood and its powers, amassing a collection of rare tomes and priceless artifacts, or perfecting some terrible *magnum opus* she'll reveal one night to her covenant. Even an ancient hermit doesn't completely escape the Danse Macabre, though. It's practical to make sure a few key people know she's out there, and to reach an understanding that she won't make trouble for them if they don't make trouble for her. Elders who

don't bother find themselves in constant competition with the domain's ancillae for feeding grounds and resources, and *they* all have friends.

On the other side of the coin, many elder Nosferatu are much more well-connected than their juniors would ever expect. They all started out doing dirty work for Kindred higher on the social ladder, and leveraged their talents and loyalty into connections of their own as their peers and rivals succumbed to Final Death one-by-one through the years. Though an ancient Haunt might have fewer allies than her counterparts of other clans, those bonds tend to be stronger and better-tested.

The master of Nightmare is a singularly dignified figure who tolerates the ridicule and revulsion of others with equanimity because she knows that at the smallest word from her, they'll show their true colors. Cowards, all of them. Broken, pathetic piles of useless flesh. All their beauty and charisma affords them nothing when they're face-down in a gutter begging for their lives. She's seen the terrified child that hides beneath every facade, and she knows she's the only one who's destroyed her child forever.

### *Coping with Change*

When they awaken from long bouts of torpor, Nosferatu take time to acclimate themselves, watching from a distance. A more sociable Haunt chooses promising mortals to pull aside, questioning them about the modern era. She might simply devour them afterward, but she might keep them as errand-boys and ghouls to help her adjust and bring her things she needs. A Nosferatu making the transition to a new time can use her natural talent for stealth: stealing electronics, books, and other useful items that characterize these new nights. A gracious elder returns the items afterward, giving their owner no further incentive to track down the thief. To elders who've all but given up hope of interacting peacefully with mortals, this method offers a window into modern culture: one they can open and close at their leisure.

Cultural change isn't the only problem for an ancient Nosferatu. She's used to being the creature that haunts the tower, or the sewers, or the docks; her lair is part of her identity, a home that comforts her when the years grow tiresome. But, mortal developers have their own plans for old, abandoned plots of land. She wages a one-Kindred war of fear and blood to save a beloved sanctuary from becoming a shopping mall. A Haunt might awaken from torpor only *after* a roaring excavator upturns her cherished resting place, leaving her scrambling for shelter. To find a new hunting ground she must navigate an unfamiliar era filled with kine, younger vampires with their own agendas, and even stranger beings. Success is far from assured, especially if the Nosferatu was a relative unknown in local circles before she went to sleep.

The rise of modern technology has been a boon to those elder Nosferatu who've adopted it. Social media, internet forums, and mobile devices offer ways to find and connect with mortals beyond any means the solitary Haunts had before. Though it's



hard to cultivate Touchstones through text, the faceless medium allows a Nosferatu to get to know new people in an environment where her unsettling presence and unpleasant appearance matter less. She earns a chance to establish emotional bonds with someone before putting those bonds to the test in person, granting her a measure of hope she hasn't felt since she was a naive neonate. The internet also allows Nosferatu who lost touch long ago to rekindle ties across great distances and from isolated lairs, sharing stories and information.

### *The Desolate Curse*

In an elder Nosferatu, the Lonely Curse becomes the Desolate Curse. On top of her unsettling presence, whenever she risks detachment outside the presence of one of her Touchstones, the weight of her long years of solitude comes crashing down upon her. She takes a -2 penalty to such rolls, which stacks with any other applicable penalties.

### *Ventrue*

*Let them rail against you. What good will it do them? They are small, a mayfly insignificance crashing like rowboats against the cliffs of your undying supremacy. Make of them the villains of your piece, those who gnash their teeth in impotent envy for what you have – what you have always had – because you deserve it and they don't. You've been around for longer than their entire sad little movement. If you weren't meant to stay on top, surely someone would have struck you down long before now. Your truth is **the** truth because you have won and they have lost; such is the pliant nature of truth. You are the period at the end of the story. And since you're immortal, no sequel is forthcoming.*

The stereotypical Ventrue elder is a creature out of time, a relic from the age of absolute monarchs and divine authority. Completely detached from modern society, he acts as though the rest of the world is cruder for having changed while his back was turned. He has good Blood and a proper lineage, and God help you if you forget it. He was a prince or potentate before his Embrace, giving him an extra helping of arrogance and entitlement. He would be comically irrelevant if he didn't insist on keeping his fingers in all modern Kindred society's pies, where his power remains a serious threat.

The picture this stereotype paints isn't a false one; ancients like this certainly walk the night. Many Ventrue do select childer from the world's nobility, considering them more worthy, or better able to adapt to the viper's nest of the Danse Macabre. But, many elder Ventrue were farmers, craftspeople, or warriors before the Embrace; their sires valued strength of will, and recognized that cleaving to mortal standards of nobility was foolishly narrow-minded. These venerable vampires are made of pure steel. In life, they learned to work hard and endure; after death, they were rewarded with power and authority beyond their wildest mortal dreams, and the rest of their unives are marked by the overweening pride of the self-righteous.

Regardless of their origins, elder Ventrue all share one thing: they always get their way. They're implacable, impressive, and

irrefutable. Ventrue are prone to detachment, and with an enormous gap of years between them and their lost mortality, they easily fall prey to extravagant narcissism and a stark refusal to keep up with human progress. They're no longer capable of comprehending the idea that kine would fail to recognize their authority, much less defy them outright.

As an ancient Lord's power and influence grow, so too does his hubris. Some slip into self-serving delusions, convinced beyond reason or evidence that the rest of the world has no lasting effect on him, or that the continued existence of the Kindred is somehow contingent upon his own. Since these Ventrue have already spent centuries watching the night revolve around their whims, it doesn't take much to send them down this self-destructive rabbit hole. Those who recover take extra care to guard their Touchstones, to shield against a repeat performance. Those who don't recover have servants who protect their Touchstones for them, because they may not admit to *needing* any until it's far too late.

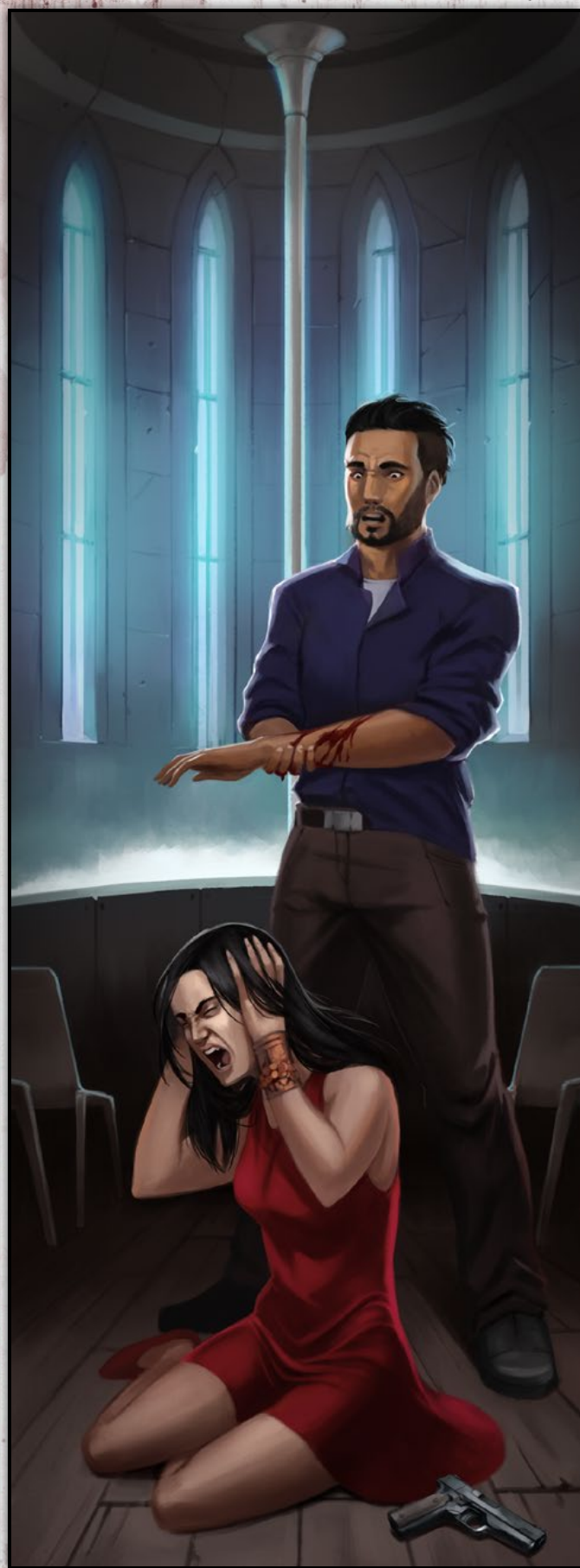
### *Coping with Change*

Of all the Kindred, the Ventrue are most likely to have a buffer of underlings between them and the mortal scene. Lords who identify with their traditional role surround themselves with hand-picked servants who act as intermediaries, saving the vampires from the repugnant task of talking to the kine. Leaning on centuries of old money and investments, they have all the money and resources they could ever want. These assets allow an elder Ventrue to isolate himself from the movements on the ground as human culture shifts and advances around him. All it takes is a high fence, the right paper trail, and a few well-placed bribes for humanity to just leave him in peace. More than one Lord holds court inside an isolated pocket of anachronism, a place that looks and feels just like the world he remembers from his living years so long ago.

Other Ventrue elders see such a coping mechanism as little more than desperate escapism. Rather than try to run from change, they embrace it, choosing the newest innovations and most swiftly-rising stars to sponsor. They pay to put their names on buildings, grind mortal political parties under their heels, and Dominate bigwigs with miles of social capital into doing precisely what the Ventrue wants.

Celebrity culture fascinates these old-world Lords seeking to understand a human era that sways to the tune of the loudest voice, with thousands of clashing voices pulling them in every direction. Silicon Valley, Fortune 500, reality television, and Hollywood are the elder Ventrue's modern playgrounds. Rather than holding themselves above kine society with layers of go-betweens and isolating wealth, they *master* it, and in doing so they assert their relevance and influence anew each time they wake from torpor. These ancient Kindred affiliate themselves with new money and unparalleled talent, preferring to surround themselves with people they feel earned their way to the top. Though they die soon enough, these brilliant mortal shooting stars provide essential social links, insulating an elder from the ravages of the Curse.





### *The Apathetic Curse*

Elder Ventruie have a hard time remembering why they should bother to show a convincing face to the kine. Over time, the Aloof Curse becomes the Apathetic Curse. The elder can only regain all his Willpower at once through his Mask when one of his Touchstones is present. If he has no Touchstones, he can't regain any Willpower through his Mask at all.

### *Lost Clans*

The Kindred family tree is long and tangled, and many of its branches died off centuries ago. To scholars of history and the Kindred condition, these withered boughs pose tantalizing questions. How do clans emerge? What kills them off? Are the five clans that survived to the modern era the most successful overall, or are they merely a snapshot in time that vampires a millennium hence will forget?

Eager Kindred historians seek elusive survivors of fallen clans to hear their fascinating stories and glean priceless insight. When they can find any at all, they're often in for much more than they bargained for. Such survivors are not only hoary and powerful but also lonely and paranoid. A vampire may scheme and rail against her clanmates, but what's a little betrayal between family? Her clan is her assurance that she's not some singular horror, but part of an ancient line of horrors that all understand her nightly struggles intimately. Just because she doesn't trust them doesn't mean she doesn't appreciate them. Without that kinship, a vampire is not just alone but constantly hunted, whether for what she knows or because of whatever ageless vendetta wiped out the rest of her kind in the first place.

### *The Akhud*

Sired ages ago in Babylon, the Akhud are little more than a myth to modern Kindred: a failed clan that died out in an orgy of bloodshed. When the Lancea's priests dare speak of them, they make the fallen clan a lesson in obedience. The Akhud were wicked and God punished them for their sins, cursing them to madness in His judgment. Other covenants take a more pragmatic approach to these legends, viewing the Akhud as a rationale for the Traditions. These were the doubly-Damned. They flaunted their monstrosity, Embraced indiscriminately, and diablerized each other for want of human prey. If any Akhud remain, they're not Kindred at all, but diabolical boogymen who want to destroy the Kindred to save themselves.

If the Akhud can confirm or deny any of these legends, they haven't done so. Better to let the rest of the dead think you're just a bedtime story, especially when you really are out to get them.

#### **Clan Bane: The Curse of Five**

Though few remain, the blood oath of the Akhud is as potent as ever, forming the basis of the clan's bane. Whenever an Akhud would knowingly take an action that would harm



## Praestantia

Within every Akhud's veins runs the taint of diablerie, even if he himself has never committed it, strong enough for an Auspex practitioner to sense it. In exchange for this minor inconvenience, the vampire benefits from the predatory intuition and survival instincts of all who came before him. He turns every fight into a dance for which only he knows the choreography.

**Cost:** None or 1 Vitae per active effect

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None (for persistent effects) or Reflexive (for active effects)

**Duration:** Permanent (for persistent effects) or one turn (for active effects)

Like other physical Disciplines, Praestantia has two kinds of effects: persistent and active. Persistent effects are always on, and have no cost. Active effects are Reflexive, and cost one Vitae per effect.

**Persistent:** Add the vampire's dots in Praestantia to her Dexterity when making Attribute or Skill rolls, and to her Initiative modifier. This can raise her Dexterity above the normal limits imposed by her Blood Potency.

**Active:** By spending Vitae a vampire can call upon millennia of stolen Kindred experience, pre-empting disaster and making violence look easy. For each point of Vitae spent, choose one effect from the following list. A vampire may spend additional Vitae to invoke multiple effects simultaneously, but no effect of Praestantia may be used more than once per turn.

- Add her dots in Praestantia as a weapon bonus to all Firearms, Athletics, and Weaponry attacks made with Dexterity this turn. This puts enormous strain on weapons, especially those not designed for moving at high speeds. Improvised weapons take one point of damage for every dot of Praestantia over that tool's durability whenever they are used in this manner.
- Replace a failed action to inflict violence with another, different kind of action as though the first one never happened; the vampire instantaneously imagined the first scenario and foresaw how it would fail, then acted differently. He can't just try his original action again; something fundamental must change, whether it's the Skill he rolls, the weapon he uses, or the victim he targets. Simply enhancing the original action with new powers doesn't cut it either. He can't replace a dramatically failed action, but if he can spend more than one Vitae in a turn, he can use the previous active effect to turn the dramatic failure into a normal one first and then replace it.

another Akhud, it takes a dice penalty equal to  $(10 - \text{his Humanity})$  divided by two, rounded up. If the pool is reduced to a chance die, he automatically experiences a dramatic failure. No compulsion, natural or otherwise, can force him to take such an action; a blessing in some circumstances, but a disaster in others. This bane extends along lines of shared blood; the oath also protects the Akhud's mortal descendants and anyone in Vinculum with him from both him and his kin.

**Favored Attributes:** Strength or Wits

**Disciplines:** Celerity, Praestantia, Obfuscate

### *Hollow Mekhet*

Long ago, legend has it, all Mekhet were Hollow. The story goes like this: The first Mekhet weren't living humans dragged into darkness by the Embrace. Instead, they were corpses roused from death by their own departed souls. These ghostly spirit-doubles went out into the world in search of sustenance and revenge, leaving their bodies to wander the Earth as vampires. Back then, people knew an improper burial could spawn a vengeful spirit, but they didn't know what *else* it could spawn. In the early nights, this was how the Mekhet made more of their kind; they searched for new burials and worked shadow-rites, disturbing the soul's sleep and stoking its wrath. If they were lucky, the corpse would rise.

In time, the Mekhet learned of other clans and the Embrace, and came to see those vampires as Kindred. The old ways gradually waned, and the Hollow became so rare that many Kindred see them as nothing but a legend. But, they exist still. The Hollow Mekhet are phantoms among vampires, undead creatures that cast no shadow and have no reflection. No recording device can capture their likenesses, and no sound they make will echo.

Shadow, reflection, likeness, echo — all these things reside with the Ka, the hungry ghost that looks and sounds exactly like its Kindred counterpart. In the ancient lore of Egypt — the land the Mekhet consider ancestral — the Ka is part of the soul, and its departure condemns the dead to rise. Ravenous hunger and eternal fury drive a Hollow Mekhet's Ka. Its continued existence depends on the continued existence of its Kindred counterpart, and for both this is a curse. The ghost can only manifest as a reflection in a mirror, a voice coming from a speaker, or a phone call or text with the Shadow's caller ID. Though it doesn't suffer the bane of sunlight, its nature forces it into the role of bystander, and it becomes jealous of both its Kindred half and the living. Any chance it gets, the Ka makes its Mekhet suffer without killing him, impersonating him to piss off his friends and get him in trouble. At the same time, it longs to return to where it belongs and become complete. When it shows this ache to its other self, it can be almost tender in its earnest grieving.



### Clan Bane: The Haunted Curse

In place of the usual Mekhet clan bane, the Hollow suffers his Ka's persistent harassment. The Storyteller should create the Ka as a ghost using the rules for ephemeral beings (*Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 122), with a Rank based on the vampire's Humanity score, as outlined below. It has a ban against manifesting outside the strictures noted above, and it shares any banes the character has gained through detachment in addition to its own innate bane. The lower the character's Humanity drops, the more blatantly antagonistic the Ka becomes, and the stronger its urge to merge with the vampire grows.

The Storyteller can use the Ka to make the Mekhet's unlifemore complicated whenever she likes, but she earns a Beat if it shows up multiple times in her Story, based on her Humanity. If the player rolls a dramatic failure on a detachment roll, the Ka appears without awarding a Beat regardless of how often it has already done so. Characters who deliberately seek out or summon their Ka earn no Beats this way.

An elder Mekhet who drops to Humanity 3 does not suffer any additional intensification of his clan bane; his Ka's growing strength is enough to make him nervous about becoming too detached. Much to the elder's horror, the Ka does not fall into torpor when the vampire does, so it's in his best interests to plan well for his long slumber.

Humanity	Rank	Frequency Before Beats
9-10	1	Once per scene
7-8	2	Twice per chapter
5-6	3	Once per chapter
3-4	4	Twice per story
1-2	5	Once per story

### The Julii

Despite their mysterious fall from grace, modern Kindred regard the Julii as an aspirational tale. Against the odds, they carved out a vast, civilized dark side of the Roman Empire that allowed their kind to grow and prosper. Those rare elders who remember it consider it a long-lost golden age for the Kindred, driving them to try to recreate the modern Camarilla. Trouble is, none of them remembers how the Julii did it. If they really did strike a bargain with the Strix, no one knows how, or why the Owls agreed, or what ultimately turned their feathered coats. If not the Strix, then who was the devil behind the deal?

If any ancient Julii remain, they could easily be mistaken for modern Ventrue. They share many of the Lords' traits, among them the Dominate Discipline and an affinity for authority and social status. Still, these similarities make the differences even more striking — the Julii are warriors as well as emperors and scholars, and carry themselves accordingly. This makes their fall all the more disconcerting. What could the Strix have done to turn the tables on the proud, ever-vigilant Julii? Other vampires who manage to hunt one down could perhaps pry the answers

out of her. Then again, she might just remove them from the picture to make sure her resurgent shadowy nemeses have no reason to suspect any of her kind survive.

### Clan Bane: The Strigid Curse

Whatever the cause, the dread Owls' shadows fall heavily on those of Julii blood, making them strangely vulnerable to otherworldly influence. The vampire's Resistance traits against the Numina, Embodiments, and Dread Powers of the Strix and other ephemeral beings, are capped by her Humanity.

**Favored Attributes:** Composure or Presence

**Disciplines:** Dominate, Resilience, Vigor

### The Pijavica

This bizarre clan — assuming it shared enough with other Kindred to be called a clan — is the subject of much speculation, prompting disturbing questions about the origin of the Curse and the ultimate fate of elder vampires. The Pijavica grew into their vampirism through a grotesque undead lifecycle. The Embrace created an amalgam of Vitae and blood, a mass of congealed crimson goo that could gain a shape and mind of its own if it could scrape by long enough. The lone surviving firsthand account describes this existence as endless, gnawing hunger and a primal need to consume and multiply. Scholars propose off-the-wall theories ranging from the Pijavica as collections of undead microbes that eventually fuse to form sapient creatures, to pure expressions of the Blood that could transcend the Kindred dependence on living kine given enough time to evolve.

Unlike the Akhud and the Julii, the Pijavica didn't die off in a single apocalyptic event. Theirs was a quieter and slower demise: attrition overcame their already dicey chances of survival, and that was that. Any that remain exist as freakish oddities that arouse both fascination and repugnance in their fellow Kindred. A Pijavica's physical form is an unnatural and precarious shell, kept intact only by will and Humanity. His Blood Potency must reach a critical mass before he develops human intelligence, and if it rises too high, it transforms him into something more like the viscous ooze he once was. Elder Pijavica walk a fine line between retaining enough power to stay on top of the food chain, and losing their tenuous commonality with their Kindred.

### Clan Bane: The Mutative Curse

Torpor represents both salvation and terror for a Pijavica, as he performs his nightly balancing act between bestial instinct and alien evolution. For every dot his Blood Potency falls below 4, reduce his Mental and Social Attributes by -1. For every dot his Blood Potency rises above 7, reduce his Physical Attributes by -1. Holding onto his Humanity can help mitigate the Curse; whenever he would take an action using one of his reduced Attributes, his player may first roll his Humanity as a dice pool, with a penalty equal to the amount his Attributes are reduced. If he succeeds, he may restore the Attribute to its full value for that action.

**Favored Attributes:** Stamina or Wits

**Disciplines:** Animalism, Protean, Resilience



## *Portrait of an Elder: Covenants*

Each covenant offers something unique to attract elders to its numbers. The Invictus affords its elders all the temporal power they could want, and the comfort of structure that helps ground them in civilized culture when they might otherwise lose themselves to the Beast. The Lancea et Sanctum promises moral authority over inferior Kindred and centuries of collected lore. Elders in the Mother's Army enjoy the heady high of complete validation for all their growing monstrous urges, and the unconditional support of scores of younger Kindred who view them as goddesses. For elder Dragons, the Coils they dedicate their unlives to are their own rewards, as they learn ever more esoteric ways to master and transcend their Curse. Elder Carthians are a bit of an oxymoron, standing against an establishment they themselves represent, but the Movement gives an elder the excuse to wage any war and pursue any vendetta she pleases under the pretense of bucking the status quo or bringing back the "good old nights."

### *The Carthian Movement*

The stereotypical Carthian is a neonate, freshly-drawn from some mortal revolutionary movement and brimming with naiveté and zeal, but elders have always had a place. The Movement itself is only a few centuries old, but Kindred dissatisfied with the social order have existed since the first time vampires joined together to delay their descent into bestial chaos. The Carthians are not the first reformatory movement in the Danse Macabre — and they won't be the last — but so far, they're the longest-lived and the most successful, and that attracts ancient vampires looking for ways to shake up their unchanging routines. Carthian elders are as adaptable as they are zealous, and woe betide the vampire who mistakes their heedless dedication for a Final Death wish.

The Carthian Movement attracts three kinds of elders: the hopelessly idealistic, the irredeemably jaded, and the iconoclastic narcissists. The idealists are Kindred who never fit in with the All Night Society of the past, refusing to conform and compromise whatever principles they used to stave off the Beast. While the mortal perspective might think of them as noble, they're as angry as they are driven. It takes an unhealthy amount of single-minded devotion to hold onto a philosophy — and a grudge — for that long, through centuries of the loss and tragedy that characterize Kindred relationships. Their ideals have so consumed them by the time they join the Movement, they can't see the world through any other lens; their pursuit of a new Kindred order is all that's keeping them around. If they ever got what they wanted, what then?

The jaded elders usually come from the upper echelons of Kindred politics. They were judges, trusted seconds-in-command, or even Sanctified chaplains; rumor has it that at least one senior Firebrand was a Prince before joining the Revolution. Regardless of where they came from, they've seen the darkest nadir of Kindred politics-as-usual, and they

don't ever want to see it again. They're sick of the lies, the backstabbing, and the corruption. To these elders, Kindred society is rotten to the core, and the only way to fix it is to burn it down and build something new atop the ashes. Once these ancient newcomers earn the Movement's trust, they become its loudest and most acidic voices. On the other hand, the Carthians aren't free from dysfunction, and these elders only see it after they've given what little they had left.

Other elders join the Carthian Movement to mold huge swaths of vampire society in their own image. The Revolution touts its egalitarian and progressive values, but these elder Firebrands see it as nothing but an exciting way to acquire fanatical underlings. When the revolution comes, they intend to end up on top, and they have the centuries of skill and experience to make it happen. If they get to dispose of troublesome enemies in the name of progress on the way up, so much the better. For these self-serving ancients, the Carthian Movement is just the latest in a long string of novel distractions and power plays. In the end, the message doesn't matter as much as the damage these rebellions can inflict on the status quo. After all, if this Revolution fails, another will always rise to take its place.

### *Elder Roles*

Most of the Movement's elders established themselves as opponents of the establishment well before the covenant formed and their long-standing reputations set them up as obvious choices to lead the Revolution. They use their status to promote their personal beliefs and convert their supporters to their pet causes, creating sub-factions within the local membership. Sometimes, these factions form without an elder's approval or knowledge, only coming to his attention after they've performed some heinous act in his name. A group of young Firebrands stumbles across his writings from centuries ago and comes to idolize him. He finds himself in possession of die-hard followers, and doesn't know what to do with them.

Other elders occupy far less public roles, including ones the Movement would never publicize. It needs connections to thrive, and no one in the Danse Macabre is more well-connected than an elder who's spent centuries accumulating favors. These elders act as spymasters and information brokers, coordinating networks of ghouls, younger vampires, and mortals. When the covenant needs to get something done, it knows precisely who to call in, who to blackmail, and who to kill. And when all that fails, personal power wins the night. Even the most well-disciplined ghoul can hold out for only so long against an elder who can pluck his master's secrets directly from his mind, or force him to confess them with a single glance.

In some cases, an elder acts as more of a consultant to the Movement than a true member, usually because he was once a mover and shaker in another Revolution long ago that eventually failed. He provides favors and old connections to



the local covenant in exchange for resources from the mortal world, publicity in Kindred circles, and support for his own parallel causes — or a buffer between him and the rest of the All Night Society — so he can pursue his own goals in peace. The Carthians look up to these ancient rabble-rousers as role models and celebrities. One who finally decides to wave the flag and step fully back into the spotlight can tip the scales of loyalty in his favor faster than his rivals can even parse the threat he poses, drawing the ire of up-and-coming ancillae who thought their positions were secure.

## *The Circle of the Crone*

At a bare two centuries of age, the Circle of the Crone is a newcomer to Kindred society, but it burst onto the scene in a wave of fire and blood. This set the tenor for everything it's done since then, and in its early nights, its message was like a siren song to elders sick of the old order. To these Kindred, especially those alienated from mortals by their Curse or low Humanity, the Circle's beliefs provided vindication and release after centuries of hiding. They embraced their power wholeheartedly, rejecting any philosophy that described it as sinful or broken. Perhaps they'd already felt a deep, primal shift within their Blood, but denied and suppressed it for fear of what they'd become. When the uprising came, they finally found the affirmation they'd been looking for.

The Mother's Army has continued to attract elders to its ranks ever since. The closest thing it has to a core tenet is the veneration of the Blood, and no one has more potent Blood than an elder vampire. In the trio of Maiden, Mother, and Crone, elders are the Crone: sources of ancient wisdom and breathtaking mystical power. Despite its excesses and wild abandon, the Acolytes encourage a healthy respect for vampires who've been in the business for centuries. By nature, an elder has had centuries to evolve along with her Blood. She knows what feels right to it and what feels wrong, and hears its song in her torpor dreams. The Circle's rites speak to that kernel of primeval truth hidden in the core of the Beast, and the ancients roar that truth with every orgiastic cry they utter. They believe elder Kindred are close to the end of a process of becoming, and they want to be there to see that final climax shake the earth.

For all that, a vampire who comes to suckle at the Crone's breast after a long career in another covenant has high bars of expectation to overcome. No matter the lofty heights of power she attained in her previous endeavors, in the Circle, she humbles herself and starts from scratch. She must prove herself worthy of the secrets of Crúac and the unshakeable bonds of solidarity that await her should she succeed. Established Mother-Goddesses put such recruits through trial after trial, rejecting them for the slightest hesitation and holding them to standards no ancilla could ever hope to achieve. Once they finally earn the covenant's trust, though, these elders are among the best-loved and most ecstatic of the bunch, and rarely do they ever break ties with the Army no matter how many more centuries they endure. During an elder transplant's trials, neonates often develop fan

clubs of sorts for them, rooting for their success and jockeying for their favor in anticipation of their eventual triumph.

## *Elder Roles*

The most iconic role for an elder Acolyte to take up is that of the Mother-Goddess: the matriarch who leads rituals, guides young vampires through acceptance of their condition to fervent enthusiasm for it, and when need be, raises literal armies to oppose tyrants who would impose their order on others. She is a walking embodiment of the Blood and her fellow Kindred worship her for it. She doesn't give orders or lead in any traditional sense; instead, she's the center of a cult of personality that spills blood in her name and cheerfully eviscerates her enemies without her even needing to ask.

But, the smallest covenant only has room for so many Bitch-Mothers. What do the other elders do? Some use their long years of experience blending in with human society to meddle in it on behalf of the Circle. They recruit mortal outcasts and disenfranchised groups to participate in covens and cults, playing ritual leader to the kine as their Mother-Goddess counterparts do to the Kindred. They even reveal themselves to the inner circles of these human sects, deliberately creating cliques of vampire worshipers she can mine for childer when some of them display the kinds of traits the local Circle likes in its members. Most Acolytes don't dare go that far, but these elders have embraced the devil-may-care attitude of the Mother's Army for so long they've ceased to care about something so arbitrary and confining as the Traditions. If the Prince has something to say about it, he can come and say it to her face.

Other elders of the Circle spend their time engrossed in study of the Beast and occult traditions to unlock more powerful Crúac rites. They seek the next evolution of the Kindred in nameless ancient places where only they dare walk, teach what they learn to their sisters when they return, and gather small coteries of apprentices upon which to bestow all their years of wisdom. Still others use their centuries of experience and contacts to act as Cacophony leaders, running the underground railroads that connect vampires the rest of the covenants have shunned or exiled. Even if they don't find new recruits this way, their efforts win them staunch allies when inevitably the pendulum of law and order swings too far in one direction and the Mother's Army must ride.

## *The Invictus*

It's not hard for the First Estate to attract potent elders to its ranks. They don't have to recruit actively or offer tempting bribes. Every elder already knows the value of power for its own sake. The real question isn't whether they join, but which of them comes out on top and how that affects everybody below them.

Some elders join and stick with the Invictus because it's what they've always known. They're from a time before other covenants had enough clout to stand on their own against the



Establishment's iron fist, and they see those others as brash upstarts with delusions of grandeur who can't, shouldn't, and ultimately won't persist as major players. If the Invictus is patient, its elders are paragons of the slow burn and the long game. They envision the rise of a new Camarilla at their command and they expect nothing to get in their way. Most of history to them is just a holding pattern until they fulfill the promise of the true All Night Society, with them sitting on its thrones. They remember the awe-inspiring might of the elders who were in charge when they were mere neonates and they now hold themselves up as the rightful successors to that crown.

Others find their way to the First Estate after centuries of trying and not earning respect, accomplishing a goal, or defeating an enemy. They may see it as a last resort or even a betrayal of their most cherished principles, but they've given up. They're ready to accept that the Invictus way is the only way and that if they want anything they'll need to drum up some ambition and act like jerks to get it. Sellouts from the Carthian Movement and the Circle of the Crone especially become hated Judases who suddenly *need* all the power and toadies they can get to keep their ex-compatriots from unearthing their resting places and dragging them kicking and screaming into the sun.

### *Elder Roles*

Unlike some of the other covenants, the elders of the Invictus rarely see the need to get creative with their roles. In a strict hierarchy, the top is the natural place for an ancient vampire with more resources, blackmail fodder, favors to cash in, and raw power than anyone else around. When more than one elder competes for supremacy in the same local covenant, heads roll in waves until the pecking order gets re-established. As a result, it's rare to see more than one Invictus elder in the same domain unless they work to establish carefully structured webs of Oaths and cyclical dynasty agreements that keep them out of each other's way.

Torpor is the major variable that can shake things up for an elder of the First Estate. Even if everything is the same when he wakes up as it was when he went to sleep, his diminished potency means that all eyes are on his prize and it's no longer out of their reach. That's why Invictus elders take more care than any other vampires to plan ahead for torpor and make sure

that even if it takes them by surprise, they have contingencies in place to preserve their primacy. Between their ghouls, childer, and Oathbound vassals, someone's always around to keep the company in the black, funnel money to the right political candidates, and ensure he still has a dynasty to return to when he wakes.

Over the course of centuries, the daisy chains of fealty an elder racks up become grossly impractical and difficult to track. A vampire savvy enough to make it through a few centuries of unlfe learns to consolidate his Oaths to reel in what's owed to him and make sure nobody forgets where her highest loyalty lies. As long as an elder can prove — whether via contracts provided by a Notary or testimony from a trustworthy source — that the liege of an Oath owes fealty to someone else who ultimately owes fealty to him, regardless of how many degrees of separation lie between them, he may cash in on that Oath in place of the direct liege. Fabricating proof of a fealty chain that isn't connected to him doesn't work; the Blood always knows. Because of this practice, elder Invictus employ hosts of flunkies to keep painstaking notes on who's making Oaths to whom across their domains.

### *Cyclical Dynasties*

When simple preparations aren't enough to appease an elder haunted by the thought of succumbing to torpor and waking up with nothing, she can choose one or more trusted Kindred apprentices or comrades to whom she's willing to entrust every resource she commands, down to her very reputation. Together they make mutual Oaths of Dynasty (p. 85) that bind each of them to the rotating position of dynasty head. They collectively embody its leadership and take turns benefiting from its perks while the others slumber, including all the authority and respect the original elder has earned over the course of his career. Those who sleep are entitled by Oath to expect that when they wake, not only is every last shred of their power and property returned to them, but they also gain whatever added resources the other vampires accumulated in the interim as interest. Once sealed, a dynastic Oath cannot be broken without invoking certain catastrophe for all parties involved.

To use the cyclical dynasty construction in a chronicle, each player creates *two* characters — one who's part of the dynastic

### *Cyclical Dynasties Outside the Invictus*

Note that the Oath of Dynasty Merit requires Covenant Status, not Invictus Status specifically. Nothing stops members of other covenants from creating incestuous little empires of power between them, or even mixed-covenant coteries. Since non-Invictus vassals often swear Oaths to Establishment lieges, the entire troupe could be part of a dynasty sworn to a single Invictus elder by a Notary. The Merit could also represent less formal oaths bound simply by word of honor, contract, or Vinculum. Perhaps the deal they've made is even stranger: a psychic torpor-bond that makes them a true partnership, acting in perfect sync and assuming one collective identity; or a group of mutually blood-bound lovers who are happy to share and share alike, but can't all stand to be in the same room together.



Oath, and one who isn't. The chronicle can span centuries of time, in which case most stories will take place while only one of the dynasty elders is active and the other players play their primary characters. Each story, the active elder switches to one of the others in the group, while the Storyteller controls the player's primary character for a time. If events conspire to have more than one of the elders active at a time, or even all of them, that's fine; this is a freeform way to progress through the ages and take a relatively small dynasty from its inception all the way to modern times, when it's a major force to be reckoned with. Alternatively, if the chronicle takes place wholly in the modern era, all of the players play their primary characters while the Storyteller controls whichever elder is awake at the time, but the troupe intersperses the game with flashback scenes (see Chapter 2) or chapters — or even whole stories — during which the dynasty elders are all active at the same time, and the players take control of those characters to explore the history of the dynasty and how it came to be the powerful hegemony their primary characters contend with in modern nights.

Another way to explore cyclical dynasties in a game that spans long periods of in-game time is to have one player create *all* the members of a single dynasty and play them in sequence as the story progresses. Anytime more than one of these elders is awake at once, the Storyteller or other players can take on the additional roles. The group could even decide to have each player control his own separate dynasty this way.

### *The Lancea et Sanctum*

A Sanctified elder is fire and brimstone; a fallen angel who stands unmoved by the pleas of the judged or the wails of the innocent. Ancient priests carry the mystique of dread and twisted salvation, and the older they are, the more they seem to have stepped straight out of biblical times. They are the Lancea et Sanctum's own Princes of Darkness, feared and revered in equal measure. The covenant prizes its lay elders as well, but affords them fewer privileges and mistrusts them somewhat. One who serves the Lord for so long but fails to find her way to devote her whole self to Him must be lacking in faith. Still, the Church isn't about to turn away powerful advocates.

An elder who's been Sanctified since her Embrace has dedication beyond reason. She may be sincerely devoted to the teachings, throwing herself into her role night after night, seeing faithless dogs everywhere she looks. As the self-proclaimed conscience of her kind, she acts with perfect equanimity and doubts nothing. She's seen what happens when the Damned are left to their own devices and refuses to allow her domain to repeat history. Or, she may have fallen in love with the power she wields, taking her position as judge and avenger of wrongs to such an extreme that she acknowledges no authority but her own, regardless of who's Prince. Some see their souls weighed down with the sins of centuries and try to balance the scales by punishing others as harshly as they believe they'll be punished when the end of all things finally comes.

The Church Eternal accepts elders who convert to the faith

with open arms. Ancients come to the Lancea from other covenants when they've spent long periods in exile or experience drastic shifts in their Humanity and need the accountability that comes with the Kindred religious community. After so long fighting the endless battle against her own inner demons, an exhausted elder admits she can't manage it alone and takes her vows. Some crave a simpler explanation for their condition after failing to satisfy the existential anxieties of their immortality through secular study, taking comfort in the thought that their damnation is part of a grander design.

### *Elder Roles*

The covenant teaches that torpid elder priests receive a sacrament directly from God as they dream, so those who spend time dormant wake to *more* power and influence than they had before, rather than less. These elders become prophets whose advice shapes the course of the Church's practices an age at a time. Masters of Theban Sorcery are the jagged thunderbolts from heaven who smite all who defy God's will, and some only deign to intervene in the affairs of other Kindred when they feel called to deliver judgment.

Bishops and other high-ranking Sanctified are usually elders who hold their positions until Final Death. They issue edicts, set the covenant's course with respect to its duties among the kine, and direct the efforts to reclaim or destroy artifacts and lore. Elder priests are the most fervent and effective evangelists when the Church needs to bolster its numbers, cutting imposing figures of marble poise in the halls of Elysium to sway dead hearts and minds with promises to give their damnation purpose.

A vampire's Requiem is a cavalcade of tragedy, compromise, and impossible choices. As the centuries pass, many Kindred find themselves staring down the barrel of a crisis of Humanity. The Lancea's elder confessors receive their suffering brethren in shriving crypts by candlelight, granting them not absolution, but the rare opportunity just to speak the truth for once, and the punishments for which they've come to beg. Such ancient monsters won't flinch at sins horrific even by vampire standards. These confessors are serious about their calling, and visit brutal retribution upon any among them who uses another vampire's confession for personal gain or revenge.

Elders among the Sanctified laity rarely hold positions of authority, instead using their tremendous insight and archaic skills to fulfill practical duties. Few kine know how to scribe an illuminated manuscript or translate languages that have been extinct for a thousand years, but the Sanctified count vampires among their numbers who grew up speaking and reading those very languages. These elders track bloodlines, both mortal and Kindred, for generation after generation, and perform archaeological investigations based on knowledge no living human possesses. Even in modern nights, the Sanctified's extensive genealogical research provides lines of inheritance when an elder succumbs to Final Death, in some cases tracking down her mortal descendants to offer them the Embrace and continue age-old traditions. Elders of a scholarly bent write



personal accounts of historical events they witnessed; or ones that saw them elbow-deep in blood and culpability. The Sanctified take it upon themselves to travel the night seeking secluded ancients to interview, compiling their tales into Kindred biographies and risking great personal harm to pester elders who want nothing more than to be left alone.

## *The Ordo Dracul*

Imagine a mystery like a chrysalis. One night, it will bloom and something that was once a vampire will issue forth. Spend eternity picking it apart, teasing it open, layer by layer. Imagine going to sleep with a question about yourself, and waking up to realize its answer asks a hundred more. Imagine an obsession riveting enough to risk pissing away a thousand years of unlived for a single glimpse of apotheosis. It takes bottomless reserves of passion and audacity to keep chasing transcendence for as long as the elder Defiant have. Small wonder, then, that their fellows fear them, and question their sanity.

Whether he styles himself as a scientist, a cultist, or an ecstatic, a Dragon's search drives him deep into the world's abysses, and if he emerges at all, he does so enlightened. His thirst for the forbidden is as strong as that for blood. Those who survive this gradual winnowing away of qualms and uncertainties are nothing less than unliving demons, speakers of forgotten truths and rebels against nature. Elders who have been with the Order from the beginning scorn hesitation as a fatal weakness and perform wonders that drive their lessers to their knees in awe. They remember Coils long abandoned by the covenant as a whole, inflicting their heinous Scales upon their own kind with abandon and casting ruined, rejected specimens back out into the night without pity. They cultivate patience that borders on psychosis, for otherwise who could endure so many centuries of failing to live up to an all-consuming ideal?

Those who come to the Ordo Dracul after long careers in other covenants do it out of frustration with their limitations or in a fit of epiphany. These are elders who have tried everything, done everything, and are ready to plunge themselves into the acid bath of hard, cold facts to find themselves anew. They're sick and tired of waking up every evening feeling like monsters. They want more, and the Order promises more. Occasionally, an ancient vampire comes to the door claiming to have known Dracula personally, insisting he's spent the last 500 years perfecting what he learned from the world's most infamous Dragon and co-opting resources and personnel for his supposed Great Work. Inevitably the younger Defiant get caught up in the wake of his fever dreams only to turn on him like hateful piranhas when they discover his lies — and more importantly — his failure.

Defiant elders can be among the most diverse and well-rounded vampires, having tried and discarded countless approaches to their work and survived through many developments in the ever-evolving theoretical landscape of human science, thaumaturgy, and philosophy. At the other end of the spectrum are Dragons who have spent their entire Requiems hyper-focused on a single idea, clinging to it relentlessly through ages of ridicule and

disappointment with the absolute certainty that all it will take is time to prove they were right all along.

## *Elder Roles*

While it doesn't have a central hierarchy, the Ordo Dracul recognizes seniority, expertise, and experience as highly valuable. The old guard's insight into the Curse is unparalleled and they often serve as advisors, apothecaries, and blood alchemists to Princes who like to tinker with their immortality. Local Orders that run themselves like universities treat elders as tenured professors, entitled to first pick of the funding and resources and impossible to mess with. They teach younger Kindred, take on apprentices and assistants to pass on their techniques, and commandeer whole labs or workshops for their personal projects. They publish papers to other Ordo sects around the world and compete fiercely to be the first to discover a new Coil or Scale. Some take up actual professorial positions among the kine, or commandeer the leadership of mortal universities as elite committees that direct doctoral research and look for promising ghoul or childe candidates.

A few Defiant elders take their hands off the reins and step back from active research to sponsor others instead. They create prestigious prizes and material rewards to dole out to those they favor, acting as catalyst and muse for younger vampires. They act as patrons of the occult arts and sciences, accumulating vast wealth, and then selecting and promoting talented ancillae.

Others take the example of Dracula literally and set out to recreate his life and death. Rare though it is to see a vampire wielding worldly power over the kine as an actual ruler, some Dragons who follow the Mystery of the Voivode grow to assume nothing can meaningfully challenge them. They spend a few decades lordling their superiority over a vast mortal herd as kings and queens of small nations, until it all crashes and burns or implodes under its own weight. A less civically minded Dragon might take control of a massive army or raise a devoted cult to himself. When his followers outlive their charm, he can repurpose them for whatever his next dark endeavor demands.

The combination of high-stakes obsession, great personal power, and good old-fashioned vanity makes feuds between elder Dragons bitter even by Kindred standards. They go to absurd lengths to sabotage their rivals, working through unwitting proxies to steal notes, kill experimental subjects, taint Vitae solutions, and other petty acts of ruination their clever minds devise. Subtler elders use the process of vetting and peer review as a bludgeon, denying their rivals the support their theories need to garner resources. Even reviewers who stay objective risk provoking a centuries-long blood feud if they reject the wrong findings. Turns out, ancient vampires don't like learning they spent a hundred years on worthless data.

Some elder Dragons withdraw from their colleagues even as they earn more authority, wrapped up in unfathomable projects they dare not share with anyone. As if the Order's reputation wasn't sketchy enough, these elders are flat-out terrifying to outsiders and members alike. Rumors blame the Ordo Dracul



for anything and everything plaguing modern vampires, from Malkavia to the return of the Strix, and while the Order dismisses them as slander, the white-tower ancients among them make it all seem scarily plausible.

### *The Cerberus Pact*

Not so long ago, this place was safe — well, as safe as any Kindred domain can be. You saw to that. Your eyes and ears brought you news of every glance and whisper at Elysium. You knew the name of every ghoul and every childe as soon as they were made. You were vigilant. You were careful. You were attentive.

Now you're just paranoid.

Because last night you clasped hands with someone you can't stand so you could watch your own beloved childe scream and writhe in the flames of perdition.

Because every time you close your eyes you see the snarl of fury on that neonate's face right before you forced her to swallow a nightmare, and you hear a hollow cry of vengeance on the wind.

Because once you made a mistake and eight hundred years haven't cleansed it from your shuddering soul.

Because the one thing you swore on your Requiem to do is the one thing you hoped you'd never have to do.

But now, the Owls have come for this place. Time to step up to the plate.

### *The Three-Headed Vow*

For as long as Kindred legend can remember, the Strix have preyed on them as they prey on humanity. And for almost as long, the Cerberus Pact has stood to keep watch over the Kindred, and to cauterize the wounds the Strix inflict on their society before they have a chance to bleed out. The origins of the Pact are murky, but those few elder vampires inducted into its fold over the millennia agree that three of their kind once survived the complete annihilation of their domain and made a solemn vow never to allow the Birds of Dis to gain such a ruinous foothold again. Then, after they lost a *second* domain to the Strix, they came to understand that words and warnings couldn't defeat their foes. It's Kindred nature to tear each other apart at the slightest suspicion. The Cerberus Pact was born in the tortured shadow of the bonfire that destroyed the first coterie of vampires forced to open themselves to possession. They became the Watchdogs of the Danse Macabre, safeguarding the Kindred from the Strix without raising the alarm to either side. Their code has been one of strict secrecy and ruthlessness ever since.

Tonight, the Pact is a tiny covenant that pops up here and there in domains that seem at risk of Strix invasion or have a





history of it. They pass down as much lore about their ancient enemies as they can hold onto, while hiding in the shadows and telling no one about their grim purpose. It isn't always comprised of exactly three vampires, but it is always small, and always made up of elders. Younger Kindred are too naive, too reckless, and too weak. Watchdogs need power to stay hidden, to spot the danger signs of invasion before it breaks out into violence or true conspiracy, to perform delicate and demanding rituals, and to survive at all costs. They need the cold detachment it takes to deliberately lure both vampire and Owl into a trap that consumes them both and leaves nothing to chance. They need the unshakeable conviction to destroy anyone — *anyone* — who *might* be compromised. No loose ends, ever, no matter who they need to kill to make that happen. No hints to the covenant's existence gets out. Nobody who hasn't been invited gets in. Sometimes, even vampires who don't show any signs of possession are sacrificed for the greater good if it looks like they might be desperate enough to make a deal with the devil.

### *The Rule of Three*

The Cerberus Pact doesn't set out to enact a spree of preemptive murders without sufficient cause. If they can nip the problem in the bud before it gets to that point, bravo — they've fulfilled their oaths. They employ, kidnap, or bind by blood any mortal or other supernatural exorcists and spirit mediums who might know a thing or two about warding, binding, and killing ephemeral beings like the Strix. They're distinct enough from ghosts and spirits, that even after millennia of vigilance and study, the Pact's practices feel like shots in the dark. Still, they've managed to cobble together a few key rituals that make their work possible. They can protect themselves from possession, though nothing is foolproof; more than one hunting party has fallen to pieces after having to incinerate the wrong vampire. They can tempt a Strix into claiming a particular victim and then keep it trapped there until they can destroy host and raptor both.

The Pact hunts in teams of three — thus, the Rule of Three: never hunt alone, never hunt in pairs, never hunt in groups too large to be accidental. A Strix hunting party always consists of

two Watchdog ritualists and whichever unfortunate vampire they've chosen as the sacrifice. Usually the poor bastard has no idea what he's walking into. Occasionally, some noble or self-loathing Kindred finds out about the covenant and offers himself up as bait. The Pact swears never to allow an Owl to escape once they have it in their sights, regardless of what atrocities they might have to commit or losses they might have to suffer. Even half a domain is better than none at all.

### *The Cerberus Pact in Play*

The Watchdogs recruit silently and from afar, watching all the elders of a domain where they've settled until they find a likely candidate. That means someone with all the qualities and abilities they desire, but also one who they can be reasonably certain will accept the invitation. If they reveal themselves to a vampire who refuses, they must introduce her to the wrong end of a torch to protect their secrets. They're a pact because upon joining, a new member must swear oaths affirmed in blood to uphold the covenant code from now until Final Death. Of course, no Kindred can realistically maintain her sworn level of remorseless stoicism and still care about the fate of her brethren. Conflicts of interest, moral dilemmas, and raw emotion get in the way of a Watchdog's vow all the time.

Storytellers can introduce the Cerberus Pact to their elder games in various ways. The current members of the Pact could recruit some or all of the players' coterie, or they could get recruited by default as they discover the truth just as their predecessors die — or beg to be killed as their rituals backfire horribly. The player characters don't necessarily need to be elders for the Pact to come into play in a chronicle, either. They could stumble across the covenant's existence in an ancient tome or from the lips of a dying Methuselah and seek it out to deal with a potential Strix problem on their home turf. They could run afoul of the Pact by accident when they kill someone it's using for its plans, or when it shows up to destroy someone possessed by an Owl and the players' coterie insists on finding another way. And, of course, as soon as the characters discover the Watchdogs, the knowledge thrusts them into an immediate "join or die" scenario from which they must creatively extract themselves.







# Chapter Two

## The Long Solo

*Because I could not stop for Death – He kindly stopped for me –  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves – And Immortality.*

– Emily Dickinson

Time is the enemy. History shifts and contorts like a great snake, its jaw wide open and preparing to devour all who pass. Mortals stroll blindly into the serpent's maw; their short lives near insignificant to the passing of time. Time distorts and skews their stories, as tale-spinners change their names, accentuate their deeds, and enhance or depreciate their legends.

Many elder vampires reject history's thoughtless consumption. They seek to overcome history, and withstand time's corrosion. Kindred know time is the enemy. Elders know that to remember history, and harness it, is to transcend time. They will not pass beneath the serpent's fangs without lashing out at history and leaving a permanent mark.

Elder vampires know what it means to transcend history. These ancient immortals leave memorial for each act, accomplishment, and failure, knowing retaining memories of their deeds, and those of their peers, allows them a form of

immortality denied to the transient kine. Vampires committed to the Masquerade generally discourage written records of their past, as they may be tampered with or expose the Danse Macabre's secrets. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* – for all the benefits it has granted vampire mythology – is inaccurate to the true experiences of the Requiem, and potentially harmful when mortals connect the dots between anachronistic Kindred and the words in the text. Therefore, vampires prize memories and experiences. They remind elders of each tragedy and victory experienced. Flashbacks and reminiscences offer elation and deep, hurtful scars. They also influence the way in which elders survive history's tide. Some vampires cling to their past and allow it to define them. Others dedicate their long existences to trying something new with each passing year, mentally chronicling each and every experience. These vampires push into new fields of sensation and practice, desperate to remain relevant as the scrolls of history unfurl in their wake.

### *Transcending History*

Imagine a long, blue vein, running just beneath the skin of a pale, thin arm. You cannot see the blood flow, but you know it courses through that conduit, pushed by pulses, forced from one end to the other.

Unexpectedly, a puncture mark appears at the wrist. Dark blood begins to ooze out, and marks the white flesh. Another hole appears a thumb's length away, the blood from this wound throbbing free, viscous, and syrupy. The third eruption of blood doesn't come until we reach the crook of the elbow. Now the arm is more red than white. From a tiny needlepoint hole in the bicep, a steady trickle leaks to complete the tableau.

The vein is a timeline. The wounds are points along that timeline. The blood flow is the strength of the memory associated with the wounds.

The vampire could lick the wounds shut, suck the blood up, and forget about her history. Or, she could reminisce about every lesion. She could memorialize each scar.

History may mold vampires. Vampires may shape history. Some Kindred weather the changes and turmoil of ages,

remembering the parts they played and taking from them lessons important to their continued existence. Elders know they must stay true to their Dirge, and to their Touchstones, if they are to remain unaffected by time's passage.

Becoming anachronistic is one of the greatest dangers an elder vampire faces, though retaining a sense of self is crucial to a Kindred's sanity. The elder vampire who wears his cape and wields an antique sword as he stalks the twenty-first century nights is a joke to neonates, an embarrassment to his covenant peers, and a reminder to other elders that time can swiftly outpace a vampire. That same vampire may be more aware of his role, accomplishments, and the mercurial existence of his kind than any of those other Kindred truly consider.

Despite their ageless natures, many older vampires dread the passage of time. They see the hoary elder in a castle with no electricity or running water, the ancient politico who speaks only in Latin to his Sanctified allies, and the vampire who after centuries still pines for her lost love, as frightening icons. With technology and culture often outpacing mortals and their short lives, they



wonder what hope a potentially immortal vampire has of moving with time, or standing apart, without risking danger. The first vampire to underestimate gunpowder's efficacy was not the last, but that does not make vampires incapable of learning. Adaptation is vital, yet for a vampire to truly thrive throughout the pages of history, she must not betray her principles, memories, and desires.

The vampire who transcends history does so by calling on the experiences that helped define her. It may seem possible an ancient of 2,000 years holds an innumerable range of such experiences, but time offers perspective. For an elder, certain points of darkness, or light, break through the malaise of generations. Moments of importance do not appear every year, or even every century, but across the course of an extended lifetime these significant moments are the defining ones.

- The time she took part in the murder of a Mekhet Prince in Charlemagne's France, and first gained status among her Invictus peers, solidifying her loyalty to the covenant.
- The battle in which she shared blood with a Gangrel warlord to ensure his loyalty in combat against the Children's Crusade, developing an unnatural love the likes of which she's never again felt.
- The year she became Prince in her ancestral homeland and commanded all Kindred present to kneel and recite the Lord's Prayer. She felt more potent than ever before, as she made the pagan people adopt her belief.
- Her childe's execution, orchestrated by the Circle of the Crone just to spite her, and the feeling of powerlessness as her innocent Embrace met flame and fury, while all she could do was weep.
- That time last month, when she discovered a mortal who perfectly resembled her loving mother from centuries ago. In desperate need for a confidante, she made the poor woman drink Vitae.

These flashpoints in an elder vampire's existence make her go beyond history. The vampire identifies certain experiences with specific time periods, locations, individuals, and objects, and these experiences impactful nature forever marks the vampire.

She has shown she will commit murder to gain reputation among her peers. She goes to any extent — even potential Vinculum with a Savage — to win a battle against a mutual foe. She is willing to subjugate Kindred in her domain if doing so empowers her. Her hatred for the Hierophants is born from their killing of her childe, and we know she is still capable of raw sorrow despite the centuries of her existence. Her loneliness forces her to cling to mortal memories, and making a ghoul of an innocent, just so she can feel an attachment to her mortality.

Elders might transcend history by clinging to these moments, though it is a fine balance for a vampire to stay true to her Dirge, and not slip into the trap of anachronistic behavior.

### *Time Changes Us*

Some elders ride the wave of time. They change with the passing years. These vampires recognize that to stay current,

and embrace modernity, is the true test of an immortal's mettle. After all, what hope does a vampire have of clinging to humanity, if she cannot understand the parlance of the era, the electronic devices in the mortals' hands, and even something as basic as the popular television shows, celebrities, and music playing in the headphones of commuting kine?

Not all Kindred striving to rise above the ravages of time do so to cling to their humanity. They understand that the best predators adopt camouflage. These clinical hunters seek to understand human advancements, study the changes in human behavior, and allow time to erode their own interests so they can swiftly emulate mortals without risking the exposure of their true undead nature.

### *The Neophile Collective*

The Collective formed as the Venetian Renaissance forced huge strides in human arts, science, and geographical discovery. The Daeva Jacopo del Santo, aware of his sire's lost grip on reality — the older vampire remained committed to the archaic, Byzantine ideals of the Eastern Roman Empire and angrily refuted the Renaissance's advancements — formed the faction, comprising vampires aware of the rapidly changing times, and committed to keeping pace with humanity's progress.

Ostensibly formed so the faction's Kindred could play caretaker to their elders, and bring their thinking into line with mortal culture, the Neophile Collective swiftly abandoned the pretense of being anything other than a self-interested group. The vampires within made ghouls of artists, focused feeding grounds on universities and galleries, and with humility unexpected by many Kindred, abased themselves at the feet of mortal scholars so they might learn and grow. Del Santo's frustration with his fossilized sire resulted in his abandoning the vampire to his dated confusion. Most of the Collective's other members did likewise, focusing only on their own development.

A sudden wave of "modern" Kindred emerged as the Collective's membership grew, and unlike their foes, never felt distant to mortal thinking and invention. Within the Invictus and Gallows Post covenants, members of the Collective rose to prominence. Comfortable in the company of mortal pioneers and entrepreneurs, the Neophiles clutched to anything resembling advancement. More often than not, they leeches from mortals and absorbed not only blood, but ideas and innovation. The Collective's cloying grip on its members' herds allowed the vampires sparks of inspiration, and figures to emulate in society. It also led to the withering of hundreds of artists, philosophers, scholars, and lovers.

Until the nineteenth century, the Neophiles were unassailable. Indeed, few Kindred chose to attack the Collective for its ambitions. Most held the faction in high regard, which rarely crossed into aggression with other Kindred. For those who attained rare membership in the exclusive club, they found a constant link to humanity, through the Collective's centuries-long patronage of arts and culture. Del Santo and his brethren persisted — the Daeva an elder half a millennium in age — but their expansion to the United States led to their dissolution. Del Santo and his coterie immigrated to the east coast of America,



shipping massive caches of historic art, books, and even bringing their mortal muses. The Collective underestimated New York City's customs authorities however, and the Carthian Kindred controlling them. American vampires stole their crates and cargo before the émigrés awoke for the evening.

The Neophile Collectives' strength was in their parasitical grip on human history. Through their great collections of art and artifacts, they were ever capable of reviewing the past, and through its lens understanding the present. Their weakness was in their reliance on this inventory. When the vampires awoke to find their possessions scattered, del Santo could not prevent his brethren from falling to frenzy. Ellis Island became a bloodbath, as for weeks the furious Neophiles stalked the streets, preyed on migrants, and sought the precious baubles keeping them locked to humanity. The Invictus and the Carthian Movement of New York ultimately joined to hunt the Kindred, by this time draugr, leaving only del Santo to explain his intentions in America.

Del Santo had finally — altruistically — hoped to spread his methods of Humanity retention, not realizing his club's fanatical attachment to trinkets and physical fetters. He believed they learned from humanity, modeling their lives on mortals, sharing in all the joys and sorrows of fragile life, and the bursts of innovation associated with it. His Collective's increasing attachment to material things passed him by, leaving him as one of few Neophiles not destroyed in the Ellis Island massacre.

The Duke of New York offered the crushed Jacopo del Santo a haven and the possibility of reforming his coterie. The Daeva declined. His beliefs shattered, del Santo returned to Venice, where he dwells in seclusion to this night.

## *We Change History*

Vampires prey on the supposed apex race: humanity. Yet, vampires must hide their presence. Invictus sires warn their wards that influencing mortal politics and philosophy goes against the codes and conspiracies making the covenant strong. The Lancea et Sanctum make the same decree about religion, encouraging its Sanctified members to focus on following the Testament of Longinus. These covenants, and others, would have their members believe all Kindred exist apart from mortal society, leading perfect existences with no ripples or aftershocks.

Vampires who believe the Danse Macabre is at all so clandestine fool themselves.

Kindred covenants reflect and skew mortal societies and beliefs. With their Disciplines, they push mortals into acts through misguided benevolence and sheer sadism, sometimes just to see what might happen. No Masquerade-adhering vampire would admit it, but throughout history, vampires have played kingmaker, matchmaker, and warmonger in the field of mortal affairs.

The tactics elders use and the scope with which they apply them vary. A vampire may try to drive forward technological, environmental, or cultural changes at a broad level — becoming a hidden director of a major corporation or the shadow behind a political leader. Another may focus purely on a single family of kine,

## *We Who Atrophy*

Some vampires refuse to fight history, or find themselves unable to keep up with the pace of progress. These vampires atrophy, never moving beyond their own historic era. It is rare, but not impossible to locate a vampire still acting as she did at the time of her Embrace, whether it was at the height of punk, the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, or the decline of Rome. First impressions upon meeting these vampires are shock: that they remain unmolested despite actions separating them from the humanity in which they masquerade, humor: as the scope of a vampire still dressing and behaving like she's in Victorian England starts dawning, and horror: as the might of this vampire often focuses on the Kindred ridiculing him, or exposing him to a world he does not wish to know.

Consider that a vampire might choose to outlast time by locking himself away in his country estate, occasionally using his retainers to fetch him a meal, but otherwise reclusively separated from modern society and even the reach of these nights' popular covenants. When another vampire arrives at the recluse's door, wearing revealing clothing, a mobile phone buzzing in her pocket, and speaking in a vernacular they consider crude at best, and insulting at worst, it is likely the haven-bound vampire reacts with anger at having his seclusion interrupted.

Only other elders have true success engaging these isolated Kindred. Elders who match the flow of time, seek to manipulate it, or allow themselves to change with it, understand what the reclusive vampire goes through. However, those elders have the knowledge allowing them to adopt his style of dress, speech, and act as if the world outside is the world he knows. A large number are sympathetic to the recluse, much as a young mortal might be when visiting an elderly relative in a nursing home. They hope there exists a chance for the lost vampire's reintroduction into the All Night Society, as faltering as that hope might be. Hope for one lost Kindred, is hope for all.

having them dance to her tune, and act to her preferred expectations. There are many ways for a vampire to affect change, at intimate, local, and global levels. By surrounding herself in the world she creates, an elder more easily keeps pace with the passage of time.

## *The Idle Hands*

Some elders believe that to withstand history's tide, they must try to control the waves. These "Idle Hands," as they style themselves, attempt to transcend history by becoming its manipulators. Skilled in the realms of politics and theology, these vampires — often of the Lancea et Sanctum and Ordo Dracul — believe in the power of change, and the Kindred's right to forge a future for herself.





The Idle Hands are a loose confederation of manipulators crisscrossing the globe in domains from Moscow to Kinshasa. Their relations with each another are ones of tension and rivalry, as coterie comprising Idle Hands work to push mortals like chess-pieces, swaying governments, armies, and faiths, out of a mixture of ambition and fear. The Hands hope for control over evolutions in mortal law, order, and belief. The Hands dread these concepts escaping their understanding, which is why they work to enforce their own wills on mortals. It is far easier to grasp mortal activity and growth when you are the one fostering their activity and direction of that growth.

The Idle Hands have gone by many names, but only at the dawn of the twentieth century, did its disparate, elder members come together in Antwerp and decide on a unified course. Until that time, Idle Hands Kindred routinely worked to oppose one another. The Mekhet, Gustav Mero, and the Nosferatu, Theresa Owen, proposed to the collected manipulators that their cross-purpose movements resulted only in individual timelessness, rather than the same for a group of like-minded Kindred. As one vampire enforced his personality and whims on a political party or influential society, another with a separate viewpoint, possibly influenced by another Idle Hand, completely escaped his understanding.

The members of the Idle Hands present at the symposium agreed with Mero and Owen's requests, and resolved to readily communicate – whether by telephone, letter, or in person – to ensure they all kept abreast of one another's intentions. The Idle Hands formalized a plan to influence mortal society in a way better suited to their ideals, and as an example of what they might achieve through working together. The Great War shortly followed.

It is a matter of conjecture between vampires the world over, whether attribution for the First World War belongs to the Idle Hands. Most thought such political brinksmanship and the massive loss of life over the course of half a decade beyond the small faction. Gustav Mero stood in a court in Budapest and took credit in 1919, on behalf of the Hands. Kindred destroyed him within the night, the benevolent vampires aggrieved for the loss of so many beloved mortals, and the more cynical furious over the thinning of feeding stock. Since Mero's declaration, the Idle Hands fell to silence.

The Idle Hands still exist in the present nights, though their true influence is unknown. Carthians in-the-know claim the Hands are Invictus agents seeking to topple governments, or pry open weaknesses for members of the First Estate to climb into. The Circle of the Crone made clear in the aftermath of the Second World War that any Idle Hands discovered in their domains would find their unives forfeit. Paranoid elders see the presence of VII, or the Strix, as the Idle Hands' puppeteers.

The Idle Hands are all elders, though their connection to one another is nearing as tenuous as it was prior to the twentieth century. Admission to the faction, which



comes through invitation from an existing member, allows one access to advice and historic records concerning the influence of mortals, and the development of mortal society. Sadly, for many vampires who hope to move beyond history's

calcification, and believe the Hands are a key to doing so, they discover any mortal groups controlled by the Hands inevitably fall to corruption, fail to grow, and invariably end in bloodshed.

## *Turn Back the Clock*

Elders possess a vast array of experiences. To have existed through wars, witnessed the deaths of countless mortals, and experienced the transition of collapsing and evolving cultures, embeds scars on a vampire's consciousness. It is near-impossible for a vampire to live for over a century without her perception of others, the world, and herself changing.

Flashbacks are powerful scenes in chronicles of **Vampire**. They act as tools to explore character background, allowing players to revisit the times and locations from historic chronicles, and eras not yet visited during the course of the story. There are various reasons a Storyteller should use flashbacks, the following examples being but few:

- Enable characters to interact with historical eras and cultures, where the changing society and customs may tremendously change them or contribute to their calcification.
- Add meat to a character's skeletal backstory by visiting unexplored regions of their history.
- Provide the opportunity to revisit the events of earlier chronicles from different perspectives.
- Help strengthen the bonds between characters who on paper have established relationships, but in play have only the player's word that these bonds exist.
- Help exacerbate the antagonism between recurring foes, by offering examples of historic instances an enemy interferes with the protagonists' plans.
- Allow characters to acquire traits and behaviors a player wants to use in a modern chronicle.

Background development through flashbacks encourages players to add layers to their character. Players may conceptualize a backstory for their vampire, but flashback scenes make broad-stroke character histories even more detailed. Playing out a scene from a vampire's history is the perfect way to revisit key moments from the character's past, or add previously unexplored facets that can inform a new way of playing the character.

The famed movie *Rashomon* is a mystery tale told from multiple perspectives. Only by the story's conclusion does the viewer start understanding the truth of the historic events performed on screen. Flashbacks enable tales such as this, where players may explore ambiguous motives and actions between elders. A recurring plot in a chronicle with a mystery theme expands through flashback use. Players may grasp previously hidden plot points, such as by interacting with deceased characters, reading missing clues, or witnessing crimes as they happen.

Characters often have Merits at the chronicle's commencement. Especially in the case of elder characters, acquisition of these Merits may have occurred a long time ago. Flashbacks enable players to explore the ratings of traits on their character's sheet, and explore the moments where they formed their relationships, whether through owed debt, genuine friendship, or lingering resentment. If a Storyteller character shows up in a modern night chronicle, that character becomes a greater source of focus when they also appear in flashbacks.

Elders' experiences in the past result in the character presented in the modern nights' chronicle. Flashbacks allow players to add forgotten or hidden facets to their characters. If a flashback details a character's unknown past in the Ordo Dracul, it might make sense that when the story returns to the present, she understands some of the Coils of the Dragon. Likewise, if a character engages in and wins a melee tournament during a flashback to a knightly pageant, awarding that character dots in a related combat Attribute or Skill helps emphasize the character's connection to that moment, and the importance they place on it.

## *A Solitary Past*

Elders frequent coteries as often as do neonates. For an immortal, close companionship with trusted compatriots is a necessity. Due to the several centuries forming an elder's past, it is possible a vampire may not have shared the same friendships, courtships, and alliances for the entire duration. Kine and Kindred politics drive wedges into tight relationships. Vampires succumb to torpor, and not at uniform times. Kindred are as prone to falling out with best friends as mortals are — perhaps more so, due to the powers and high emotions at stake throughout Kindred existence. Maybe a trusted companion tonight was not even Embraced or born when the protagonist first entered the dark, or perhaps once upon a time the current friend was a sworn enemy.

Many of the formative lessons and memories an elder keeps took place when surrounded by enemies, alone, or in the company of companions long since departed. When playing flashbacks of this nature, it is important for the other players to remain involved. The Storyteller should write brief supporting cast backgrounds for play in a character's flashback, with guidelines on how the cast may act towards the character. Players should be encouraged to play these supporting cast members in a way that enriches the flashback, for the character receiving focus.

The following scene kits handle different themes and goals applicable to a variety of characters and taking place across



a diverse range of geographical locations and historical eras. Storytellers are encouraged to adapt these scenes to a new area or timeline, if necessary, and adjust any named or titled characters where appropriate. These scenes offer opportunities for enhancement of elder play, as players experience their characters' historic successes and failures not merely as narratives, but as participatory vignettes or starting points for new chronicles.

## ALTERATION

Change is something many vampires fear. The dead are physically unchanging. When the world around them changes, especially after a period of torpor, the alteration profoundly affects the vampire. The alteration may occur at a personal level, where they lose a limb in conflict with a rival; a familial level, where his favored ghoul gives birth and acquires new responsibilities; or a global level, where the vampire wakes to discover his bloodline declared anathema. In all cases, alteration to the status quo forces a vampire to reflect and change to fit new circumstances.

### BloodMap Inc.

By the late 1990s, adoption of the Internet became commonplace, irreversibly changing methods of communication, research, and leisure for mortals and Kindred alike. An enterprising elder, not fully understanding the Internet's scope, yet appreciative of its practicality for information storage, compiles an online record of vampires, along with short biographies, methods of contacting them, and behind a pay wall, access to their haven addresses.

As other vampires discover the burgeoning website, alarms ring throughout each of the covenants. Who is this foolish vampire so readily advertising information in breach of the Traditions? What does he gain? Does he fully understand the danger this information poses? This vampire surely realizes *anyone* could see this information: Kindred, kine, or otherwise.

Perhaps the vampire responsible truly is out-of-touch with the Internet's reach. He is naively trying to encourage connectivity between Kindred. Or maybe he seeks to bring down each of the vampires on his site, using this new form of communication to breach the Traditions, concealing his own identity behind layers of code.

Any covenant might send the elder protagonist to bring down the site, or the vampire himself. The elder knows the vampire responsible, and knows his intentions. Maybe she needs to talk him down from his quest, no matter its intent. But, what does she do with the stored information? Is the vampire correct when he claims he is just the first of many to attempt compiling such a database?

Turning this scene on its head, perhaps the vampire who forms this site is the elder protagonist.

## BONDS

- **The Employer** is the ranking member of a covenant, who trusts the elder protagonist sufficiently to perform this mission of silencing a potential danger to the Masquerade. The Employer offers a reward for the Webmaster's destruction, and an even greater one — under the table — for the recovery of the vampire's stored information.
- **The Webmaster** is the vampire responsible for setting up the Find-a-Vamp.org website. He is a vampire already known to the protagonist, either for his hatred of other Kindred, or his desperate need to reach out to others like him. Maybe he is an old friend, recently awake and innocent to the dangers the Internet presents.

## STAKES

If the elder allows the information to flow, hunters, rival vampires, and other dangerous entities access the intelligence. Vampires must adopt greater haven secrecy, and Kindred community pulls farther apart as a feeling of paranoia descends on the All Night Society.

If the elder silences the website, she may now hold the information, increasing her knowledge of Kindred worldwide, along with their resting places. A mercenary elder may use the information as a bargaining chip. Such a route leads to rapid wealth and a swiftly growing target on her back.

The Webmaster himself will not die for his information, but will forever target the vampire responsible for its destruction.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

If the information is still available, the website alters the elder's Safe Place and Haven rating, along with that of other vampires named on the site. It is now dangerous to have only one hidey hole.

Obtaining the Webmaster's information justifies a high Intelligence rating, or the Merit *Where the Bodies Are Buried*. An elder using the information for blackmail gains Resources and a lot of enemies. Those who turn it over to the Employer likely gain Kindred Status — either at a city or covenant level.

## CONTROL

Whether controlling or controlled, the experience of influence leaves an impression on an elder. The seizing of power over a city, the blood bond forced on an errant child, and the domination of mortals into fulfilling a covenant-ordained objective: all are control experiences during which a vampire feels empowered. The elder may fondly recall the gifts his subjects brought to him, attempting to win favor. The moment his rival ousted him from power and exiled him from the domain leaves an even greater mark.



## An Uncomfortable Throne

The medieval domain's figurehead succumbs to torpor without naming an immediate successor. War threatens to consume the region, unless a suitable replacement steps up and takes the throne.

This chain of events is commonplace in Kindred society, though there is a twist. Nobody in the domain wants the power. There have been eight rulers in as many decades. The domain seems to draw chaos like a moth to the fire. The Princes routinely fall to foes within and without the domain.

The elder is being pushed to claim rank, based on her age, if not her willingness. All speak in her favor, but she knows it is a short road to unavoidable destruction.

### BONDS

- **The Council** comprises elders of each clan and covenant. These barons and viscounts routinely push vampires into leadership roles they cannot survive. They speak to the elder protagonist, rejecting any refusal to title. Their constant plotting and rivalries inevitably lead to the domain figurehead's Final Death every single time.
- **The Rival** is a vampire knight who — through naïveté or blind hunger for power — believes he would make a more suitable ruler. The Council does not desire this Kindred as ruler, but he is insistent, and arrays all his minions against any opponents.
- **The Sleeping Figurehead** remains torpid. If someone finds her body, revives her, and returns her to power, the matter will resolve for a time. But, what if the Sleeping Figurehead does not wish to reclaim power, or the Rival assassinates her as soon as she sits upon the throne?

### STAKES

If the elder accepts the burden of power, the Rival targets her. In swift order, the nobles' Council falls to civil conflict. Council members will use the elder as a tool, until one objects and has the elder slain or driven to torpor. The protagonist may gain power, but only temporarily.

The elder may support her Rival, despite personal enmity, finding the Rival to be the best equipped vampire for the role. He is above the Council's edicts and challenges them at once with his full force. If such a coup proved victorious, the Rival becomes a firm friend.

The Sleeping Figurehead may be the best opportunity for stability, if the elder convinces her to remain. Such a character may become a mentor, and owe a boon for reprieve from torpor.

### RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder may gain control of a domain, constituting Merits such as Feeding Grounds, and Kindred Status at a city level. The Tasked Condition is appropriate, when the Council delegated the elder as leader.

If the city does not remain within the elder's grasp, this leaves the Broken Condition, whereas if she clings on, she gains Steadfast.

Relationships with the Rival and Sleeping Figurehead translate to Allies, Contacts, Mentor, or potentially a Touchstone if a strong bond forms. The longer she stays leader, the greater her Social Skills increase, along with the risk of injuries and Banes, as greater threats force her to desperate measures.

## CORRUPTION

When your powers allow you to read and sculpt minds, addict mortals to your Vitae, and twist the blood in their bodies, it is little surprise that corruption comes to easily to Kindred. The defining moments of corruption in a vampire's life may come at the point she bends a childe to complete mental slavery, betrays a trusted peer to an enemy for small gains, or indiscriminately feeds from subjugated mortals. Vampires are victims to corruption as well as perpetrators. Princes and Hierophants send coteries on suicide missions and con them out of territory and resources. Carthians are as susceptible to losing positions to political brinksmanship, rigged voting, and voter manipulation as the kine.

### Vitae Slaves

In the fifteenth century, Pope Nicholas V issued the papal bull *Dum Diversas*, approving the reduction of "Saracens, pagans, and any other unbelievers" to hereditary slavery. This decree legitimized Catholic beliefs of the time.

On the African West Coast, Portuguese and Spanish Kindred preyed on the indigenous peoples, trafficking healthy bodies to courts in Europe for high fees. The elder takes part in this practice. He owns a ship, a crew of loyal men, and stands to become one of the wealthiest vampires of the time. He discovers an untapped channel of blood in Mauritania. Ignorant to the rumblings of rebellion from Mekhet and Gangrel among the enslaved people, he establishes a press-gang colony and seeks to claim an army of slaves.

### BONDS

- **The Slaver** is the elder's favored ghoul, trusted and devoted to fulfilling the elder's whims, no matter how morally reprehensible.
- **The Holy Man** is a mortal slave who resists the elder's ambitions. He tries to rally his fellow kine against the interloping vampire. The Holy Man will die and become a martyr for his cause, if he must.
- **The Mauritanian Kindred** form from ranks of Mekhet and Gangrel. As the Gangrel advocate aggression against the elder, the Mekhet try to bargain their people's freedom, pointing the elder towards lands beyond their own.

### STAKES

The unconscionable actions in Mauritania risk permanent enemies and stains to the soul, in exchange for temporal power and wealth. Depending on how corrupt the elder might be, he



could lead the way for enslavement of non-European mortals, repopulating the ranks of ghouls and blood dolls left dilapidated by the great plague of the fourteenth century.

The scene offers an elder the chance to increase his geopolitical ties, and through coercion, he may gain powers the Mauritanian Mekhet and Gangrel possess. Adoption into the Lancea et Sanctum is a likely reward, as they emulate the papal blessing for such deeds.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

Slavery's immoral nature takes a permanent toll on the elder's Humanity, and may leave him with the Jaded or Guilty Condition. His Skills in Politics and Intimidation increase, at the cost of incurred Banes.

The elder may reward the Slaver with the Embrace for unquestioning service. The Holy Man compels his followers to become hunters of vampires, shackle-breakers, and permanent thorns in the elder's side. The Mauritanian Kindred grow to loathe the elder, becoming recurring foes. The elder clashes often with Gangrel seeking vengeance. He may gain Mekhet Disciplines in exchange for not touching the herds under their protectorate.

## CREATION

An orthodox Lancea et Sanctum member might have his fellow Sanctified believe creation is the province of mortals, and a vampire's purpose is to hunger, terrorize, and destroy. One of the Ordo Dracul's Dragons would likely refute this, pointing to the alchemical and ritual creations for which her covenant is responsible. A vampire *can* create, but to do so requires constant study, and immersion in the field of creation, whether it be esoteric, scientific, or simply human. A vampire is as capable as a mortal of composing a musical masterpiece, but her age and disassociation from modern culture may stunt the vampire's grasp of music. The moment where a vampire creates an artifact of lasting beauty, leads a revolutionary societal system, or founds a coterie or covenant is an instance of great importance.

### Forming the Bloodline

The elder reaches a level of Blood Potency where she founds her own bloodline, drawing attention from all quarters as Kindred admire or recoil from the subversion of the blood.

The domain's Lancea et Sanctum Archbishop curses the elder's actions as abhorrent, and against the will of his blood. The Ordo Dracul Master applauds Vitae's manipulation, and offers protection to the vampire. Caught in the midst of this is the childe Embraced to the bloodline, whose life hangs in the balance.

As covenants vie for the bloodline founder's loyalty, a member of another bloodline, secretive within the domain, offers tutelage on warping the blood further. She offers to mentor the elder in creation of a new Discipline.

## BONDS

- **The Archbishop** heads the domain's fundamentalist Lancea et Sanctum, and proclaims that the elder must renounce her aberrant line and destroy her misbegotten childe.
- **The Master** leads the domain's Ordo Dracul, and will extend protection to the elder in exchange for her becoming sworn to the covenant.
- **The Childe** is the first to manifest the bloodline's Banes and atypical behavior. His life is at risk as the covenants vie for his sire's favor. The Childe falls to the background in the shuffle as offers and threats go back-and-forth.
- **The Sympathizer** is member to another, secret bloodline. She saw the same clash of ideologies when her sire came out as member to that bloodline. The Sanctified destroyed him for his abhorrence.

## STAKES

The elder stands to make enemies of the Sanctified, and allies of the Dragons, but only if she stays true to her bloodline and accepts the Ordo Dracul as her covenant. The Ordo Dracul do not extend the same offer to the Childe, seeing the offspring as fodder for experimentation, but of little further use.

Alternatively, the elder may forswear her bloodline and earn the Lancea et Sanctum's favor, and the Ordo Dracul's hostility. The Childe may follow her lead, but is ripe for recruitment by another covenant looking to harm the elder, or upset one of the involved parties.

The Sympathizer offers sanctuary to both elder and offspring, providing they both step away from the competing covenants and agree to dwell in secrecy until attentions move on. Of course, turning the Sympathizer over to either covenant promises reward.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder gains membership and Kindred Status in either of the named covenants in this scene, along with a covenant-specific Merit such as Sworn, for the Ordo Dracul. She gains enemies in the other covenant. Sacrificing her offspring for advancement takes a toll on Humanity. If the Childe survives, he resents the elder forever after.

The elder may accept the Sympathizer's offer, and gain a Mentor, along with tutelage in developing a bloodline Discipline. Doing so removes dots in Kindred Status and Social Skills, due to the Sympathizer's preference for isolation.

## CULTURE

Vampires absorb culture. They leech from it, developing patchwork personalities informed by the various peoples, beliefs, political systems, and art types in which they revel. An elder may hold fast to Baroque art, ardently believe in the principles of Marxism,



and enjoy the music of The Beatles. Culture impacts vampires more than they know. They rarely found cultures of their own, though covenant rules and decrees may form a microcosmic culture.

## Woodstock

The Woodstock Festival of 1969 indelibly marked the mortal consciousness. It heralded the peak of hippie counter-culture, and the descent into the grim 1970s. A feeling of freedom pervaded the United States, as drugs flowed and the people celebrated musical exuberance.

The elder and a coterie of like-minded Kindred are present at Woodstock's night-time revelry. They wish to experience the bohemian joys the mortals so rave about. They want to discover the drug-induced feelings of spiritual euphoria.

As the music and thrashing pulse of blood overwhelm the vampires, they become aware of a threat to the attendees. A Daeva Apostate who feeds from the heightened emotions of those in attendance seeks to indulge, and in so doing, wither Woodstock's joy.

## BONDS

- **The Coterie-Mate** swiftly becomes addicted to the drug-infused blood of Woodstock attendees. The elder must restrain and remove her from the festival. She risks frenzy, and becoming addicted to the blood of drugged kine.
- **The Muse** is a mortal who inspires the elder with talk of freedom, enlightenment, and transcendence. This mortal may be Embraced, or inspire the elder to make a shift in philosophy.
- **The Apostate** preys on the euphoria coursing throughout Woodstock. A Daeva of the Xiao bloodline, the vampire feeds on emotion as hungrily as she does Vitae. She risks souring Woodstock, and destroying the elder's chance for enlightenment as she targets the Muse.

## STAKES

The Muse is a mystic with understanding of immortality and transcendence. He could become a prized child or useful contact for spiritual matters in the future. The Apostate endangers the Muse, targeting him for feeding. The Apostate may become an ally, if the elder allows her to feed without interference.

The elder may lose the Coterie-Mate to Woodstock's overwhelming intensity of drugs and blood. If the elder stays in the Muse's company, listening to his wise words while shutting out the cries for help, a rock band of hunters bring the Coterie-Mate's frenzy short.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

Any of the supporting characters in this scene may become Allies, Contacts, Mentors, or Retainers following the events at Woodstock, depending on choices made. Just attending the festival grants the elder an improved rating in Empathy and

Expression, and possibly Presence, as he absorbs the thriving culture. The Muse becomes a Touchstone, for his wisdom and clarity.

The elder risks gaining Conditions such as Wanton, if he indulges overmuch, or Addicted, if he dabbles in drug-taking kine. He also risks losing the Coterie-Mate if he pursues a path of personal growth over caring for his friends.

## DESTRUCTION

Vampires are natural destroyers, using their Disciplines to rip apart empires, mortals, and institutions. Elders observe and cause destruction repeatedly throughout their lives. Vampires alone are not responsible for widespread devastation. Humans need little provocation to commence wars and bloody murders. As well as watching great cities rise, vampires live to see those same cities fall. Although they may behold a great leader attempt bringing peace to an age-old conflict with words alone, they also capture the moment the mortal dies, as his enemies refuse to listen.

## RFK

In this scene set in 1968 Los Angeles, the elder witnesses the assassination of Robert Francis Kennedy, a United States Senator campaigning for presidential election.

Kennedy passes through the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel as he shakes hands with guests and the press. A man named Sirhan Sirhan guns him down with three shots, before bodyguards and members of the public restrain him. Kennedy dies the same night.

The elder is there to observe the ascension of a popular public figure, preaching hope and progression for many, at a time when his opponent is pledging the opposite. These inspirational ambitions reach the elder's cold core, and compel him to see this man face-to-face. Seeing his death shakes the vampire, reminding her of mortality's fragility, and how easily optimistic dreams may be shattered.

## BONDS

- **The Opponent** attends the scene for the same reason as the elder, though he is of a different covenant and has divergent political beliefs. The scene shocks the Opponent as much as it does the elder, converting long-term opposition to talk of peace.
- **The Man in Black** is a member of Task Force: Valkyrie; a conspiracy of hunters appointed to protect high-ranking world officials including RFK from vampires such as the elder. The Man in Black will try to prevent the elder from reaching the Ambassador Hotel, and single-mindedly blames the vampire when Kennedy falls.
- **The Collateral** collapses to the ground, as Sirhan's wild shots fly into the ground. Ignored as the onlookers focus on Kennedy, he pleads for help from the elder while bleeding out.



## STAKES

The elder risks losing hope for humanity in this scene. Watching the death of a potential world leader up close leaves a mental callous. If she intervenes in the assassination, the Opponent attempts to tackle her, fearing a Masquerade breach. The desperate situation may form bonds between the two, or worsen their differences.

The Man in Black has no doubt the elder is behind the murder, despite evidence to the contrary. Just by being there, the elder earns a permanent foe in one of the most lethal hunter conspiracies. Meanwhile, the Collateral offers hope for redemption or damnation. The elder may struggle with his hungry Beast as the blood flows, and save the Collateral's life, abandon him, or drag him elsewhere to feed or even Embrace.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The events of RFK affect a sea change in the elder's personality. After investing so much in support of this one fragile mortal, only to see him gunned down, a vampire may wonder whether there's a point. Humanity drops, and the elder gains the Jaded Condition.

Through expressing interest in mortal government, the elder gains dots in the Politics Skill, and potentially the Investigation Skill if she wishes to discover Sirhan's reasons for the killing.

If the elder connects with her long-time rival, the possibility exists for enemies to become Allies. Over the next half-a-century, one may join the other's covenant.

## DISCOVERY

Vampires inevitably follow in mortal footsteps. When invaders arrived at America's shores, European vampires trailed behind. As scientists discovered the genome, Kindred researchers stole a glimpse at the research. Elders are capable of discovery, but it is often inner discovery. After observing the marvels of human ambition, vampires reflect, and learn new things about their own desires. Sometimes a vampire discovers new experiences in the company of fellow Kindred or mortals. Occasionally they rediscover long-buried passions, interests, and beliefs. Elders dedicate their existences to solving ancient riddles, locating ancestors, and in the case of the Ordo Dracul, overcoming their condition.

### The Golden Lure

The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 changed South Africa from an agricultural society to the largest gold-producer in the world. The city of Johannesburg formed over the first major gold site, and persisted into the modern nights as a major domain for South African Kindred.

After exile to the rural Langlaagte farm, the elder faced a life of isolation. When his retainers aided in discovery of the gold reef, his fortunes changed. The elder swiftly became one of the wealthiest Kindred in the world, and epicenter to an expanding

domain. Managing the swollen infrastructure, influx of vampires, and flow of gold enters the once outcast vampire's responsibility.

Kindred follow fortune. Everyone wants a piece of the pie. The foe that saw to his exile campaigns for the elder's removal from power. Covenants court the elder in hopes of benefiting from the mined wealth. The mortals themselves cling fiercely to the gold, prying control of the mines from the elder, unless he makes choice Embraces and ghouls. The indigenous residents resist the Dutch control over the mines, while being put to laborious work against their will. Ethical quandaries arise swiftly, along with numerous threats.

## BONDS

- **The Nemesis** exiled the elder. This vampire is of great status, but puts her political acumen to one side in favor of persecuting the elder, and attempting to steal all that he has.
- **The Prospector** is the mortal who discovered the gold, either through mishap or deliberate prospecting. He now stands to benefit greatly, if he can retain land ownership and free will from the influence of the elder and his Nemesis.
- **The Sotho-Tswana** peoples populate the area, and perform unskilled mine work. The Sotho-Tswana produce representatives, including indigenous vampires, who seek to liberate the mines from the colonial Dutch.
- **The Herald** arrives from the Netherlands, as representative of the Invictus presence in the Dutch Empire. She pledges support to the elder, if he peacefully turns over the domain of Johannesburg to the First Estate.

## STAKES

The elder stands to claim domain through good fortune. Perhaps he was content as an outcast for nearly a century, before mortals discovered the seams of gold. Otherwise, maybe this is a long awaited lucky break. A rich haven in a labyrinthine mine complex awaits him.

The Herald offers position and status if the elder pledges an oath to the Invictus. He may retain praxis by joining the First Estate. His Nemesis wishes to see the elder brought low. She believes he deserves nothing — domain or otherwise — and arranges her forces against him.

If Embraced or made a ghoul, the Prospector proves a valuable minion. The elder would own the mines through mortal as well as vampire right. This does not render immunity however, as the Sotho-Tswana wish to strip the Dutch Prospector and his sponsors of all to which they lay claim.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder holds praxis over Johannesburg, or earns grave enemies in the Invictus for his rejection of their offer. If his Nemesis was victorious in turning the nascent Johannesburg community against him, the elder may still be an outcast.

The Prospector and Sotho-Tswana present Embrace, ghoul, and potential Touchstone opportunities. Their moral plight,



the significance of the land, and why they fight for it leaves a mark on the vampire.

The elder comes away with increased Resources, a potential Safe Place or Haven, and likely high Academics and Politics Skills for his understanding of mining and consorting with the Invictus. He may now be a member of that covenant in good standing, sacrificing gold for Kindred Status.

## EMBRACE

The Embrace is a pivotal moment for any vampire. Whether the point at which she was Embraced, or the time she Embraced her first childe; the incident of a vampire's creation is crucial to the elder's memory. The Embrace conveys a timeless quality to vampires. It is the moment where a human died and in its place birthed a monster. The situation surrounding the Embrace differs between Kindred. Some recall hot passion followed by rebirth. Others remember only the horror of dying or killing, followed by cold flesh hungry for blood. Depending on the historical context and reasoning behind the Embrace, the situation may leave an indelible disfigurement on the vampire's psyche.

### The Ballet of Chestnuts

The elder's first Embrace was contentious. A great bacchanalian orgy known as the Ballet of Chestnuts took place in the courts of Cesare Borgia, son of the Pope, in 1501. Vampires of all clans were present for this sacrilegious feast of flesh, with passions running high and blood flowing freely.

The elder Embraces a mortal on that night, but this mortal is pursued by another vampire. The elder reacts out of passion, where the prospective sire has been grooming their prospective childe for years. The childe's presumptive sire demanded the fledgling, even after Embrace. A clash of emotions ensues; a childe caught in the midst of warring Kindred.

As vampires draw lines in the sand, the Lancea et Sanctum move via their subtle Borgia influence, seeking to silence all Kindred who attended the Ballet.

## BONDS

- **The Prospective Sire** bitterly resents the elder. She refuses to accept that the elder stole her childe through ignorance, and demands the status of domitor over the fledgling.
- **The Fledgling** is high on Vitae, and besotted with his new sire. A mortal with a loose connection to the Borgia line, his name and title draw unwanted attention.
- **The Inquisitor** represents the Sanctified presence at the Papal Palace, where the orgy takes place. She is under strict orders to allow no Kindred to remember or survive the night.

## STAKES

Through this scene, the elder may gain a childe and lose him just as quickly. The Prospective Sire needs the Fledgling to fill a hollow in

her soul. The elder may buy peace with boons, tutelage in Disciplines, or rich territory, but little else will satisfy her parental need.

The Fledgling holds title and wealth of his own, and primarily seeks his true sire. A bond of loyalty forms, as he just ingested the elder's Vitae. If this bond breaks through offer of the childe to an adoptive sire, he will attempt to escape the Palace, and run independent of either party.

The Inquisitor arrives late to the Ballet, and balks at the sight of a dozen Kindred feeding and dropping their Masks before the decadent Borgias. She takes it upon herself to steadily remove every Kindred participant before the night is out. The elder observes this, as the vampire ranks thin hour by hour. Assisting the Inquisitor earns favor with the Lancea et Sanctum, but may also earn a stake to the heart once the deeds are done.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder gains a childe, and a strained relationship with him. The Prospective Sire may enter the elder's debt through donation of the childe, owing the protagonist boons and tutelage, translating to out-of-clan Disciplines. She may otherwise hold the theft of the Fledgling over the elder forever, and by the modern era have abilities matching the elder's, through frequent repayment of boons.

If she retains the childe, the elder gains Resources, Influence, and Kindred Status at a city level by proxy. The Borgias are a powerful family. She also likely gains dots in Occult and Politics representing the Borgias' controlling influence over the Church.

This scene may justify membership to the Lancea et Sanctum, or foes within its ranks. The Inquisitor will never stop on her mission to silence the Ballet of Chestnut's participants, as the entire debacle represents an egregious Masquerade breach on their territory, and the Church's sins.

## FAITH

Some vampires believe their condition is a curse mandated by God, or by gods. Others believe it is a symptom with a basis in science. In truth, the two do not need to be exclusive, though the divisive nature of religion often forces vampires against each other on the matter of whose belief is correct. Throughout history, elders take part in crusades and pilgrimages to prove their point, or discover whether there is one. Faith keeps some elders going. It destroys others. Mortals with faith use it as a weapon against vampires. The Lancea et Sanctum is founded on the basis of its own belief system. Faith as a concept drives vampires to moments of realization, introspection, and clarity. It may also destroy hope, instigate war, and force the hand of apocalyptic revelation.

### An Unliving Miracle

The elder's pilgrimage to the Holy Land leads her to a monastery buried in the Swiss Alps. Desperately in need of blood, the vampire struggles between the compulsion to feed on the peaceful monks, or accept their succor with grace, and depart as soon as the sun next sets.



During the elder's daytime rest, beautiful chanting throughout the monastery halls wakes her, and sends her in a daze to the chapel, where the monks all pray at an unadorned altar. Driven to stay awake, and yet compelled to her knees, the elder buckles in the altar's presence. One of the monks blesses her with clean water, and prays with her until sundown.

When the vampire wakes again — half-believing the previous day's drama was a dream — she finds herself completely satiated, and the monastery empty of its residents. It appears to have been this way for some time.

## BONDS

- **The Monks** all express kindness and understanding, no matter the elder's actions or explanations. They will not offer their blood to the vampire unless compelled. If the vampire bends one to her will, she finds the blood tastes wooden, and hollow.
- **The Angel** may be something divine, or something *other*, but he blesses the vampire in a way that does not condemn her undead state or sinful desires. The Angel remains with her for years later; a reminder of the possibility of redemption and divinity.

## STAKES

If the elder receives the monks' kindness with humility and gratitude, the vampire gains a dot of Blood Potency, a full pool of Vitae, and an inexplicable encounter with something beneficent and divine. Such an encounter may drive her into the arms of the anti-orthodoxy Circle of the Crone.

If the elder sates her hunger on the monks, it places in her mind the importance of Kindred as predator, and pushes her into the waiting arms of the Lancea et Sanctum. She drinks her fill of Vitae from the pacifist monks, before moving on.

This scene may make the elder a believer, and contribute new Aspirations and Touchstones centered on faith, or it may harden the vampire, increasing Willpower and communion with the Beast.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder's experiences at the monastery leave a pronounced effect on the elder. The scene may bolster existing beliefs, form new ones, or convince a stubborn vampire that all kine exist as feeding stock; it is simply that the kind ones make drinking easier. The elder gains the Inspired condition, the Anointed Merit, or Jaded Condition, depending on the choices made.

Receiving the blessing grants the elder a dot of Blood Potency. Either outcome compels the vampire to investigate the monks' existence, and whether they truly were agents of God or serving something else entirely.

## FEAR

Fear is a powerful motivator. Even elder vampires suffer anxiety and dread, as they see their Touchstones at risk, their

childer in peril, or an unholy monstrosity bearing down on them. Many moments of importance occur as a result of fear. When a vampire has no choice but to choose between one childe or the other to satisfy the tyrannical Prefect's blood hunger, fear rules the night. When a vampire elects to step aside for her rival, allowing another to ascend to the Primogen council, it may be through fear. When an elder murders her childe, to silence the one witness to her breaking the Traditions, it is through fear of exposure. Fear leaves a mark. It defines where a vampire has fallen, and where she may strengthen in future.

## Seven Lucky Gods

During the fifteenth century — the final century of the Ashikaga shogunate — Japan descended into a violent period of civil war. This war to determine the ruling shogun's succession led to Japan's feudal lords — the *daimyo* — burning Kyoto to the ground, as they battled for their preferred candidate.

As the city burns around them, the Seven Lucky Gods reveal themselves to the native Kindred. Whether controlling the kine's civil conflict, or taking advantage of it as a suitable milieu, the Seven perform a systematic hunt for the elder and her coterie. They terrorize all vampires in the region before a backdrop of fires. The inferno lasts several nights, consuming the domain and all vampires within it.

Coterie in this era of Japanese history tend towards the familial. In this scene, the elder keeps the company of her revered sire, known as the *ue-sama*, her rebellious childe, known as the *yogisha*, and her headstrong best friend, known as the *shinyu*. They all pull the vampire in separate directions as the city burns.

The elder cannot rescue every member of her coterie, or tackle each of the Seven, and absolutely cannot save every artifact and bauble from her haven. Hunkering down and outlasting the firestorm is impossible. The elder must flee in fright, and choose what, or who, she saves.

To this night, the elder is still terrified of the Seven Lucky Gods, their unblinking servants, and the cleansing power of fire.

## BONDS

- **The Shinyu** is one of the elder's longtime allies, bonds-people, and coterie-mates. He can normally fend for himself, but now bears terrible injuries inflicted by one of the Seven Lucky Gods.
- **Ue-sama** exemplifies the Japanese blood bond between childe and master. The Ue-sama's strong link to his childe is hard to break, potentially forcing the elder to save the ancient master. The elder reveres her sire, but resents the blood bond between the two.
- **The Yogisha** desires to fight the Gods and impress her familial line, including the elder, her sire. It is a matter of pride that she does so, as a great victory will free her from the elder's bond.
- **Bishamonten** is one of the Seven Lucky Gods, unafraid of



sprinting through flame and collapsing buildings to destroy his prey. Wherever he walks, a hoop of fire surrounds his armored, helmeted form.

## STAKES

This scene is all about pursuit, loss, and fear of Final Death. Bishamonten and his six associates will not stop in their efforts to cleanse Kyoto. The Lucky Gods are inscrutable. They do not volunteer their reasons. They are resolute killers.

The elder's role in this scene is one of choice. She cannot save everything close to her. The blood bond ties her to the Ue-sama, bonds of genuine friendship — a concept not outwardly expressed — tie her to the Shinyu, and one of parenthood and responsibility links her to the Yogisha. The Bishamonten comes for all three vampires, and will destroy two of them, or one, and grievously wound the elder — likely sending her to torpor.

Kyoto receives a hard reset. Havens, status, and wealth are lost in the city, as the Seven Lucky Gods wipe the slate clean, and leave lasting Conditions on the survivors.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder leaves this scene with at least one associate less. The elder suffers the Frightened Condition related to VII, and the Guilty Condition relating to the abandoned coterie-mate.

This scene may herald the turning point at which the elder lost everything dear. Resources, Haven, Safe Place, Allies, and Kindred Status all diminish. A permanent enemy appears in the form of the Seven Lucky Gods.

The experience of surviving a domain consumed by fire increases the elder's Resolve and Survival. If they survived a physical encounter with one of the Gods; Stamina, Brawl, Melee, or Athletics also increase.

## FRENZY

If a vampire believes the Mekhet scholars, the Gangrel rejoice in frenzy, and welcome the irreversible status of draugr. The Savages angrily rebuff this defamation. Sometimes they fall to frenzy as they do so. Frenzy is a risk to all vampires. Those who fall rarely recover unchanged. During frenzy, the Beast takes over, and displays the vampire's worst aspects. Those who witness the rage and survive will forever judge the vampire for lack of control. Vampires have lost status, loved ones, and attachment to humanity by succumbing to frenzy. Some elders approach the threshold and pull back at the last moment, just to prove their self-control. These desperado activities bear risks, courts sometimes falling to such hotheaded Kindred with something to prove.

### The Dark Years

Set at an indeterminate time when the wilderness was truly wild, and creatures of the night ruled the dark, the elder succumbs to frenzy. His lover drives him to this condition, as in a fit of jealousy the paramour destroys one of the elder's Touchstones.

For years following, the elder cannot break his frenzy. Locked in a perpetual state of rage, he becomes a figure of folklore, preying on traveling kine and Kindred alike, hounding isolated villages and border towns. A scholar believes the elder is now draugr, irredeemable and in need of destruction.

A chance meeting between the elder and a wandering Gangrel of immense age achieves the impossible, as the Savage penetrates the elder's permanent rage with a Devotion made up of Animalism and Dominate. She coaxes the elder back to sanity, and disappears into the night.

## BONDS

- **The Lover** drives the elder to his initial frenzy, after destroying one of his Touchstones. The Lover desperately wishes to make amends, but by approaching the elder, she risks destruction.
- **The Scholar** advises the Lover and all concerned Kindred that the elder is lost to the draugr state, never to recover. He stands amazed and subsequently discredited once the elder recovers, and attempts to drive him back to frenzy to prove his point and recover status.
- **The Wanderer** discovers the elder in his crazed state. For unknown reasons, she forces the elder into obedience and draws out the Beast. She then departs, leaving the elder sane, but alone.

## STAKES

The elder loses control, rank, and reputation as frenzy consumes his life. He terrorizes countless mortals and immortals, ferociously destroying fellow Kindred and consuming their Vitae. His salvation only comes via the Lover who betrayed him, and the Wanderer who grants spiritual healing.

The elder may distance himself from the events surrounding her frenzy and start anew. By tracking the Wanderer, he may instead learn a new Devotion. If he forgives the Lover, he begins to once again piece together his life, though with new Touchstones.

The Scholar's attempts to constantly harry the elder back to frenzy may result in conflict, and opposition from his covenant — the Circle of the Crone.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder's Humanity will be low because of the years-long frenzy. The elder may accept responsibility for the loss of control. If she accepts her predatory role, the elder likely joins the Sanctified or the Acolytes. If she repents and tries to maintain permanent control in future, she likely joins the controlled Invictus or Carthians.

The elder gains the Wanderer's Beast-controlling Devotion, if she devoted her time to tracking the Gangrel and learning at her feet. Add the Wanderer as Mentor or Touchstone. The Lover also represents a possible Touchstone, or source of



permanent humiliation, likely triggering the Bestial Condition when in proximity.

No matter what, the elder gains the Atrocious Merit and increased dots in Intimidation, becoming a subject of legend and nightmare.

## GRIEF

Mortals mourn the deaths of friends, relatives, and even distant connections, but the fleeting nature of life does not allow them to linger overlong on a companion's passing. They have their own lives, and dwelling on the fates of others leads to ruin. Vampires are potentially immortal. Elders witness death and loss time and again. They cannot escape grief. Wars raze cities. Buildings collapse. Mortals and vampires alike die tragic deaths. Vampires must witness all this, bear it, and struggle on, but not all are capable. The losses accumulate. Grief compels a vampire to do things differently in their own life, to memorialize a fallen friend or foe, or succumb to overwhelming sorrow. In the latter case, it is only with time and firm companions' understanding that an elder stands the chance of ever moving on.

### Unsinkable

They never actually called the ship "unsinkable" until after it sank, but none could expect the brilliantly designed Titanic would sink on its 1912 voyage across the Atlantic.

The elder stows away in the ship's hull, preying on the steerage passengers, engineers, and stokers. The vampire's retainers and coterie spread throughout the ship, some staying in opulence, while others fester in squalor.

The initial response when the Titanic hits the iceberg is muted. The Titanic begins to list, and the order to abandon ship rings out. Passengers still express reluctance to climb into lifeboats, in temperatures only just above freezing. The situation's seriousness only emerges as water fills the lower decks, and the crew begins lowering the paltry number of lifeboats.

The elder and her coterie will not survive the temperatures in the Atlantic, and walking the pressured depths is impossible. The vampire must sacrifice loyal retainers and friends for a place on a lifeboat. An undead monster must push aside living beings for the chance to survive, in vain hope that a rescue ship will recover her before the coming of the dawn.

### BONDS

- **The Butler** has served the elder for centuries, with loyalty and distinction. His gender, and position in steerage, makes his chances of survival remote. Can the elder sacrifice a ghoul so dear to her?
- **The Ward** is the elder's beloved sister by Vitae, Embraced by the same sire. She is young, and under the elder's care as she transports her to New York City to reunite with their mutual

sire. Can the elder find a space in a lifeboat for the fledgling, at risk to herself?

- **The Family** includes the elder's mortal lineage — a group Touchstone — immigrating to America. The elder only had enough money to place some of them in second class accommodation. The rest travels in steerage. Their desperate fight to survive the sinking captures all of them.

### STAKES

The elder combats much potential grief in this scene. More than a focus on vampire powers or politicking, this scene focuses on sacrifice and the meaning of bonds. The increasing panic on the ship may compel the elder to frenzy, as she must choose the path of self-preservation, which of her bonds to sacrifice, and whether mortal lives are more important than her own.

### RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

If the elder saves the following bonds, she gains the following:

- **The Butler** stays forever loyal and will sacrifice his own life for his domitor, though he never forgets the experience, and never overcomes his guilt. The Butler is a five dot Retainer.
- **The Ward's** safety ensures the sire's approval, and the Ward's gratitude. The sire rewards the elder with tutelage in a Discipline and Kindred Status at a clan level. The Ward becomes an Ally or Contact, depending on the elder's preference.
- **The Family** stays as a Touchstone. The elder's Humanity increases through her actions, and potentially removes a Bane.

If the elder sacrifices the following bonds, she loses the following:

- **The Butler's** death makes the elder lose her only confidante, and dots in Composure.
- **The Ward's** loss results in the sire's enmity and ostracism from the clan on America's East Coast.
- **The Family's** disintegration loses the elder a Touchstone, Humanity, and dots in Resolve.

The Fugue Condition afflicts the elder no matter who she sacrifices.

## HEROISM

Rare as it may seem, Kindred occasionally perform feats of heroism. Any sapient being can throw himself on the grenade to protect his friends. Only at the depths of humanity do murder and callous cruelty appear reasonable actions. Neonates are more likely to behave based on modern moralistic behavior than elders, but elders learn much from their descendants. The dedicated fledgling who saves an elder's life may deeply affect the older vampire. The elder who sees a mortal child in danger and against



better judgment, plucks her from the grip of the city Sheriff, is in his own way heroic. Heroism contributes to a vampire's reputation, for better or worse. Not all seek the mantle of "hero," but few deny the impression it leaves when declared as such.

### The Starving Masses

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Kingdom of Ireland suffered the Year of Slaughter. Following years of frost and damp, followed by drought and poor harvests, nearly 40% of the Irish population succumbed to starvation, hypothermia, or disease.

The elder exists in this domain, a bystander as kine wither and die around her. Most of the Kindred flee to healthier shores as Ireland rots, but the elder remains, caretaker over her people, and determined to outlast the Year of Slaughter.

A choice faces the elder. If she sacrifices personal wealth and uses her Disciplines on the correct people, she may be able to ensure food from grain ships reaches those who need it. Alternatively, if she bides her time and waits for the kine to grow weaker, she can play robber baron with the grain stores and docklands domains, only conveying the food to those she chooses.

### BONDS

- **The Baron** is a mortal with massive grain stores, withheld from the starving masses for the use of his own family. The Baron locks himself away and hopes to weather the frost, ignoring the cries of the people outside. The elder may seek to emulate this mortal, or manipulate him into gifting his stocks to the people.
- **The Priest** represents the Church of Ireland, and at great sacrifice, arranges the distribution of coal and meat. The Priest is aware of the elder's nature, and humbles himself, asking that with all the vampire's gifts, she do something to stave off the nation's hunger.
- **The Rioter** is hungry, angry, and supported by a small army of starving Irish. He intends to raid the next ship in the docks for its stores, even though doing so may prevent future ships from docking. A passionate and charismatic mortal, the elder may twist his anger into service, or convince him to pacify his people.

### Stakes

The elder may become a hero in this scene, or profit from the kine's misery. By ensuring the people stay fed and healthy, the elder receives acclaim and reverence as a champion to the common folk. The loyalty engendered causes aware kine to offer their services as ghouls, with the Priest and Rioter as potentially useful retainers in the future. Both carry influence in different areas.

If the elder cares little for the dreadful ongoing situation, she gains from the weakened kine. Feeding becomes easier, the mortals more desperate and willing to abase themselves for mercy and the smallest kindnesses.

### RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The heroic path leads to a depletion of Resources and Contacts as the elder expends her power to strengthen the

domain's kine. She does however benefit in the long-term, as the kine remember her for her kindness. The elder gains dots in Empathy, for her close proximity to the suffering mortals.

The path involving less sacrifice makes feeding easier in the short-term, as the kine put up little resistance. Dots in Allies increase as the Baron and other peers respect the elder's restraint. Other vampires resent the damage the elder does to the Irish kine. The elder gains dots in Manipulation and Subterfuge for controlling the mortals' chances of survival, though her Humanity decreases.

As one of few Kindred remaining in the domain, she claims Kindred Status and title within her covenant, gaining dots in Politics.

## HORROR

Vampires are by their nature horrific. Their need for blood, predilection for manipulating the kine, and need to kill to create another of their line, are horrific facets of a dead existence. The first time a vampire tries to ingest food and drink, she disgorges both. She realizes the horror of her new existence. The first time she forces a ghoul to drink, she mentally enthralls a mortal. She understands the horrors of mental slavery. Blood sorcery, cold flesh only made warm with fresh blood, and the revolting powers many elders possess, are all horrific. Scenes of absolute horror stay with an elder, as she recalls the times when she was at her lowest, and most capable of inhuman acts.

**"To keep you is no benefit. To destroy you is no loss."**

Between the years of 1975 and 1979, the governing Khmer Rouge orchestrated the murder of up to 2 million Cambodians. Any Cambodians who engaged in "pre-revolutionary lifestyles and crimes," including speaking with foreigners, received "re-education." This process involved torture, and often execution. These executions typically took the form of stabbing, bludgeoning, or poisoning, so not to waste bullets, followed by burial in a shallow mass grave.

The Killing Fields era defined Cambodia, forever staining the Khmer people with the memory of genocide. Even in these nights, after a heavy rainfall, bones and teeth rise to the surface.

Vampires have no influence over the Killing Fields, but act as parasites to the constant churn of corpses. The elder plays the role of petty warlord, indiscriminately notifying guerillas about longtime foes and trivial nuisances, knowing the mortals will wipe the clean all bothersome associates.

She must extricate herself from the languorous life of sucking from bodies in mass graves. How deeply the horror affects her, how she rationalizes her role, and whether she just turns her back on the events or stops to help with Cambodia's recovery, is up to her.

### BONDS

- **The Angkar** give orders for book burnings, property destruction, and genocide. Their representatives unintentionally act as the





elder's blood supplier. The Angkar believe the elder is an obedient citizen. They will respond violently if she stops toeing the line.

- **The Mae** is a former intellectual, now assigned a mother role within the new classless, agrarian society. She is desperate to save her family, her books, and her life. She turns to the elder, as she believes the vampire may know a way to resist the violence.
- **The Journalist** surreptitiously records the events within Cambodia, but guerillas hunt him, and he needs to pass his story on to someone. He delivers the truth of the Killing Fields to the elder before disappearing.
- **The Leech** is a vampire, and friend to the elder, who wishes to propagate the horror for as long as he receives a steady food supply. His Humanity rapidly decreases as he encourages greater crimes. He acts as a reflection of what awaits the elder.

## STAKES

With each passing crime committed within her view, the elder's Humanity takes a hit and the vampire hardens to mortal horror. To mitigate this risk, the elder may save or smuggle the Journalist's stories free, or aid the desperate Mae.

The Killing Fields put horror into perspective. Viewing the mortal capacity to kill jades or repels the elder. Such an experience may drive her into the arms of an understanding covenant.

Old Touchstones are difficult to keep in this scene. The Khmer Rouge disapprove of personal attachments, and enthusiastically destroy them. The Mae, the Journalist's work, or — for the cynical elder — the Leech, may become new Touchstones.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

If the elder stays in Cambodia without losing all Humanity, she may become Prince of shattered Phnom Penh, and the weakened mortals within it. It is not a role with great Kindred Status, though it earns the vampire notoriety.

Intellectual elders lose the Library Merit, as the Angkar burn all books. Mental Traits suffer. The elder gains Survival and Streetwise dots, as well as the Jaded or Guilty Conditions.

The Mae or her family — if rescued — become Contacts or Retainers. The Leech may blame the elder for the ruin of a good thing, and hold a grudge thereafter.

## INNOCENCE

Some vampires take great joy from interacting with true innocents. Doing so reminds them of their mortal lives, and times before the heights of vampiric power became so easy to them. Others pity those yet to fall into the whirlpool of



corruption. Sin frees an individual to do so much more. Many elder vampires wish to revisit the times of their innocence. With a lengthy life comes a sense of jadedness. Innocence is a distant memory, but a vital one. The time before she murdered her first mortal, the moment prior to her drinking another vampire's Vitae, and the sunny days before vampirism took hold of her life; all rank as important periods of innocence. Sexual discovery, unfolding tragedy, and brutal violence all chip away at the concept of innocence. An elder holds dear memories of each loss.

## Judicium Dei

Determining innocence is a simple thing when a vampire might force the truth from a subject with mental domination, or read the thoughts in the subject's mind. Most domains consider such practices unnecessary, however. A common alternative to mental subjugation was a trial by fire.

In the thirteenth century Christian Empire of Nicaea, the ruling Lancea et Sanctum accuses the elder of grave sins. The Empire's Sanctified developed their own trials by fire, adapted from the mortal practices of walking across hot coals, clutching a heated brand, or drinking hot oil. Surviving any of the practices without injury proposes heavenly mandated innocence.

The Bishop of Nicaea reads the elder's crimes aloud: that he revealed his undead presence to a mortal relation, that he attempted an Embrace without permission, and that he left a body with bite marks in its neck. The elder must test his resolve against fire in three forms: The walk of flame, the burning iron, and the drink of sulfur.

If he performs all three across three nights without frenzy or lasting injury, the Sanctified deem him innocent and free.

## BONDS

- **The Bishop** coordinates the trials, and initially believes in the elder's guilt. If the elder triumphs over the trials, she sincerely requests forgiveness and a place by the elder's side. If the trials determine guilt, he commands the elder's exile.
- **The Perpetrator** murdered the elder's mortal relation, but as one of the Sanctified, keeps his guilt secret. He wants to see the elder's guilt "proved" and pushes for execution as punishment.
- **The Witness** is a mortal, who saw the Perpetrator drain the mortal relation to death. Though she will speak to the court and pledge the elder's innocence, the Bishop then decrees her death, for she knows too much.

## STAKES

This scene displays the Sanctified's Byzantine views on innocence. The elder stands to suffer grievous injury and notoriety within the Lancea et Sanctum, or forgiveness and membership within that covenant.

The elder's Humanity may compel him to defend the only true innocent – the Witness who stands willing to risk her life for the truth. If the Witness survives, she makes a capable servant and potential childe.

The Perpetrator will fight tooth and nail to proclaim his own innocence. He will try to murder the Witness, and if that fails, will undertake the trials. His own survival throws the Sanctified's measures for proving guilt into flux.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder receives a standing invitation to join the Lancea et Sanctum, due to their wrongly accusing him and discrediting him in Nicaea. If the elder knows Theban Sorcery, this may explain why.

The trials by fire may explain an elder's permanent scars, husky voice, or need to walk with a stick. The Sanctified fires burn hot.

The scene contributes dots to the elder's Resolve, and Humanity increases if he saves the Witness. The Witness is a potential Touchstone, Retainer, or childe.

Sanctified domains exclude the elder if he fails the trials. The elder subsequently joins a covenant broadly opposed to the Lancea et Sanctum, or takes up as a wanderer in the Gallows Post.

## INTRIGUE

What better cause to persist for centuries than the unsolved mystery, the Machiavellian scheme, and the political competitiveness of Kindred? Vampires pursue intrigues lasting centuries, conspiring to one-up each other in the fields of influence, power, and blood potency. Grudges linger, mysteries expand to encompass further mysteries, and elders pull the strings of neonates attempting to wade through the morass of plots. The instigation of intrigues and the beats at which they progress construct important points in an elder's life.

### The Lost Clan

When pioneers hiked the Oregon Trail to settle untouched parts of America, their unpreparedness resulted in no few casualties. Few Kindred went with such small bands of travelers, as scarce food resulted in rapid torpor.

In this scene, a caravan including near 100 fur traders, animal herders and their families sets out on the Trail. The elder rides as a secret passenger.

As the pioneers endure wearisome environments, sickness, hypothermia, and poor maps leading them off-track, the true horrors commence at nightfall. A band of Kindred, unlike any the elder has met, materializes from harsh gales, and plucks the resting kine from their bedrolls. They leave only drained corpses marked with carvings for relatives to find.

These new vampires intrigue and terrify the elder. They have unfamiliar powers, and appear to be of the indigenous Shoshone. The elder may learn much from these night horrors, or question why no other vampire claims to have encountered them.



## BONDS

- **The Trapper** stands for the mortal interests, and continues pushing them west and north, despite the dangers. His insistence that they continue moving on endangers the group.
- **The Guide** is indigenous to the region. It appears he led the pioneers in to the vampires' territory, and the Trapper holds him responsible. In truth, he knows nothing of the Kindred, and begs for freedom.
- **The Veteran** attempts to rally a group of pioneers to go hunt the vampires. If the elder goes with him, she may discover more of this clan.

## STAKES

The elder risks torpor on this journey. The Kindred will not attack the elder, unless she attacks them, but they will leave her hungry after killing every mortal in her company.

The elder may discover the truth of this vampire clan, if she enters their good graces by offering the kine as willing sacrifices. Such rare knowledge is powerful, though limited in its use. The Ordo Dracul and Circle of the Crone hold great interest in obscure lines and Kindred history.

If the elder protects the mortals the full length of the Trail, she will have a sizeable Herd at her disposal. From this group, she could gain ghouls or childer.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder experiences a mystery that continues to gnaw at her. Who were these vampires? Where did they go? Only in the modern nights do the Dragons and the Acolytes show enough interest to sponsor membership in their covenants, assuming the elder discovers the truth.

Childer and ghouls may form from the pioneer group. The Veteran, Guide, and Trapper all have valuable skills in Persuasion, Survival, Firearms, and Animal Ken.

The elder may form bonds with the secretive vampires. These will likely be Contacts, rather than Allies. If relations are fostered, introducing this clan to one of the domains along the Trail grants the vampire great Kindred Status.

## LOVE

The Daeva believe there are few emotions as powerful as love. Some love objects. Others love causes. Vampires may love one another, or pursue the ill-fated love for a mortal. Love drives vampires to bold pursuits, and ascendancy beyond the pettiness of politicking. Love also carries tragedy on its back. When love is unrequited, a jealous vampire might strike out violently. When a foe destroys love, the elder vampire repays unkindness with ferocity. Love compels a vampire to great deeds, and foolish ends.

## Sturm und Drang

The idea of freely expressed emotional extremes entered cultural vogue in eighteenth century Germany. The *Sturm und Drang* movement rebuked the Enlightenment's rationalism and embraced impulse over calculation.

The Kindred of Leipzig fanatically pursue the concept of forbidden love, often leading to tempestuous violence and heartbreak. The domain plunges into emotional hedonism, under the influence of the Daeva Marquis.

The elder falls in love as the city rages around him. While his peers pursue human excess in twisted mimicry, he experiences true affection for another of his kind. Eager to see the relationship play out, the Marquis gives the elder the blessing to share Vitae and experience passion at its fullest.

In the wings waits a jealous Ventruue, horrified to see the elder bind her childe. She challenges the elder to a duel over the childe. Without intent, the elder's true love is pulled into Leipzig's *Sturm und Drang*; another play of vengeance and passion.

## BONDS

- **The Marquis** manipulates the emotions of all the Leipzig Kindred with his powers of Majesty. He is decadent, and would happily see his domain ruined if it was through love, lust, and passion. He encourages every vice.
- **The Beloved** is a source of affection for her sire and the elder. Her Vinculum to the elder sways her to him, but she questions whether her affections are true.
- **The Ventruue** will not allow her childe to join the elder's illicit union. She challenges the elder to a duel to torpor over the Beloved's love.

## STAKES

Passions run high in 1770s Leipzig. The elder may experience true love and gain an ally in the form of the Beloved, at the same time as developing a permanent foe in the form of the Ventruue.

The Marquis will happily tutor the two vampires in the ways of Kindred romance, indoctrinating them into perverse blood sharing ceremonies. The Beloved will likewise tutor in her own Disciplines.

The duel between Kindred results in one succumbing to torpor. In the modern nights, the loser will awake, and continue to seek vengeance.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

With the rise of the Circle of the Crone, the Marquis switches covenants, and attempts to bring all his students — the elder included — with him.

Sharing blood with the Beloved aids the elder in learning Ventruue powers, as she is of that clan. If the two drink multiple times, they become Touchstones to one another.



If the elder loses the duel and falls to torpor, he awakens to discover his love gone. The feelings of love still linger, so a quest to track her down naturally follows.

Loving acts inspire high Humanity. If the vampires share blood, it also inspires the Obsession Condition.

## MASQUERADE

Concealment is the vampire's greatest weapon. The ability to hide oneself in plain sight despite predatory urges and necessities enables the Kindred to pursue agendas and obtain blood without raising flags with hunters who would see the Danse Macabre exposed. Sometimes a vampire's cloak of subterfuge slips, however. When that happens, the Kindred must work fast to plug the gap.

### The Curse That Wasn't There

In the late nineteenth century, Frenchman Louis Le Prince pioneered the new single-lens camera, capable of recording motion. Others – including renowned inventor and scientist Thomas Edison – claimed credit for the discovery, yet it was Le Prince's invention that enabled cinema to take its first step.

Upon the advice of his Kindred patron, Le Prince filmed the elder feeding from one of the kine. The patron assured the elder that the recording showed only blurred motion and nothing showing a vampire living out her Requiem. Yet, when the short film was revealed to a coterie within the domain, the vampire's actions were visible to all.

Le Prince disappeared in France, in 1890, shortly after destroying the original version of his vampire recording dubbed "The Lovers." The elder – terrified her nature will be exposed for all to see – desperately attempts to secure all copies of the recording, and silence any witnesses including the vanished Louis Le Prince.

## BONDS

- **The Inventor** never intended to record something monstrous on his camera. When Le Prince saw what was on his film, he destroyed the original and disappeared into the night. Though not the Patron's ghoul, the vampire previously exerted a mental hold over Le Prince.
- **The Patron** hired the Inventor to film vampires as they fed, ignorantly assuring that a Kindred curse would protect her identity – "the dead do not show up on film." When the Party watch the footage, word quickly spreads about a Masquerade breach, and the quirky Patron seeks sanctuary wherever she can find it.
- **The Party** discover Le Prince's talents, and demand he shows them his small catalogue of recordings. As they watch the elder feeding, shock infects the room. The Party give the elder one night to sew up this Masquerade breach before they seal the wound by whatever means necessary.

## STAKES

The elder may gain a talented Retainer in the form of Louis Le Prince, or a longtime Ally in the form of the Patron, if she can provide safety to either. Conversely, she gains Status in the domain and within her covenant if she silences both permanently and destroyed Le Prince's work.

Forming a bond with the Inventor, confirming his silence and taking him from a dangerous domain, allows the elder a new Touchstone and potentially an increase in Humanity, if she doesn't mentally subjugate Le Prince.

Allowing the footage to escape into the wild increases the elder's Fame, for better or worse.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The Party either respect the elder for serving the Masquerade, or detest her for her frivolous breach. While they will not seek to destroy her, they treat her as impulsive and foolish forever after. She gains a poor reputation that never fades.

If the elder keeps Le Prince's footage, she gains dots in the Library Merit, with media-savvy vampires desirous of the recordings come the modern era. Curating the Inventor's work grants the elder dots in Academics and Crafts.

If the elder saves the Patron, she grants the elder any boon within her power. If the elder destroys the Patron, she claims the eccentric vampire's Haven and dots in Resources. The Patron was an Unaligned loner, with no close companions to kick up a fuss following her death.

## PARANOIA

Is it such a leap to believe vampires even more ancient than elders are acting as puppeteers behind every covenant and each domain? Is it a baseless fear to assume mortals will one day rise up and burn Kindred out of every haven? Elders develop paranoia as a natural reaction to the scheming of their peers. For some elders, it becomes a survival instinct. For others, it is a crippling debilitation. The trigger points for these bouts of anxiety are crucial, as if a vampire understands the cause of her paranoia; she may be capable of overcoming it. Discovering whether paranoia is necessary or unwarranted allows an elder to move on, or reflect on the feeling, and use it to justify further actions.

### Boom and Bust

The First World War left the USA in an economically strong position. America's loans to other countries paid off. The country swallowed industries once controlled by other nations. Its growing population, couple with new ideas and industries, contributed to the 1920s-boom period. The increasing strength of the Dollar, low taxes, import tariffs, and the easy acquisition of haven utilities made even a vampire's life richer and brighter.

Nothing lasts forever. At a time when the domain's Kindred swan through the city in automobiles and listen to music on their fancy radio sets, someone, or some group, chips away at



the elder's life. One night his ghoul confirms her inability to withdraw cash from the bank — they froze the account. The next evening, the taxman queries the unregistered house occupant — who is he, and why does he pay no taxes? Then, the ghoul commits suicide, jumping from one of the city's new high rises. One night later, and the vampires at Elysium all snub the elder, but they will not confirm why. The elder then receives a letter addressed to his ghoul. All his stocks are now worthless.

The elder believes someone is trying to ruin his reputation and finances. He may be correct, or this may be an early symptom of the Great Depression.

## BONDS

- **The Ghoul** is the elder's daytime earner and respectable façade. She has served the elder for many years. Something compels her to commit suicide by leaping from a tall building.
- **The Vanities** are the city's Carthian Kindred, who revel in the Boom's laissez-faire opulence. As the elder's fortunes turn, they turn their backs on him, just as they do every unfashionable vampire.
- **The Taxman** is a mortal with a vested interest in exposing the elder as a tax dodger and criminal. He risks delving too deeply.
- **Ruin** is truly the winds of economic change, though the elder believes an enemy uses the Depression against him.

## STAKES

As the Great Depression dawns, mortals and Kindred alike lose it all. The elder is not exempt. The elder loses his wealth to financiers reclaiming loans and rendering stock worthless. He loses the Ghoul to suicide, as the retainer blames herself for the vampire's collapsing situation. She cannot confess responsibility, and takes her own life.

The Taxman is an innocent in this situation, just doing a job, but risks waking a vampire during daytime sleep. The Vanities swiftly turn on each other, as one after another they lose their wealth. Desperate Kindred do desperate things to cling to power.

There is little to gain from the Depression's onset, unless the elder overcomes his paranoid delusions and realizes the situation's scope. Otherwise, he believes everything bad emerges from the mind of one, fictional enemy.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder loses any dots in Merits tied to personal wealth, unless the value stems from physical artifacts. Every comment made by another vampire seems like a veiled threat and every onlooker a potential spy for his "enemy." Paranoia increases, unless the elder realizes what's going on economically.

The Great Depression gives the elder an opportunity to start over. If he stays in the city, it requires a new Carthian structure after the Vanities implode. He can acquire abandoned havens and feeding territory.

When the Taxman wakes him during the day, the elder may murder him in frenzy, with likely Humanity loss. If he does not do this, a mortal exists with knowledge of Kindred.

## POLITICS

Political scheming and one-upmanship are the bread and butter of Kindred existence. Vampires form covenants, coteries, and cling to their clans as their tribal need to surpass their rivals needs support. Elders may reminisce about the time when all Kindred in a domain bent the knee to a single Prince, or when a revolution swept the city and removed all the heads from power. Politics may drive an elder to reattempt coups from the past, avenge political failures, or campaign for freedoms denied in centuries past.

### Revolution

As the French Revolution removed aristocrats' heads and allowed the rise of the lower classes — at least for a time — the nascent Carthian Movement tried the same actions against the Parisian Invictus and Lancea et Sanctum. Hidden within peasant and worker ranks, the Carthians assemble against the First and Second Estates, and make the covenants an offer: all must leave, or die by the guillotine.

The elder's role in this conflict is central. She may assist one covenant or the other, remain impartial, or seek to place herself in authority once the revolt concludes.

The scene begins with the Carthians hunting throughout Paris. They find the Invictus and the Sanctified guilty of corrupting Kindred, living to excess, and betraying each of the Traditions when it suits them.

## BONDS

- **The Comte** is one of the few Invictus not put to death by the rebelling Carthians. A stabilizing force, the Comte seeks peace, and wishes to use the elder as intermediary.
- **The Montagnard**, a Carthian who pursues a campaign of terror against the Invictus, seeks to raze the historical pillars of Kindred power across the entirety of France. He promises to reward the elder with governing power if the elder supports the Movement.
- **The Bourbon** is a decadent Sanctified vampire who will see Paris drenched in blood before she gives up both her mortal and immortal right to rule. She moves to rally the other covenants against the Carthians.
- **The Feuillant** is an ambitious member of the Ordo Dracul. She pushes both sides against each other, hoping for an emergent power vacuum. She will offer the elder a place of privilege once the revolution dies down, on the condition of alliance.



## STAKES

The political situation in Paris offers the potential for great gains and devastating losses. The Carthians engage in a heated feud, and the Comte's desire for peace is likely a futile gesture with firebrands such as the Montagnard and the Bourbon active in the revolution.

The elder may gain title, covenant membership, and reputation for their role in the vampiric equivalent to the French Revolution. How it resolves is down to the elder's choices. The autocratic Invictus and Lancea et Sanctum may continue to squeeze the vampires outside their covenants, or the Carthians may usher in their new laws and new corruption.

This scene forges Paris' — and potentially France's — political state for centuries to come. Whatever decisions the elder makes will have repercussions through to the modern nights.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder gains membership and Kindred Status in any one of the covenants present in this scene. Depending on the covenant, Merits such as the Oath of Fealty or Carthian Pull will be appropriate.

Involvement in the revolution grants increased dots in Skills including Politics, Firearms, and Survival. Siding with the victorious covenant helps the elder in gaining Disciplines and benefits exclusive to the triumphant group. Consider the elder gaining Aspirations related to forming new governments, or rebuilding the old society.

If the elder makes poor choices, and the Storyteller feels their involvement jeopardized one side's actions, the elder gains permanent foes.

## SURVIVAL

No vampire is on top forever. Whether recalling the time hunters pursued her across multiple domains, or reliving the terror of nearly dying within a burning haven; survival leaves a deep impression. Some elders revisit their memories of survival against adversity with a sense of pride, confident in their actions and the results gained. Others wonder whether a divine presence played a part in their survival, or whether they even deserved to survive, when others perished. Weathering harsh environments, withstanding aggressive Kindred, and outlasting a determined foe — all produce survival scenes perpetually replayed in an elder's mind.

### Walkabout

The elder made many enemies in her domain. After her once-loyal childe staked and transported her to the depths of the Australian Outback, the domain expected to never again hear of the disruptive vampire, with her offensive beliefs and covenant practices.

Her staked form lay beneath the starlight, when a young Pitjantjatjara Aboriginal Australian discovered the body, and

elevated it to the nearby trees. The movement dislodged the stake, waking the elder, and giving her a second chance at life.

The Pitjantjatjara speaks his traditional language, but illustrates that the vampire is lost, and must follow her dreams and engage on a path of discovery to once again be found. The elder must embark on a spiritual walkabout across the Outback, preying on wildlife while accompanying the one guide capable of leading her back to the domain.

## BONDS

- **The Pitjantjatjara** is a young man, curious about the vampire, and unaware of the danger she poses. He leads her to feed from wildlife, but endangers his life by staying close. The Pitjantjatjara falls for the elder, no matter her levels of aggression and rudeness. He needs no blood bond to stay loyal, but if Embraced, will abandon her side.
- **The Dreams** haunt the elder, as she pursues the nomadic spirit journey across the Outback. Memories of her sins, betrayals, enemies, and friends assault her as she struggles to survive in the harsh environment. The Dreams only leave her once she reenters her domain, but once gone, she may wish their return.

## STAKES

The elder's spiritual and physical survival is at stake. The long journey across the Australian Outback is a grueling ordeal, designed to make her grow, learn, and respect the world in which she exists.

The relationship the elder forms with the Pitjantjatjara is profound, as she needs the mortal for her to survive the day. His skill in tracking wildlife from which she can feed makes his survival vital, therefore forming a dependent relationship. The bond she forms with her guide makes him a Touchstone, and potential ghoul.

If the elder kills the Pitjantjatjara, she must make the journey alone, guided only by the Dreams in her mind. She loses Humanity, but grows confident that her fate is self-determined.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The trials the elder overcomes or endures during the walkabout change or calcify any outlooks held before her abandonment in the Outback.

If the elder follows the Pitjantjatjara's lead and learns to respect the world, she gains dots in Survival, at least one dot in Humanity, and another in Fortitude. The Pitjantjatjara becomes a Touchstone, forever bound spiritually to the elder. The elder accepts the actions leading to her abandonment, and moves on to new experiences, joining a new covenant and cutting herself free from former bonds.

If the elder discards the Pitjantjatjara and makes the journey led only by the Dreams, her view hardens, and she commits to vengeance upon her return to the domain. The Dreams grant a dot in Auspex, and another in Willpower, along with several more in Survival.



## TRIUMPH

Pride is a sin, but the most likely one to which a mortal or vampire succumbs. A victory over an opponent warms the soul. A hard-fought contest, resulting in the Prince declaring a vampire the champion in his field, conveys a feeling of triumph. Elders might revisit their victories in times of trial, or fondly recall their greatest achievements for the benefit of a coterie. Snatches of memory from a landmark victory may push an elder into performing similar feat years later.

### The Overture

In the domains of eighth century Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, contests of physical might and manual prowess rule the night. More than the ability to exercise diplomacy, vampires ruled their kind through force of arms and displays of martial brilliance.

The elder is embroiled in a contest to declare the domain's new chieftain, pitted against other Kindred in challenges of mundane skill, such as archery and riding. As the competitions heat up, competitors drop out. Elimination results in exile. Only stepping down voluntarily ensures a retained position in the domain. The committed vampires — including the elder — remain for the tests of supernatural might and dominance. They put Disciplines to the test, and run gauntlets of fire and daylight to prove the right to rule.

As the elder reaches the finals, an unknown vampire makes a secretive offer: if she stands down, and allows one of her opponents to win, the elder will receive a boon of great worth in centuries to come.

### BONDS

- The Chieftain rules the domain, though her grip is tentative. She competes alongside the other challengers, as she must with every century of rule, but her ways are outdated.
- The Contender is a Nosferatu who seeks to become chieftain and bring glory to his clan and sire, no matter the moral cost or risk of danger. He will sacrifice everything for the domain.
- **The Agent** intends on becoming chieftain and turning the domain over to the Legion of the Dead, who struggle to gain a foothold in the region. He has no allies, and seeks to sabotage others.
- **The Mysterious Vampire** is an outsider who offers the elder a boon in the future; if she abandons the competition she is so close to winning. Her political affiliation is unknown.

### STAKES

The elder may triumph and claim the domain or she may accept the Mysterious Vampire's offer and step down from the competition.

Triumph grants rank, status, and honors for at least a century — when the domain holds the next challenge for title. If she relinquishes the chance for victory, the elder waits a long time for the boon's delivery. It takes a full millennium for the Mysterious Vampire to reappear, and offer the secrets to a new Discipline and membership in an honored bloodline.

Supporting one of the other aspirants offers the elder an ally, and possible covenant membership.

### RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The longer the elder stays involved in the competition, the greater the number of dots the elder should have in Willpower, Resolve, and Stamina. It is likely the elder possesses high ratings in Weaponry, Athletics, Brawl, and Animal Ken. The competition rewards high physical-based Disciplines, such as Vigor and Fortitude.

The elder's victory results in her gaining the throne and all the benefits that come with praxis. She may turn the domain over to a covenant, make certain clans prominent, and impose laws, in her role as chieftain. She also gains challengers in time for the next competition.

The Storyteller determines the Mysterious Vampire's new Discipline and bloodline.

## THE UNKNOWN

Interactions with other creatures of a supernatural nature leave an intense shock to a vampire. By meeting a werewolf, mage, Promethean, or other unnatural being, the vampire realizes she is not alone. Alliances form between the different creeds of monstrous beings. Feuds follow in increasing number. An elder who befriends a werewolf pack in her city, is likely unaware of the mutual enemies she will subsequently acquire just through association. The unknown acts as a radiant reminder in elders' memories that there is more to life than creaking around in dusty courts, and kissing the Prince's ring. Recalling the time she ran with the wolves, exchanged sorcerous principles with a mage, or harbored one of the Lost, gives an elder the feeling of attachment to a larger world.

### The Owls' Crusade

In besieged Constantinople, the Ventrue and Daeva desperately work to recreate Rome's Camarilla. The metropolis offers the vampires a great opportunity for communal equality. Food is plentiful, territory is vast, and though the Crusades rage, faiths exist widely across Constantinople and the Eastern Roman Empire.

The elder is responsible for ensuring the Kindred plans for a resurgent Camarilla remain undisturbed by Constantinople's native population of werewolves, mages, and other, less easily defined entities. Beings from each of these groups demand to know what the vampires are up to, forcing the elder as mediator into diplomatic rows, bribes, and subtle attempts at courting favor.





The amnesty between all beings breaks sharply, as murderous attacks beset the ranks of all but the vampires. Eyes turn to removing the vampires once and for all, as the various supernatural believe the undead responsible for conspiring against them.

The elder is one of few to witness several of the attacks. She recognizes and understands the involvement of the Strix, but is she capable of keeping the peace and exposing the truth?

## BONDS

- **The Emperor** stands as the vampire ruler of Constantinople, a shadow to her mortal counterpart. This Ventrue disbelieves talk of Strix, and readies for a hopeless war with the city's other denizens, if necessary.
- **The Chariot** is a werewolf, arrived in Constantinople with his pack as part of the most recent Crusade. Respected as triumphant warriors, his packmates' murders crush him. He leads the charge to cleanse Constantinople of undead, placing the Kindred as responsible parties.
- **The Magician** leads the city's mages. Receptive to the elder's entreaties about the Strix, he is capable of rallying his fellow Awakened, but only for a price.
- **The Hanged Men** are the coterie forming Constantinople's Strix. They wish to completely discredit the vampires with

their Camarilla ambitions. They like to leave a witness, and they have selected the elder for that purpose.

## STAKES

If the elder can prove the Strix exist independently of Kindred society, and are orchestrating this chaos, she may be able to foster peace. This is unlikely though; the Emperor loudly decries all such talk, and sentences the elder to branding and exile if she persists with these claims. The Strix also target the elder if she poses a threat.

The elder stands to gain either a great contingent of supernatural contacts and allies, or a gang of long-lasting enemies. Constantinople's supernatural beings believe the elder set up the assassinations by convincing them to lower their guards.

The Magician asks for a sample of the elder's blood in exchange for his making the Awakened stand down. The Warlord will not rest until he achieves vengeance, either against the elder or the Strix.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

If the elder successfully arrays Constantinople's supernatural creatures against the Strix, she achieves something truly impressive. Such a feat results in gains to Willpower, Resolve,



Composure, many Social Skills, and Merits related to status and alliances. She may join a coterie including other supernatural creatures for a time, gaining an in-depth understanding of their cultures and several dots in her Occult rating.

Allowing Constantinople to fall to war is the best course for self-preservation, and understanding the Strix. This route should also reward the elder with dots in Occult, though she gains the Frightened Condition concerning Strix, and any supernatural creatures who swore oaths to punish her.

## VENGEANCE

The desire for revenge is prevalent among elders. Nobody lives so long without making enemies. An elder may inadvertently wrong a foe in the seventeenth century, only to find that foe 400 years later and still hungry for revenge, having established traps and pitfalls all conspiring to one climax of retribution. Another elder may experience a game of tit-for-tat with a similarly aged vampire, lasting from their Embraces all the way to the modern era. Both know the other deserves punishment. Both are vengeful, but only through dwelling on memories may the elder discover the disagreement's cause.

### An Expensive Meal

As the Romantic Movement reached its peak, aspiring poets and artists filled the salons of England, France, and Italy. The kine wiled away years pursuing the heights of pleasure and depths of pain, mining the reserves of emotion for the next great inspiration.

The elder, intoxicated by the heady mortals, feeds from one such poet. The euphoric zest to the mortal's blood leads to the elder draining the poet dry. He dies tragically, and the elder deposits his body in the river, remorseful over his actions.

Unfortunately for the elder, a domain harpy intended to Embrace the talented mortal. Robbed of her possible immortal companion, she commences a lengthy campaign of poetic hatred against the elder. First, she attacks his reputation, before threatening his holdings and achievements with vengeful degradation. As the centuries wear on, the initial poetic justice of the situation fades. By the modern nights, she commits purely to outright violence against the elder.

## BONDS

- **The Poet** was a stimulating male, with the capacity to achieve great things. The elder cuts him down before he reaches prominence. He becomes a footnote in history, and to the elder, a haunting reminder of insatiable hunger.
- **The Avenger** desires long, drawn out justice for the death of her lover, the Poet. She pursues vengeance against the elder and would rather meet Final Death than forgive. Her identity remains unknown to the elder for years to come.

## STAKES

The elder gains little from his reckless feeding, other than humility at the constant losses besetting him across the following centuries. The longer it takes for the elder to discern the Avenger's identity and stop her campaign, the more he will lose over the years.

The feelings of vengeance reflect back on the Avenger. As the elder suffers increasing losses at her whim, he may start whittling away her resources and reputation.

The two elders likely spend the next centuries on a see-saw of power — the Avenger holding the advantage one year, the elder holding the power the next.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

The elder and the Avenger both gain the Obsession Condition, related to one another. Their Skills match, as the two compete against each other in their constant rivalry.

The Avenger's obsessive drive results in the elder losing dots in Herd and Contacts, as she targets both. She does become a Touchstone to the elder, due to their close bond.

The elder can neutralize the situation if he has the Poet's spirit summoned, and convinces it to talk sense into the Avenger. Dealing with necromancers capable of such magic bears a cost of blood and reduces dots in Resources, however.

## WAR

Wars scar the entire world. Mortals die by the thousand, many of them innocents caught up in conflict through ill-fortune and decisions beyond their influence. Wars also exist between vampires. Feuding coterie and covenants vie for power in a domain, throw retainers at one another for the chance to grasp a potent artifact, and sacrifice warm bodies to fuel their blood magic. Memories of historic wars help elders refine their tactical techniques, and act as reminders of war's cost. Living through one massacre may be enough to make an elder reconsider whether violence is the answer. Living through a dozen may compel a vampire to drop the sword, gun, or bomb once and for all.

### The Expansion of Empire

Pizarro's attack on Atahualpa's Inca Empire should have never been so successful. The Inca underestimated the Spanish, and lost many warriors in a single grand ambush. The subsequent short and bloody battles culminated in Atahualpa's capture. The Inca emperor pledged tons of gold, silver, and jewels in exchange for his freedom. The Spanish took the wealth, forced his conversion to Catholicism, and executed him anyway. Smallpox handled many of the remaining Inca.

As an elder in the Spanish retinue — keeping retainers and herd within the invaders' ranks — it is a time of great triumph. The kine celebrate their victory over the Inca, and the elder enjoys their success. The elder benefits massively from the accumulated riches and new slave resource open to him.



The elder wonders at the lack of indigenous Kindred as he puts the Inca to industry, commanding one member of each family to mine silver and fill his coffers. Reprisals occur as soon as the mining operations commence. From the mountains emerge demonic vampires known as the Supay. They seek to reclaim their domains and feeding stock. The elder must push the Spanish kine to eradicate the conquered people by whatever means necessary, to ensure a lasting victory and an untroubled domain.

## BONDS

- The Viceroy is the Spanish mortal charged with subjugating the Inca people. He is not yet under the elder's control, but seeks power, and will respond favorably to the elder's overtures.
- The Supay abandoned the Inca for their "inner world" as the Spanish invaded, but now return to deliver reprisals. They wage war against the elder and his coterie.
- **The Ashamed** considers the elder a friend, but abandons his coterie after the Inca massacre. Now she assists the Supay in their war, selling information regarding the Spanish forces.
- **The Dying** are the small percentage of Inca not enslaved or murdered by the invading forces. Too broken to put up more than token resistance, they act as a reminder to the elder of war's cost.

## STAKES

This scene follows a mortal war, and leads into one between invading and indigenous Kindred. A war across mountain and jungle, this conflict would be nothing like combat in Europe.

On the invaders' side, the elder has political power and wealth at stake. His existence is likewise threatened. If the Supay are victorious, they may send him to torpor for centuries to come.

The elder's victory in Peru leads to an enormous gain in reputation as warlord and politician. If the elder represents a covenant, he increases its hold over the former Inca domains.

It is possible the elder may seek peace with the Supay, if the Ashamed drives him to conscience. Peace is difficult to attain without the freedom and survival of their people, who the mortal Spanish are determined to oppress.

## RESOLUTION AND MOVING ON

As war reaches its climax, Kindred reduced to ash on either side, the winner decides the resolution. If the elder and his Spanish Kindred prove dominant, the victors forcibly convert the remaining Supay to the ways of the European covenants and faiths, or execute them for resisting. If the Supay emerge victorious, they hunt the elder and his remaining coterie-mates across South America until they succumb to torpor or flee the continent.

The elder gains dots in Politics, Survival, and Weaponry for his actions in Peru. Humanity decreases due to his involvement

in the annihilation of a people. If he can foster peaceful relations with the Supay, a once-hidden covenant emerges as a diplomatic force in South America, burgeoning in the coming centuries. They grant the elder honorary Kindred Status within the covenant.

## *A Chronicle of Flashbacks*

The scene kits offer many examples of flashback events, with multiple examples potentially forming a complete elder backstory. An elder Embraced in fourteenth century Europe may experience the kit named An Uncomfortable Throne within his first decades as a vampire. Within the next couple of centuries, he embarks on one of the first Spanish voyages to the South American continent, playing an integral part in The Expansion of Empire. Later, he encounters the kit named The Lost Clan as he treks across North America with the pioneers, and ultimately attends the Woodstock kit, achieving a form of spiritual enlightenment denied in his previous adventures of conquest.

We can form a timeline of the elder's life, starting in Europe as a petty ruler, before he escapes to South America and assists in the subjugation of the Inca. His travels take him north, where he commits to his love of exploration and encounters unknown vampires for the second time. His life of travel and conquest leads him to experience the transcendental awakening and revelry of Woodstock, opening new doors in the elder's mind.

Consider how many rises and falls a single mortal experiences in their short lifespan. If it seems implausible in your chronicle for an elder to survive the Titanic's sinking, experience an Outback walkabout, and witness the assassination of Robert Kennedy, change the names, the locations, and the eras. Human history has a habit of repeating itself, which is something of which elders become all too aware as they endure repeated wars, cycles in fashion, and the decline of everything great.

Flashbacks can form chronicles broken across multiple eras, with different players taking on the elder role as different scenes arise. If the group does this communally, exchanging characters and playing as a troupe of cycling leads, characters develop in unforeseen ways. If flashbacks result in ways displeasing to the elder's original player, consider how the next flashback may course correct the elder's trajectory towards the modern nights. An elder who rises to power in Rome and loses all prestige in the Middle Ages still has plentiful time to recover it all again before the present nights arrive.

Chronicles focused on one elder's flashbacks risk isolating the other players. Ensure the Storyteller offers flashbacks to all characters, and where a flashback scene is deeply involved in one elder's history, either introduce one of the elder's modern nights' coterie-mates — perhaps this is where they meet — or introduce enough supporting characters to provide roleplaying opportunities for the rest of the group, and test the elder's abilities, Humanity, Banes, and Disciplines.







# Chapter Three

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED ALONG THE WAY

*I always had a repulsive sort of need to be something more than human.  
I felt very, very puny as a human. I thought, "Fuck that. I want to be a superman."*

— David Bowie

Imagine what a person can learn within a single lifetime. Languages, facts, skills, songs. Imagine all the ways a person grows and changes, how she refines her personality until it shines like polished steel, how she becomes more herself every day or plays at personas until she can't tell the difference. How she forms habits, builds muscle memory, picks up an accent, falls into routines and then digs them out and discards them like so many scabs. Experience is the greatest teacher.

Now imagine one person doing all that, twice over. Three times. Five. Twelve. On one hand, the word "ingrained" takes on new meaning when phases last longer than lives and patterns have centuries to calcify. On the other, a vampire could realistically set a goal to court a lover in every city in the world. She could try every profession, play every instrument, and master every martial art. The clash of both instincts makes elder Kindred odd contradictions. They stick to the familiar and plow ruts so deep the neonates can't see the bottoms, while constantly seeking new affairs to fill up the long nights.

It might seem inevitable that by the time a vampire gets to be a thousand years old, experience runs out of things to teach,

but it never does. Immortality breeds procrastination. Human progress always outstrips the pace a vampire takes to absorb culture and knowledge, especially in the modern age of absurd technological advancement and mass media. Eventually, every ancient Kindred hits extended slumps of ennui and sleeps time away in torpor. Keeping up with human endeavors brings diminishing returns for a walking corpse with all the time in the world to fuck around, who can barely remember what it was like to get truly passionate about a lover, much less a new project.

Even Kindred willing to fall out of step with the Danse Macabre for a decade here and there to chase some mortal mystery eventually find the melody again, embroiled once more in the heady politics and deadly intrigues of Princes and predators. Mundane pursuits pale in the face of the sensuous secrets the night's great unknown teases to those who persist long enough to glimpse them. The wider the gulf between the vampire and her human lifetime, the more her focus veers toward studying the way a soul bleeds, and how civilizations fall in real time. And, no matter how many centuries she spends peeling back the layers of darkness, more always wait.

### *Who I've Come to Be*

Players can easily conceptualize what it's like to have Dexterity or Presence 5. They've seen Olympic gymnasts on television and rock stars up on stage. They can imagine their own experiences with an Attribute and then carry them to their natural extremes. What about the *unnatural* extremes?

For a vampire with Attributes that exceed human limitations, the simplest acts are exercises in careful, measured response. The higher his Attributes climb, the more improbable his actions are to mortals if he doesn't take great care to rein them in, and the harder it is to explain them away as flukes or "working out." As if elders didn't have enough avenues to loneliness, it's difficult to find peers when he far surpasses the majority of beings who

have ever existed on the planet in one way or another. One elder might reach out to another on the other side of the world just to find someone in his league to talk to or compete with. A vampire contends with few more obvious reminders of how removed he is from humanity than easily performing some feat that would have seemed a miracle to him when he lived. Most elders have, at one time or another, suffered breaking points over accomplishing previously unthinkable things. Supernatural tricks impose themselves upon the world with strange and deliberate power, but this utter dominance is effortless. It just is. The elder can't turn it off even if he'd dearly love to just walk across the street without being the focus of every gaze, and that's exhausting.



At the same time, such unimaginable capabilities open new worlds of potential to the ancient vampire that others can't understand. It's intoxicating to feel like a god by comparison to slow, clumsy humanity and the only marginally less clumsy younger Kindred. Any air of smug superiority he might exude is frustratingly well-earned; how could he *avoid* feeling superior when everything he puts his mind to is a massive ego trip? Knowing he can stay awake through the day while lesser vampires sleep or keep his Beast in check through the direst provocations gives him the confidence to ply his grand conspiracies without fear of reprisal. He has risen to the top of the food chain and everybody knows it.

### *Intelligence*

An elder with unnatural Intelligence remembers *everything*. She memorizes entire books in less time than it takes a fledgling to flip through a magazine. She thinks not ten steps ahead of everyone else, but a hundred. She makes connections where none should exist and solves the unsolvable. Her competitive Beast could goad the Buddha into action. She can translate lost languages, hack into any system, and treat any disease. But, why cure cancer when she could be unlocking occult secrets buried in prehistory — and using them against her enemies?

Slowing her mind down to talk with others is boring and dispiriting. She's the expert in her field trying to explain it to a layperson, if that layperson were a particularly recalcitrant animal. She can't engage with everyday problems anymore even when she tries. Mortals seem like ants mindlessly accepting what they're told.

### *Wits*

The Wits-focused elder doesn't miss a trick. He could call the devil out on a lie. He notices everything and responds to it before anyone else even registers a stimulus. He can finish others' sentences, pivot to a new strategy on a dime, and read his foes like they wear flashing neon signs. Smart Kindred don't bother trying to get one over on him; better to pander to his whims and hope he likes what he sees.

Reacting so quickly that everyone thinks he can predict the future means having to suppress his instincts constantly just to avoid cracking the Masquerade. Seeing everything means seeing things he'd rather not see. Mortals seem to willfully ignore glaringly obvious signals at every turn.

### *Resolve*

Unnatural Resolve turns an elder into a terrifying laser beam of intent. She could meditate through an earthquake and oppose the collective will of a nation. Mind-altering magic slides off her stalwart defenses and she has the patience to outwait mountains. She withstands the petty machinations of lesser Kindred effortlessly, swiftly establishing herself as the true power in her domain.

Such immovable will and personal intensity frighten off those the vampire might otherwise have courted as allies. Unable to bring herself to surrender to anything, she is always "on," always watching others work around her instead of with her. Mortals seem like leaves with paper-thin egos drifting in a current beyond their understanding.

### *Strength*

An elder with Strength beyond human limitations is a destructive force on the order of a speeding truck. He could rip a head from its shoulders with his bare hands. He can topple trees, leap rooftops, and fistfight bears without fear. His monstrous Beast turns the fiercest predators into cowering prey. Other Kindred learn to oppose him in roundabout and subtle ways, never wishing to anger him in person.

When he can barely walk through a crowd without accidentally hurting someone, it's easier to keep his distance. Letting himself get angry enough to hit something could shatter the Masquerade as easily as he shatters walls. Mortals seem like delicate, fragile children he must handle gently, or otherwise swat like gnats.

### *Dexterity*

Unnatural Dexterity gives an elder the grace and precision of a machine. She could accurately snipe a target on the other side of the city or perform brain surgery with a spatula. She's so quiet when she moves she can sneak up on someone standing right in front of her while actively conversing. Younger Kindred in her domain exist in a constant state of paranoia — she could be anywhere and everywhere at any time.

Watching her movements is unsettling for others even when all she does is walk or turn. It's hard to dance, jog, or play sports in public, lest the weird speed and perfection of her movements give her away. Being so flexible, she can contort herself into impossible shapes that make her feel more like a rubber doll than a person. Mortals seem like stumbling stuffed toys in their ungainliness.

### *Stamina*

An elder with unnatural Stamina is a nigh-indestructible dead thing that might as well be stone for all that he yields. He could run all night long without collapsing and withstand an arctic blizzard without blinking an eye. Vicarious intoxicants in the blood of his victims don't affect him at all. He has no fear of his lesser brethren, and they're resigned to the fact that they'll never destroy him, never stop him.

More than most vampires, he *feels* like a corpse. Without the blush of life, his skin is thick and leathery, his wounds never look fresh. He forgets that others can't keep up with him and loses patience when they fall behind. He entertains terrible premonitions, wondering whether he'll still be standing after



the world ends. Mortals seem like mayflies that drop at the slightest disruption of their feeble, sickly systems.

### *Presence*

The elder who develops an inhuman Presence has impossible allure. People flock to her like they would Jesus Christ himself, if he came down out of heaven to grab a beer. Her casual glance intimidates them more than actual violence. She tells them to jump and they don't bother asking how high, they just reach for the clouds and pray they don't fail her. Her seductive Beast brings the coldest monsters to their knees. Her domain dances to her tune and everyone knows it. They'd hate her for it if they could bring themselves to hate her.

Sometimes she just wants to sit by herself in a crowded place and watch, but that's not her lot. The attention never stops. The eyes never pass her by. She's always on display. Mortals seem like an endless sea of identical upturned faces begging for a smile.

### *Manipulation*

Unnatural Manipulation means the elder holds the strings to the puppets that make up the world around him. The social landscape reshapes itself according to his every whim. Lies, truth, it doesn't matter which he tells; they all believe every word. He can convince parents to abandon their children and sires to abandon their childer gladly, without a single threat.

## *What I've Come to Know*

The small-town kid who goes off to live in the big city learns more than just how to take a bus. He meets people from walks of life he never could have imagined before. He tries foods from all over the globe. He lives in neighborhoods where no one speaks his native language. His money goes only half as far as it used to and he must get into the habit of locking his door at night. His world is so much bigger than it was and he feels enlightened. He wants to share his experiences with his family and friends back home, but when he returns, a new wall has sprung up between them. No one understands his "wild stories." His new slang makes no sense to them. Their approaches to life are now so divergent they might as well live on different planets. They have trouble communicating and he feels detached. They're still connected, of course, and always will be. He just doesn't call so often anymore.

Multiply this by a hundred and that's what happens when an elder with more than five dots in a Skill tries to mix with the younger crowd. How does a two-thousand-year-old vampire talk to a sixty-year-old ancilla about painting when he's mastered techniques humanity has no names for? His only peers are the handful of other Kindred who have held a brush for just as long, if any even still walk the Earth. He takes apprentices and chafes at the slow pace of their progress, dismissing their efforts as useless in projects too ambitious for them to comprehend.

Other Kindred either trust him implicitly or never trust him an inch. Both are by his design.

He owns no switch to turn his tongue from silver to mere flesh again. He can't tell where other people's wills end and his bidding begins, so he must choose every word carefully. Nobody knows who he really is at his core; he's not sure he knows himself. Mortals seem like sprites in a video game that only do anything important when he presses the right button.

### *Composure*

An elder with unnatural Composure comports herself with complete equanimity in the face of explosions, werewolves, starvation, grief, and anything else the night can throw at her. She could still be unswayed by the pleas of angels and think clearly while on fire. She can resist temptations like Vitae addiction and her Beast beyond the wildest dreams of her lessers. Her feathers remain unruffled no matter how long and slow the march of unending years, while others who walk the same path go mad with restlessness.

After so many centuries bottling up her emotions, she no longer knows how to express them, even when she desperately wants to. They fester deep in her dead heart and poison her from the inside night by night. She grows accustomed to the dignity of quiet politesse and comes to loathe displays of passion. Mortals seem like garish clowns that burst with tawdry feelings like overripe fruits.

He makes stunning breakthroughs and discoveries but has no one to share them with, and he can't publish them because no human establishment exists that could make sense of them.

Elder Kindred throughout history have entertained the thought: "with what I know, I could advance humanity far beyond its time!" It never works that way. Attempts to forcefully drag society kicking and screaming into a future that doesn't exist meet with disaster every time. Not least of the problems is attracting the attention of hunters and other too-curious mortals with his impossible achievements. Inevitably, anything too advanced that catches the public eye spawns photographs, interviews, records — ways for investigators keen on such anomalies to track the vampire's ageless work over centuries. Even private journals and galleries are exposed to the light eventually, thanks to the tireless efforts of archaeologists and historians too inquisitive for their own good. Besides that, the ancients eventually come to understand through painful experience that a vampire is not a fixer, a healer, or a muse. A vampire is a creature of death and tragedy, of control and codependency, regardless of what he makes mortals believe. Controlling and influencing humans doesn't aid the progress of humanity; it stifles it. By necessity, then, most elders engaging in the pursuits they love do so quietly and subtly, far away from humanity's greedy gaze. Working through ghouls and agents



wherever they can becomes paramount.

Being literally peerless at a Skill pushes elder vampires to stretch the boundaries of what's possible — no longer to prove their preeminence, because that's a given — but to find any meaning at all in their work. They strive for inhuman levels of accomplishment because to do otherwise is to invite soul-crushing ennui. The longer they practice their Skills, the less room for improvement and innovation they have. They go to increasingly ridiculous extremes to create new heights of success, creativity, beauty, invention. Competition between elders breeds methods totally unrecognizable to human eyes. Ghouls and younger vampires caught up in their games barely realize the truth of what they're doing, with the threads that tie it all together so far beyond their understanding as to be invisible. Such competitions tend to end in blood and destruction, as the stakes rise too high for good sportsmanship to contain them. For many elders, the Skills they bank their reputations on mean more to them than anything; they will stop at nothing to retain their supremacy.

When for one reason or another an elder *can't* reach that extreme in his chosen field, the frustration can drive him to frenzy. Any failure becomes an existential crisis or an excuse to lash out at someone else who must be at fault. It's easy for an ancient vampire to define himself by his most refined Skills, especially as his handle on who he is in terms a human mind would understand slips away with every passing century. He clings to something that seems mortal in scope, only to discover one night that what he's transformed it into doesn't resemble a human endeavor in any way.

### *Preternatural Skills*

If a character with five dots of Investigation is akin to Sherlock Holmes, what can players expect a character with more to accomplish? Skills at this level of refinement look more like philosophies than simple abilities. The elder can apply the fundamental principles of the Skill to broader situations and extrapolate its usage into the esoteric. For example, a vampire with preternatural Academics may see familiar historical patterns in the way a fight progresses and predict her opponents' actions accordingly. If a player who purchases six or more dots in a Skill offers enough justification and the Storyteller agrees, she may spend a Willpower point to do one of the following:

- Substitute that Skill for another within the same category on a mundane Skill roll. This substitution may only affect one roll in an extended action.
- Identify someone on sight who has at least three dots in the Skill, or pick one out of a crowd.
- Add half her character's dots in a Mental Skill rated at 6+, rounded up, to his Initiative for a single turn.
- Dictate the target of a Storyteller character's next action if her character has a Social Skill rated at 6+ and it's at least twice the Storyteller character's Composure.

- Turn a Storyteller character's failure into a dramatic failure on a single contested roll with a Physical Skill that her character has rated at 6+. The contested roll needn't include the player's character as long as her character has a relevant way to manipulate the situation.

### *Keeping Up with the Times*

Most elder characters were born in a time before certain Skills existed, like Computer or Drive. **Chronicles of Darkness: Dark Eras** discusses how Skills have evolved over time, starting on p. 23.

In a game set in modern nights, this doesn't need to affect character creation; a player can safely assume that those dots of Archery his character once had are now dots of Firearms or Athletics. If a player would rather his character be a bit of a dinosaur, he can deliberately stick with the older forms of these Skills if he chooses. Such a character trying to use a modern gun would simply roll Dexterity, with the untrained penalty for lacking dots of Firearms. The same is true of mapping Ride to Drive and Enigmas to Computer. On the other hand, he has insight modern characters lack when it comes to deciphering codes without technological help and other anachronistic actions. The Storyteller should keep this in mind and give the player opportunities to play up his character's different perspective. Players could even choose to purchase both the older *and* newer Skills, if they'd like to represent their characters' ability to both retain historical expertise and adapt to the times. At the Storyteller's choice, Specialties a player purchases for an archaic Skill could cross-apply to the newer Skill where it makes sense.

In a game where the players create younger characters and watch them grow into elders over time, the Storyteller is encouraged to track the transition from the older Skills to the newer ones. Players could decide to simply buy dots in the new Skills with Experiences on top of the old ones as history progresses. They may instead *replace* an older Skill with its modern counterpart, at no Experience cost. In the latter case, the Storyteller may rule that a player can only replace dots one at a time, with in-game events reflecting the gradual transition. Alternatively, she may rule that a player can replace them all at once if the game experiences a time-skip.

In either case, it's usually a good idea to roleplay through a scene or two to explore how the character learned this newfangled ability and how he's handling the march of progress emotionally. It could be a blow prompting a breaking point to realize the extent to which activities that were commonplace in his mortal days have become novelties in modern nights, or the elder might thrill to the idea of having brand new things to learn after so long.



## Pre-Modern Skills

The following summarizes the information about pre-modern Skills presented in **Chronicles of Darkness: Dark Eras**.

**Archery:** The Firearms Skill didn't exist before 1500 and didn't completely eclipse the Archery Skill in ranged combat until the mid-1800s, when cheap and reliable hand-carried guns became available. Characters born in the transition period may have training in both Skills, or just one. Crude, early firearms use the Athletics Skill to fire rather than Archery. Common Archery specialties include: European Bow, Japanese Bow, Longbow, Pellet Bow, Poor Visibility, Short Bow, Trick Shot, and Wind and Weather. Archery works identically to Firearms except for dramatic failures: restringing a bow takes one turn just like clearing a gun jam, but damage to the bow itself renders the weapon useless until it's repaired. Storytellers might rule that an Archery dramatic failure results in hitting the wrong target instead, or running out of arrows if the game tracks ammunition narratively.

**Ride:** The Drive Skill didn't exist before the late 1700s and didn't become commonplace until the mid-1900s when cars became more than luxuries for the wealthy. Transportation by animals uses Ride, whether the character rides them directly or drives them via coach or chariot. During the transition period, aristocratic characters might learn both Skills. Characters can also use Ride to perform basic veterinary first aid on common mount animals and build relationships with them. Common Ride specialties include: Jumping, Particular Breeds, Riding in Combat, Tricks, Tailing, and Unfamiliar Horses. A mount animal has a Handling score like a vehicle, which starts at the animal's Wits rating and increases or decreases based on treatment and training. Ride works with Social Attributes except in cases where Wits is more appropriate, such as a roll to tail someone while mounted. Dramatically failing on a mount usually involves injury to the mount or uncooperative behavior, like throwing its rider or refusing to move.

**Enigmas:** The Computer Skill didn't exist until the 1980s, with the invention of the home computer. Before that point, characters use Crafts or Science to interact with cruder computer-like technology. They use the Enigmas Skill to manipulate information, navigate complex systems, solve puzzles, and create or decipher codes. It shouldn't replace interactive problem solving and roleplaying, but should help offer specific answers and new options. Common Enigmas specialties include: Bureaucracies, Codes, Conspiracies, Research, and Social Networks. On a dramatic failure, the Storyteller gives a dramatically appropriate misinterpretation of the information or solution. With failure, the character knows she failed and can try again with a -1 penalty. On a success, the character successfully decodes or obscures the information. With exceptional success, the character gains more answers than she was looking for or hides information exceptionally well. Decoding Ciphers is an Intelligence + Enigmas extended action requiring between 5 and 20 successes, with each roll representing one hour of work. Encoding Information is a Wits + Enigmas + equipment instant action that takes between a few minutes and a few hours depending on the complexity. Mastering Complex Systems is a Wits + Enigmas extended action requiring 10+ successes, with each roll representing three hours of interaction or observation.

## *What I'm Becoming*

The fledgling opens her eyes to a mysterious new bounty of wonders and secrets. She marvels at the potent scent of blood, the way her wounds close in seconds, how her hair grows back each night no matter how many times she cuts it. As a neonate, she revels in her preternatural powers, flaunting them, using them to get anything and everything she wants. Crush a mortal's hand, mesmerize him with a glance, become a hawk and soar. It's like being a superhero, if she can forget for just a moment about that never-ending, overpowering thirst. As an ancilla, she takes the basics for granted and digs deeper into what it means to wield the power of death. The fascinating allure of blood sorcery, the heady experiments and probing questions, the quests for hidden knowledge and deeper meaning that seem like a fountain destined never to dry up. And now finally, as an elder, she looks back on all she's learned and sees the portrait of something she doesn't recognize. The secrets are naked and alien here, and she, as their keeper, is a sinister beast of unknown proportions. Plumbing the darkness for power is no longer a game or a quest, but an imperative born of perching on the cusp of some awful understanding. She feels herself

stepping toward utter removal from humanity with each new facet of monstrosity she discovers, yet can't stop herself from discovering more.

Elders speak in hushed tones about what terrifies them about themselves. Reading minds and vanishing into crowds are one thing, but when a vampire's very presence can elicit existential despair, the question "what *am* I?" is never far from her mind. She's moved well beyond the human experience, though that mold still shapes her emotions and thoughts. The stranger her powers become, the more she must adjust to the reality of being who – or what – she is. Sometimes she doesn't adapt so well. Sometimes she makes mistakes. Sometimes she underestimates her own blossoming horror and does something she can't take back. Some elders would give anything to trade centuries of forbidden knowledge they never wanted for an unlife of sweet, blissful ignorance. Many a long sleep starts with the elder learning something she wishes she hadn't and being unable to wipe it clean from her mind. This is what it is to live forever: knowing too much and regretting it.



## *Waking from Torpor*

Sleeping doesn't fix anything, though. No amount of torpor can let a vampire unlearn his bloody gifts. Waking only brings the full weight of everything his nightmares hinted at crashing down onto his head again. His sheer prowess may have diminished, but all the horrible secrets linger: all the unnatural abilities persist. He must come to terms with becoming the thing he fears and having no one to explain what comes next. Perhaps worse, he must do so knowing that now he's less powerful, vulnerable to the rapacity of bigger predators despite the arrogance and confidence he's developed over the years. Upstarts he lorded his dominance over in the past now outstrip him in pure potency, ready to take their long-awaited vengeance.

For some, the immediate need to earn back everything they lost is overpowering. They see fangs in the shadows at their backs at every turn and resolve to rise back to their former glory as soon as possible — making diablerie an attractive shortcut — taboos be damned. For others, waking from a long slumber is a refreshing adventure. Let other Kindred bear the burden of being the biggest fish for a change. These rejuvenated elders delight in the thrill of deriving sustenance from human beings again, the excitement of being able to feel threatened again. Still others revere their diminished power as a return to a state of "innocence," imagining that the experience cleanses their souls of ancient sins to make room for all new ones. They approach torpor as a sacred rite and believe the loss of potency signifies a cycle that will eventually culminate in the perfection of their unliving souls.

The formidable powers an elder has learned over time don't fade with sleep, but many younger vampires don't realize it because few elders choose to advertise it until they need those powers. The rare rites and Devotions that come with millennia of Requiem are dirty little secrets that a newly awakened elder holds close to his chest, waiting for the right moment to spring them upon some poor unsuspecting ancilla who thought she had the situation under control. On the other hand, some weakened elders use their unique powers to project the illusion of potency, flaunting them left and right to keep up the pretense that nothing has changed since they were last active.

The side effects of torpor make it a mixed blessing, but any vampire who survives long enough knows it's an inevitable consequence of her longevity. By this point, she rarely lets the death sleep take her by surprise. She conspires with her most trusted and capable servants, preparing for the worst. Rivals and foes who find her resting place can bring her Final Death far too easily. A more powerful vampire might take advantage of her vulnerability to wake her with his own Vitae, binding her to his will. Daring younger Kindred spend years hunting down slumbering elders to commit Amaranth and devour their potent souls. To rationalize the threat, elders often preempt disaster by succumbing to torpor on their own terms, so they can control when, where, and how it happens. They set aside hidden rooms, buried crypts, or elaborate vaults. Some build personal cults around their time in repose, making generations

of mortal followers build them shrines to sleep in, protected by their fanaticism. Others prepare for torpor as they would for battle, with an array of ghoul guardians, a secure fortress concealed at the center of a labyrinthine hideaway, and traps mundane and supernatural. Even when circumstances force an elder into torpor unexpectedly, those who would capitalize on her weakness run afoul of her myriad contingency plans. Only the most egregious thrill-seekers looking for any excuse to feel mortal again, or those who give in to morbid death wishes, don't bother to plan ahead at all.

## *Revelations*

Every vampire's journey into the latter nights of immortality is a singular and twisted path. But, where does it lead? Some elders scoff at the idea that any destination waits for them at all. These proclaim the fundamental meaninglessness of the Kindred condition and continue as they always have, making selfish grabs at worldly influence and playing chess with lives for no reason other than familiarity, to fill the nights, to avoid the scary questions. Others debate for centuries about what they think an elder vampire is becoming. "Less human" is clear enough, but if less human, then more what? They look to their frightening capabilities for clues, walking the concept of one Discipline or another to its final extreme to see what it might reveal. For what ultimate purpose, they ask, would a monster need the power to possess a mortal body with its own inimitable will, or transform into a deathly miasma? Why is blood the alpha and omega? Is the vital stuff of life — stolen for the sake of each night's waking — harvested as fuel for some greater unseen plan?

Elders try to carry the sum total of their inconceivably long Requiems to their logical conclusions, but logic in the face of such monstrosity looks menacing indeed. Countless rumors and theories have circulated since any vampire extant now can remember, positing one horror or another that the Kindred might some night become. Great dark deities, some say, accepting human sacrifice as worship. The evolutionary pinnacle of humanity, say others. Angels of death selected by God to punish the wicked. Pieces of an ancient primordial spirit from which all life emerged, seeking now to devour it all back up into itself. Weakened alien beings from another planet preparing to return home once they've accumulated enough power. The personified chronicle of all history, meant to record the entire timeline of the Earth for some final future reckoning; or the personified reckoning itself, meant to tear down the world and make way for a new one when the time comes. Empty vessels for the blood unbounded, destined to one night subsume their personalities and act on its own. The millennia-long gestation of a brand-new life form that will be born from the transmutation of all human blood to Vitae. Some whisper what others try not to think: that an elder who survives long enough leaves her corpse-body behind to join the ranks of the dread Owls.





### *Jewels in the Crown*

If Disciplines are the crown of power that proves a vampire's dominance over whatever kingdom he carves out for himself, then Devotions are the jewels that stud it. Rare and relatively individual to begin with, they only become more so with age. Most Devotions an elder vampire has are unique to him, or close enough that it hardly matters to those who covet his secrets. Even if his old mentor from the Renaissance era is still around, the likelihood that his rivals would figure out who the mentor was, find her, and decide they would rather tangle with her than with him is small to say the least. For the most part, if a vampire wants what an elder has, she must go through him to get it.

Where do elder Devotions come from? For most Kindred, Devotions are either spontaneous manifestations of their blood's growing potency, or the products of long practice and careful study of their own capabilities. The same is true of elders, but the frequency with which an ancient dog learns new tricks tends to decrease over time, especially the further those tricks get from mere extensions of Disciplines. As the Devotions a vampire learns look less like superhuman abilities and more like alien horrors, they become harder for the mind that once was human to process. It may take some jarring epiphany or profound trauma for such a power to spontaneously develop. Deliberately learning to surpass more common vampiric gifts is no longer as simple as mesmerizing the same victim over and over again until he discerns how to permanently enslave the poor bastard. He needs an extra leap of strange illogic that he must figure out how to take.

The most obvious tutor for an eldritch monster is another eldritch monster, of course, but it's never quite so simple. Few elders offer their services as dispensers of secrets they spent centuries perfecting or unearthing. Seeking a teacher among things older than himself means a vampire must prepare to sacrifice; to swallow his pride and to work harder than he has had to work for anything in a long time. Elder Kindred may demand payments that seem impossible or disastrous to give; and that's the less worrying scenario. Even worse is when the lessons come at a deceptively low price, or when the vampire doesn't even *realize* he's paying the price until after it's done. Many elders end up blood bound to each other in an incestuous web of favors and traded power. So few of them walk the world at any given time, that an elder can only find so many sources of education; particularly if he needs to find someone of a specific clan who's willing to cooperate. Age-old grudges and long, sordid histories make this process even more complicated; good luck to the Kindred who pissed off his fellow ancilla four hundred years ago over a ghoul who's been dead for most of that time, and needs her help now that they're the old guard. She's as likely to agree and then drive a stake through his heart as she is to spit in his eye and walk away.

It's no less hazardous finding other ways to learn elder Devotions, though. Years of research might have uncovered the existence of a journal written by an infamous Mekhet who perished a thousand years ago, but the elder who would lay hands on it still needs to track it down, figure out how to get it from wherever it is, bring it home safely, and then protect it from other vampires doing the exact same thing. Putting such



## Learning Elder Devotions in Play

In game terms, the concept of elders learning Devotions more slowly than in their younger nights is represented by higher Experience costs for Devotions with higher Discipline dot requirements. To some extent, this is only as true as a given game table makes it, depending on the frequency with which the players earn Beats and how they decide to spend their Experiences. But, the idea is still the same: elder Devotions should feel unique and unsettling, and learning one should be a notable moment for a character.

That's not to say the Storyteller needs to devote an entire chapter or story to discovering a single Devotion — although she could! It would certainly be an appropriate way to explore the dangers and thrills of becoming a powerful immortal, and would help foreshadow the kinds of conflicts a character might encounter *after* he's learned the Devotion. If the group doesn't want to spend so much time on it, consider devoting a scene to it each time a player buys a new Devotion for his elder character, or at least shining a spotlight on the character's enlightenment when it occurs in game.

Even the spontaneous manifestation of a Devotion can be a gripping character moment. Consider allowing players to earmark Experiences for a Devotion and then spend them mid-game session during an important and relevant event, such as facing a breaking point, achieving an Aspiration, gaining or resolving a Condition, etc.

power down in words is a dangerous affair, so elders who do it find all kinds of vicious ways to keep the eyes of would-be thieves out of those pages, from laying down blood magic wards to bribing creatures even more immortal than they are to guard the precious knowledge.

Some elders do learn their awful Devotions without a guide of any kind, but inevitably, they're left to wonder whether it was worth the ordeal. Stories tell of Kindred who pursued the mysteries of vampiric origins or unearthly realms down rabbit holes they couldn't ever climb wholly out of again, gleaning dark and terrible powers at the cost of their sanity. One rumor whispers about a vampire who etched his name into walls all over the Underworld, desperately clutching his identity as he followed a path toward the darkest kind of enlightenment. Other tales speak of ancients who weren't looking for power at all, but simply manifested horrors in sudden fits of rage, conscience, or despair.

Every now and then, a vampire gets it into his head to try ripping power directly from its source. Forbidden tomes in the archives of the Lancea et Sanctum relate accounts of elders devising blood rituals to enhance the Amaranth, allowing it to steal more than potency and Disciplines through eerie vision quests designed to sip every last secret from the victim's

soul before devouring it whole. An insidious suggestion that eventually works its way to every elder's ear, is that some of the oldest vampires throughout time have learned how to steal Devotions by making cursed deals with the Strix to receive regurgitated knowledge from old ones the Owls possessed and hollowed out long ago.

Some long-standing traditions among the Kindred override the desire to squirrel knowledge away from prying eyes. Many sires — whose childer survive long enough — pass down the Devotions they know, either as hooks to keep them loyal, as rewards for continued service, to show favoritism or love, or just to see that the knowledge doesn't vanish from the world when torpor or Final Death comes. Similarly, the covenants dole out the secrets of their elders as members achieve venerable status and prove their undying allegiance. Some coteries of elders teach each other their powers so that any of them can protect the others from malevolent outside forces, or satisfy some need for a cohesive identity to cling to as a shield against drifting apart over the centuries. Certain secret societies hidden within domains with long Kindred histories are predicated on the ritual bequeathal of ancient Devotions no one else knows exist, recruiting members so subtly that an elder can go for centuries without realizing he's been drawn into the fold of something much older than himself.

## New Devotions

### ANNALS OF DEATH (AUSPEX ●●●)

An elder vampire is an authority on the cycles of war and ruin that run rampant through the currents of human history. She has watched — or even presided over — the ends of people, institutions, traditions, kingdoms. Her sixth sense for death weaves a tapestry of its legacy for her when she chooses to look, and she can recognize

patterns in the cycle to predict the future. A vampire can only use this Devotion on a particular location once per scene.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Auspex

**Action:** Instant

**Dramatic Failure:** The player asks a question as though she had rolled a success; the Storyteller should give false or misleading information.



**Failure:** The vampire can glean no bloody history from the place. Could it be that pristine?

**Success:** The player can ask the Storyteller one question per success about the history of her current location, as it pertains to the deaths of people, creatures, or supernatural beings. For purposes of this Devotion, a location encompasses a single building or other discrete area of roughly equivalent size, although she may focus on a smaller area such as a single room if she likes. Also, for purposes of this Devotion, “death” includes the Embrace, as well as Final Death. As with similar uses of Auspex, the Beast within provides images and sensations that convey the history. The questions below are samples; the player may — with Storyteller permission — come up with others that fit the criteria.

The player may also spend successes to learn who or what will be *next* to die in her location, if nothing interferes with the pattern in the interim. Each success she spends this way allows her to ask the Storyteller one question about the next death to come, similar to the sample questions given for past deaths. She may mix and match successes to gain information about both the past and the future with one use of this Discipline.

**Exceptional Success:** The elder can extrapolate more subtle moments of tragedy from patterns of ruin. For each answer the Storyteller provides, the vampire also learns the nature of any breaking points, Touchstones, and Vices that were or will be involved in the deaths she sees or predicts.

### Sample Questions

- Who was the first (or last) person to die here? *The ghostly image of a face in the mirror with a bullet hole in its head. Last words scrawled in blood across the wall.*
- Is there a factor that connects multiple deaths in this location? *A hand reaching out from the shadows to direct the knife. Shimmering lines connecting objects and spaces as if on a map.*
- Did someone die here within [a given time period]? *A set of bloodstained, turn-of-the-century style clothes draped over the arm of a chair. The pages of a calendar flipping backward to a particular date.*
- Who was the last person to die here that I know personally? *The victim's voice calling out to the vampire for help. A pair of glaring eyes that accuse the vampire from the detached head of a corpse.*
- What was the predominant emotion surrounding [a specific person's] death? *The seductive scent of heady perfume. A room tinged with the green of envy.*

## BONES OF THE MOUNTAIN (PROTEAN ••••, RESILIENCE •••, VIGOR •••)

The Gangrel who lets his Beast run in wild places and sleeps in graves of loose earth for centuries comes to know the patience and endurance of the natural world, which far outstrip those of even the oldest Kindred. Millennia of wind and weather may

erode the mountain, but they'll never bring it crashing down. With this Devotion, the vampire becomes the stone itself.

This Devotion costs 5 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 3 Vitae, plus 3 per additional turn

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Survival + Protean

**Action:** Instant

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The vampire convulses with the pain of an uncontrolled change, transforming into a motionless statue in a contorted pose. She can't move, act, or speak until her next turn, and must roll to resist frenzy when the effect wears off.

**Failure:** No transformation takes place.

**Success:** The vampire transforms her body into animate stone, which lasts until she stops paying 3 Vitae per turn. For the duration, she benefits from all active effects of Resilience and Vigor each turn without additional Vitae expenditure, and adds her Protean dots to her effective Resilience. All her unarmed attacks deal lethal damage. If she takes lethal damage in her rightmost Health box, she may reflexively activate Unmarked Grave at no cost regardless of the material's Durability.

**Exceptional Success:** The vampire also becomes immune to the Knocked Down Tilt for the duration.

## CELEBRITY (MAJESTY ••)

Elder vampires may stay out of the *true* limelight to protect the Masquerade, but building a massive cult of personality is something an ancient Daeva does without batting an eyelash. This Devotion is as close to real household-name fame as most Kindred ever get. His fawning followers gush about him to their friends, and they to their friends, and soon he's the talk of the town without ever having to set foot outside his cushy haven.

If the vampire targets someone on whom he has inflicted the Enthralled Condition, the player doesn't need to roll to activate this Devotion; it automatically succeeds. He may still roll if he likes, to try to achieve an exceptional success, but if he fails he must accept the result.

This Devotion costs 2 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 3 Vitae

**Requirement:** The vampire must have inflicted the Charmed or Enthralled Condition on the target.

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Empathy + Majesty vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

**Action:** Contested; resistance is reflexive

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The vampire's efforts backfire, causing his victim's unfettered excitement to turn people off. Any attempt to use the Majesty Discipline on anyone in the general location where the victim lives or spends most of her time lose the 10-again quality



until her prerequisite Condition wears off, and further attempts to influence her after that take a -2 penalty until successful.

**Failure:** The vampire's insinuations are too subtle to kindle his victim's fanaticism.

**Success:** The elder fans the flame of his victim's enthusiasm for him, prompting her to rave about her new best friend at every opportunity and spread his influence. At the end of every scene while the victim is still Charmed or Enthralled, as long as she had reasonable opportunity to engage in conversation with someone, the vampire gains a temporary dot of one of the following Merits: Allies, Fame, Herd, Retainer, Staff, or Status. The effects of this Devotion end when the victim no longer has the prerequisite Condition. Attempts to use the Majesty Discipline on anyone in the general location where the victim lives or spends most of her time gain the 9-again quality, or 8-again if the duration lasts longer than a week (e.g. as the result of The Wish, *Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p. 148).

**Exceptional Success:** Attempts to use the Majesty Discipline on anyone in the general location where the victim lives or spends most of her time gain the 8-again quality right away.

## CONSUMPTION (DOMINATE •••••)

Not content to simply possess the body of a victim, the vampire devours her volition, hollowing her out to make a vessel that he can fill whenever the fancy strikes him. Characters with Supernatural Tolerance traits aren't valid targets for this Devotion; only mortal characters can be consumed this way.

This Devotion costs 4 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 5 Vitae and 1 Willpower

**Requirement:** The vampire must be currently possessing a valid target using the Dominate Discipline.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Intimidation + Dominate vs. Resolve

**Action:** Contested

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The victim's free will asserts itself violently, immediately ending the possession and any other effect or Condition the vampire has inflicted upon her using Dominate or any Devotions that require Dominate.

**Failure:** The vampire continues to possess the victim, but nothing more happens. He can try again at a cumulative one-die penalty for each attempt.

**Success:** The vampire destroys the victim's will and leaves her vulnerable to further possession. The victim gains the persistent Enslaved Condition (*Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p. 303). As long as that Condition persists, the vampire may possess the victim again at a cost of 1 Vitae without a roll and without spending the Willpower cost. As long as the victim can hear his voice, he may possess her from any distance.

**Exceptional Success:** Whenever the vampire possesses the victim's body he gains a faint impression of her memories, giving him a +2 bonus to any Social rolls he makes while deliberately posing as the victim among people who may know her.

## CRUSH OF YEARS (NIGHTMARE ••••, MAJESTY •••)

A presence that has persisted for lifetimes upon lifetimes impresses itself upon her victims in a paralyzing wave of understanding. The human mind wasn't meant to grasp such impossible spans of time, and with this Devotion, the vampire imposes the full weight of her immortality onto those ill-equipped to process it. Her victims reel with horror and melancholy that surpass any merely mortal emotion.

Everyone within (Blood Potency x 2) yards/meters who can directly perceive the vampire and has not existed for at least a hundred years total must roll to contest this Devotion. The vampire rolls once and compares the result to each victim's attempt separately.

This Devotion costs 3 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 4 Vitae and 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Expression + Nightmare vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

**Action:** Contested; resistance is reflexive

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The elder's mastery of this Devotion comes from centuries of enduring her own slow realization of what immortality truly means, and she brings it all crashing down on her own head. She suffers the Crushed Condition herself.

**Failure:** The vampire's efforts don't impress her audience.

**Success:** Anyone who fails to overcome the vampire's roll succumbs to the full forbidden knowledge of eternity, and suffers the Crushed Condition.

**Exceptional Success:** The vampire regains a Willpower point, having stared immortality full in the face and come to terms with it.

## LEGION (ANIMALISM •••••, AUSPEX •••)

An elder may not derive sustenance from the blood of animals, but by consuming enough of it, he connects himself to all the sisters and brothers of the creature he has devoured. He becomes an ecosystem in microcosm. He is legion, and he is everywhere.

This Devotion costs 4 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae + 1 per active glimpse

**Requirement:** Consume blood from a single type of animal equivalent to 10 Vitae before using this Devotion.

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Animal Ken + Animalism



**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Scene

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The vampire forges a connection, but his own Beast overrides his intentions, provoking a fight-or-flight response. All affected animals either flee at once in an incredibly conspicuous manner — massive flocks of ravens blacking out the moon, unnatural hordes of cats filling the street — or zero in on the vampire's location and attack in droves, depending on the animal's nature.

**Failure:** The animal blood fails to take hold and the vampire forges no connection, or the area doesn't contain enough animals of that type.

**Success:** The animal blood within the vampire's veins forges a connection between himself and all animals of the type she consumed within (Blood Potency) miles. For the duration, he receives passive sensory input from them as vague impressions and flashes, gaining +5 dice to all Perception rolls and rolls to search out or investigate anything in range, as long as the animals have an opportunity to perceive it. In addition, the vampire can spend a Vitae to take an active glimpse, taking over one animal's senses as an instant action. He chooses a location within range and shuts down his own senses for as long as he likes to ride along with an animal there. By default, he has no control over its actions but can sense anything it can, including things he wouldn't normally pick up like pheromones or sounds only audible to canine ears. He can switch animals at any time with another Vitae and an instant action.

The vampire can use Feral Whispers on any animal he's currently using for an active glimpse.

**Exceptional Success:** Once per active glimpse, the vampire may make his presence behind the animal's eyes known to someone in its vicinity. If he succeeds on a Presence + Intimidation roll, resisted by the target's Composure, the target gains the Spooked Condition without quite realizing why the creature is so unsettling.

## MALIGNANT SMOG (PROTEAN •••••)

Vampires might be a curse on the world, but nothing fucks up the environment like good old human invention. The elder Savage has watched people pollute their own air with chemicals and biological weapons since the beginning and refuses to be outdone, becoming all the deadliest fumes humanity can conjure up.

This Devotion costs 3 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 2 Vitae

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

This Devotion enhances the effect of Primeval Miasma, transforming the vampire from a cloud of hungry smoke to





a cloud of toxic gas. By spending 2 additional Vitae when she activates Primeval Miasma, she doubles the maximum diameter of her cloud and can float at her normal Speed. When she activates Malignant Smog, she chooses a Tilt based on the type of gas she becomes. Anyone who enters her Miasma must succeed on a Stamina roll once every (10 - Blood Potency) turns he stays there to avoid falling prey to the Tilt, with its most severe possible effect. If the vampire transforms into mustard gas, she might inflict the Sick (grave) or Blinded (both eyes) Tilt, as blisters and chemical burns cover the victim's body inside and out. Transforming into a psychotropic inhalant might inflict the Insane or Insensate Tilt, while becoming concentrated smog or tobacco smoke can cause Poisoned (grave) Tilt. The Tilt wears off once the victim spends a number of consecutive turns outside the cloud equal to the elder's Blood Potency.

## PASS INTO YESTERYEAR (OBFUSCATE •••, NIGHTMARE •)

Unending nights of skirting humanity's notice, prowling the fringes of the world unseen and forgotten by all, weigh on the ancient's mind like a shroud. Will he one night simply cease to be, if no one knows he's there — or cares? He takes comfort in those he chains to his side, companions to lurk with him in the lonely places. Still, they return to the light when he cannot. They leave him behind. Perhaps, he thinks, he should change that.

This Devotion costs 2 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 3 Vitae and 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

Whenever the elder feeds his blood to someone, he may bolster it with this Devotion to infuse his own history of self-inflicted ostracism. If his victim suffers the onset or strengthening of the Vinculum from this drink, she gains the Forgotten Condition (see p. 136).

## PRETERNATURAL INSTINCT (AUSPEX ••••, CELERITY •)

The elder's strength of blood gives her an edge against her foes, alerting her to danger before it happens and picking up traces of intent from her enemy's mind.

This Devotion costs 2 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

**Duration:** One turn

For the duration of this Devotion, the vampire may apply her Defense against attacks she can't see coming, as long as she's still able to physically react. Additionally, if she spends a Vitae to move to the head of the Initiative queue, she automatically

wins any Clash of Wills that contests her ability to act first unless her foe also uses this Devotion, in which case the Clash occurs as normal.

## SPONTANEOUS IGNITION (CELERITY •••••, RESILIENCE •)

The vampire touches her target, causing minute vibrations so fast as to be imperceptible. In seconds, her victim ignites, while her Resilience protects her from the same fate.

This Devotion costs 4 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 6 Vitae

**Requirement:** The vampire must touch her target.

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Celerity - Stamina

**Action:** Contested; resistance is reflexive

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The vampire sets herself on fire.

**Failure:** The vampire's victim feels an uncomfortable heat, but does not combust.

**Success:** The vampire's victim catches fire at the torch level for both size and heat (see **Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition**, p. 103). For each success rolled beyond the result of the victim's resistance roll, move either the size or intensity of the flame up on the chart by one. The flames burn for a number of turns equal to the vampire's Blood Potency, but the victim can try to extinguish them sooner by taking instant actions to smother them or put them out with water or a fire extinguisher. Each instant action spent combating the fire reduces it in size by one level on the chart. If it burns for more than one turn, it can ignite flammable objects in the victim's vicinity.

**Exceptional Success:** The vampire enjoys the benefits of a larger and/or hotter flame, as above.

## UNBRIDLED FORCE (VIGOR •••••, DOMINATE ••)

Such strength as Kindred of many centuries has exceeds the boundaries of his own flesh and bones, begging to be unleashed on the unsuspecting mortal world. Through the twin irresistible forces of his physique and personality, his will imposes itself on the world effortlessly.

This Devotion costs 4 Experiences to learn.

**Cost:** 5 Vitae

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

**Duration:** Scene

For the duration, the vampire may perform feats of raw strength at a distance by simply exuding force with his gestures. He can push, pull, throw, or lift any object within (Blood



Potency x 10) yards/meters that he normally could without touching it, so long as he can perceive it, and can make Brawl attacks the same way. No fine manipulation is possible, but he can use his Vigor Discipline to increase his Strength as normal for the purposes of this Devotion. He still must have at least

one hand free to direct this force. The vampire may not use this power at anything less than his full strength — he can't gently slide a bookcase aside, deposit a person lightly onto the ground, or pull his punches.

## *Elder Blood Sorcery*

Where Devotions follow Disciplines to their most inhuman extremes and blend them to create iconic powers, the rituals of blood sorcery evolve down paths of theme and purpose. An elder may further her understanding of its nuances by spending long nights in ecstasy, frenzied or holy. She may earn the trust of the Church Eternal and bear witness to its oldest artifacts, hold them in her hands and smell the mandate of the angels in their dust. She may let her Beast roam free and unbridled, gleaning meaning in where its instincts lead it. She may devise a torturous trap for one of the Strix and squeeze all it knows from its infernal beak. Really, though, it all comes down to the blood in the end. Taste it, share it, know it fully in its elegant simplicity. Blood is bondage. Blood is freedom. Blood is life. Blood is faith. Blood is power.

### *Learning and Creating Rituals*

Elder blood sorcery results from centuries of communion with its principles and a deep commitment to exploring — and protecting — its secrets. Ancient Crúac masters claim to hear the voice of the Beast howling in their ears and translate its wordless demands into power. Elder Sanctified priests gain access to the covenant's earliest and most sacred records, transcriptions of the original Theban incantations, and miracles that other old and unfathomable monsters like themselves devised long ago.

Such intimate affinity with the blood magic of the faith doesn't come easily and isn't shared lightly. Generally speaking, the following rituals are only available to characters with Blood Potency 6 or higher, or characters who have been a part of the covenant for at least three hundred years. While it's possible for younger or less-powerful vampires to learn them, their leaders are unlikely to teach them except in extraordinary circumstances that threaten the very existence of the local covenant. For the Lancea et Sanctum, it's a matter of devotion and hierarchy; for the Mother's Army, it's a more practical matter of whether the young one can handle it. Ambitious Kindred find ways, though. With enough daring and luck, a Sanctified desperate enough might steal ancient texts from the covenant or bribe venerable exiles for what they know. The Circle of the Crone doesn't advertise it, but occasionally an Acolyte in the midst of frenzy or ecstatic feeding spontaneously grasps a rite's workings in a rush of grisly inspiration after only having witnessed it.

Even if such an upstart does manage to get his hands on a ritual meant for elder eyes, he's unprepared for what it will take out of him to perform it. Rituals elders develop for themselves cost twice as much of the necessary resource as usual to cast:

two Vitae per dot of the rite for Crúac, or two Willpower for a Theban miracle along with the sacrament. Even those who try not to craft such draining rituals inevitably fail. The power these primeval horrors wield simply demands more of a vampire daring to inflict it upon an unsuspecting world. Only a desperate ancilla would so dare, lest he give everything he has to something that's liable to piss someone off.

Members of the Circle of an age and considered true matriarchs work to prove themselves worthy to those even older, who pass down their secrets in intimate ceremonies. Other times, an elder keeps her rituals to herself until the Beast or the blood demands their release, foisting them upon another ancient in the throes of mystical fury. An elder Acolyte can create brand new rituals as her Beast keeps evolving endlessly, growing ever more restless for change the longer she persists. When a Mother-Goddess invents a new rite, it's less like setting out to make something new and more like giving birth to something that demands to be made — something that tears its way out from the darkest crevices of her dead heart. Some have even seen the rites they already know mutate into unique, more vicious expressions of their blood magic as they age.

The elders of the Church Eternal keep many holy secrets from their younger brethren, bestowing them only upon those rare few who survive enough nights and show enough faith to be trusted with them. Powerful elders with enough Humanity left to perform Sanctified rituals of this caliber command awe from younger vampires struggling to reconcile their base urges with their solemn calling. All who serve under the Lord's dread banner understand that certain miracles are too profound for a mere ancilla to glimpse, and thus they uphold the sacred hierarchy of wisdom and damnation.

Learning a Theban miracle is a ritualistic affair in and of itself, adhering to ancient traditions meant to evoke the original visitation of the angel Amoniel. The covenant deems a priest ready who has reached the requisite status, age, or power. They lead him into their hidden vaults and libraries with solemn processions. They light candles and burn incense. They speak words in Latin, in Hebrew, in older languages no mortal ear has ever heard. When a priest becomes the elder, and no one is left in the local Church to initiate him into the faith's highest miracles, he performs these rituals alone. He fasts and prays, spending weeks holed up in the archive with scrolls and carvings no one has touched in a millennium. When the divine muse strikes him during such ceremonies, he may compose new miracles of his own, written in his blood and consecrated for eternity as Theban canon.



## Crúac

In the Mother's Army, an elder is one who has reveled in monstrosity for so long the word ceases to have meaning. She's a force of nature, an ululating cry echoing across the night sky. She existed before the covenant did, a pure expression of its ideals. She's a channel for the blood, and in this lies the truest understanding of Crúac, according to the ancients who bother to speak of it. The sorcery of the Acolyte is the will of the blood made manifest. Masters liken casting the most powerful rituals to losing themselves utterly to the Beast in the moment. They talk about rites not as discrete actions designed to produce results, but rather as what happens when they point the monster within toward some goal and then just let go of the reins. Elders laugh to hear young ones ask what it's like to "learn" a rite; as if she could set the wild abandon of pure desire down on paper somehow. Better to ask what it's like to invite the magic to happen *to you*, they say. Better to ask how it feels to give your body and soul over to a ravening hunger that works its intent *through you*.

Elders in the Circle of the Crone debate how literal that description really is, and what place they hold in the grand scheme of things. Ancient dead things seem, by definition, to defy the covenant's dedication to change at all costs, and yet here they are, true Mother-Goddesses with primordial gleams in their eyes who, night after night, lead rites no young one has ever seen before. When they bother to philosophize about how that could be, the most widely accepted explanation is that the blood won't let them stagnate. It has a consciousness and a purpose all its own, the oldest matriarchs say, and as it evolves toward some hazy new state, the Kindred who are its vessels evolve with it.

Crúac rites performed by the most powerful vampires show characteristics that bear out the argument. They devour, possess, transform, infect. They warp nature itself into forms befitting the predator. They give a terrible will to things that should lack it. They rip things apart and put them back together wrong. They enable the Beast in ways most Kindred would shudder to consider. Elder Acolytes shed so much precious Vitae in their casting as to seem wasteful and excessive to neonates, who can't conceive of not having to hoard the blood like a starving mosquito. These elder rites are orgies for all the senses, a gruesome tease for vampires who hold themselves back — or don't — from getting on their hands and knees to lap up the warm gushing catalyst as the Mother-Goddess works her magic. Of course, they'd get no satisfaction out of it, but why let that stop them from getting caught up in the moment?

## Crúac Rites

The following are examples of rituals an elder Acolyte may possess.

## MANANANGGAL'S WORKING (••••)

**Target number of successes:** 8

As part of the ritual, the Acolyte cuts off as many parts of her body as she wishes, allowing them to move on their own through the volition of the Vitae itself and perform tasks independent of her. A detached arm, for instance, might slip through a narrow vent and open a door on the other side. A detached eye might ride along in a moving car, allowing the matriarch to see its journey and destination. Because the vampire tears her own body apart as part of the magic, *all* the sacrificed Vitae for this rite must be her own. The ritual lasts until the next sunrise, at which point the parts return and reattach themselves to the vampire's body. Any part detained, destroyed, or harmed beyond any ability to return bursts into a spray of viscera, dealing bashing damage to the ritualist according to the size of the part — one point for small parts such as hands, two for larger ones like limbs, and three for vital parts like her head. The ritualist regrows the lost part within an hour of the ritual's end. While the ritual is in effect, the vampire suffers the appropriate Tilt if her body part is too far removed from her to be of any direct use, such as Arm Wrack or Blinded. If she detaches a significant portion of her body weight, the Storyteller may rule that her Vitae is split between the parts, as evenly as possible.

## GWYDION'S CURSE (•••••)

**Target number of successes:** 10

The ritualist soaks the earth with the sacrificed Vitae, where the roots of living things absorb it and grow wroth. The will of the blood animates all trees and other large plants within a radius of (ritual potency) yards/meters, prompting them to attack anyone who comes within reach. Animated plants use the vampire's Blood Potency for all dice pools, have a damage bonus of 1 Bashing on attacks, take damage as inanimate objects with Durability 2, and have no Willpower score. They have a Vitae pool equal to the Vitae the ritualist spent, split among the plants as the vampire wishes. They may spend one Vitae per turn to heal Structure damage, two points per Vitae. This curse lasts until the sun next rises.

## SCAPEGOAT (•••••)

**Target number of successes:** 12

**Contested by:** Resolve

The ritualist rips his Humanity out, tearing down the cage that holds back his Beast, and feeds the rite's Vitae sacrifice to a mortal victim. Until the next sunrise, the ritualist can't risk detachment, isn't affected by banes gained through breaking points, and can't gain Willpower through any of his Touchstones. Instead, the



victim suffers the banes and any breaking points the vampire would face during this time, taking a one-die penalty to these rolls from the sheer helplessness of feeling her soul corrode for nothing she can see. When the ritual's effects end, the vampire gains the Wanton Condition (*Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*,

p. 307) and takes a three-die penalty to further breaking points until Wanton resolves. If he has already suffered the Wanton Condition within the month, this ritual cannot be performed until his period of immunity to it ends.

## Theban Sorcery

For the Sanctified, elders are coveted beings who move through the flock like venerated giants. They know secrets of faith the ancillae can only pray to be worthy of some night in the far future. They give young ones something to strive for, an eternity to look forward to in their infinite grace and wisdom. At least, that's how the Church perceives them. True believers among vampires lust after the knowledge and experience hidden in the minds of those old enough to remember the time of Christ and Longinus. Whether those elders are truly wise or not, they at least have a firm claim on knowing the will of God. Who would question them in that?

That claim is why the most ancient secrets of Theban Sorcery are reserved for their eyes only, and why the rituals they create – or receive from the Lord, depending on one's point of view – are guarded with just as much care and deference. Vampires old enough to command such privilege don't just inspire fear of their prowess or respect for their age; they inspire reverence. They are the very embodiment of the covenant's stated purpose to preserve tradition and keep secrets. They *are* tradition. Alongside that, an elder priest's role as a font of fantastical dark miracles and the hand that punishes those who transgress with God's own vengeance leads to the perception of him as more than just Kindred. Scripture maintains that the powerful rituals the Methuselahs perform flow directly from God's darkest whims, and that as a priest survives the millennia they transform him into a prophet, or in rare cases, an actual angel, chosen to mete out harsh judgments the mortal Church can't. Angels of death and prophets of doom.

The elder blood magic of the Sanctified lends credence to its practitioners' place as higher servants of God. These miracles open Kindred eyes to sin and Kindred ears to prayer. They inflict condemnations biblical in scope on those the Almighty decrees deserve them – through the elder's will – of course. They show revelations to the faithful and deliver messages that could only have come from on high. They allow a Judge to live up fully to that name, bringing swift damnation on wings of authority. They give him the divine insight he needs to see through the petty illusions of heretics and separate the few innocent from the plentiful guilty. Then they grant him the power to curse the innocent as well as the guilty in whatever manner he sees fit.

## Theban Sorcery Miracles

The following are examples of miracles an elder member of the Lancea et Sanctum may possess.

### CURSE OF ISOLATION (....)

**Target number of successes:** 15

**Contested by:** Resolve + Blood Potency (of the Kindred whose Touchstone is the ritual's subject)

**Sacrament:** any bladed weapon

The ritualist severs the bonds between the subject and a vampire, cursing her fellow Kindred to solitude and sorrow. The subject must be a Touchstone for a vampire character, and must be present for the ritual. If the ritual succeeds, the vampire victim loses the Touchstone and suffers all the usual effects thereof, while the ritualist gains the subject as a new Touchstone immediately at her current level of Humanity. This stolen intimacy fades after seven nights unless the ritualist's player buys a dot of the Touchstone Merit (*Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p. 115) to keep it. The vampire who lost his Touchstone to this ritual must start all over again if he wants to rekindle the relationship after it's over.

### ORISON OF VOICES (.....)

**Target number of successes:** 8

**Sacrament:** rosary beads

The ritualist attunes her ears to the voices of those who would call out to her, whether to plead for mercy or curse her. For three nights, whenever any voice in the world speaks her name, she hears it, along with enough surrounding context to understand the intent expressed in the speaker's words. In this way, some elder Sanctified priests seem as dark angels to their flocks, receiving prayer from wherever they may roam, or appearing without warning to punish those who speak against them while thinking themselves safe.

### SINS OF THE ANCESTORS (.....)

**Target number of successes:** 6

**Sacrament:** at least 1 Vitae (for vampires) or 2 lethal health levels (for mortals) of the target's blood



The ritualist consecrates the blood of his subject and plumbs its depths for the grim secrets it hides. He may ask the Storyteller a number of simple questions equal to the Potency of the ritual pertaining to any of the target's close blood relatives, going back along her bloodline. For vampires, this means any Kindred once or twice removed by blood sympathy, as well as those on the direct line from sire to childe in either direction. For mortals, it means actual blood relatives of up to two degrees of removal, plus anyone on the direct line from parent to child in either direction. Direct mortal descendants of Kindred targets also count.

## *Elder Mysteries of the Dragon*

The elders of the Ordo Dracul are often distant and terrifying role models who inspire awe and jealousy in their lessers. To the eyes of the other Defiant, and usually to their own as well, they start to look a lot like Dracula himself the older they become. Records indicate that a few old ones throughout history claim to have actually achieved transcendence, become glorious monsters without a Curse. If they did, though, nobody knows how, and they didn't bother writing that down. Most say they assume it's not true but believe it behind closed doors; it gives them hope. In the meantime, the elders who are still around searching for the way present tangible achievements to which others can aspire.

Elder Dragons tend to develop the most widely disparate practices of the covenants. Though their Mysteries all aim for the same unified goal, the Coils and Scales they invent branch into countless variations and offshoots of what has come before. Each elder latches onto a few facets of a Mystery and spends centuries exploring their ins and outs, their possibilities, their limitations. Then he breaks all that apart, shattering limitations and exceeding possibilities to pursue avenues of study all his own. He paves the way for younger Kindred to follow him, although more often than not he gives them no obvious footholds with which to do so, preferring to let them work for it as he did.

The Ordo's ancients rarely hold the post of Kogaion. They've already been through all the politics and intrigues, and they've got better things to do. To one of these venerable Dragons, so absorbed in the budding transfiguration of his immortality, mortals are nothing but test subjects and convenient sources of human blood for experimentation. Younger vampires are little more — food, good fodder for analysis, lab assistants and cult minders, hands for fetching and carrying. They're useful and can make pleasing companions, but ultimately, they exist to further the elder's path to transcendence. As he observes the changes he works within himself and sees how strange he's become, he can no longer imagine having been something so bounded and small. Elder Defiant are some of the most solipsistic creatures in the world.

Despite that tendency, they *need* others. Their Scales don't work without subjects to torment and blood to doctor. The Voivode is nothing without someone to rule. The initiate of the Wyrn can't experiment with his Beast if he has no one to stimulate it. So, he takes apprentices, he shares his work with a

The questions the ritualist asks must be simple enough to return an answer of one short sentence or less. If the Storyteller deems a response too complex, she may declare that the vampire's player has used up multiple available questions or that he doesn't have enough total questions to cover it. The Sanctified can use this ritual to hold victims accountable for the sins of their kin, or to learn more about their loved ones so he knows who to punish later for their inevitable transgressions.

select few. He engages, even if only because he must. He keeps communications open with old colleagues and competitors, in case he needs something from them to complete his *magnum opus*. In fact, most elders find that the further along they are on the road to apotheosis, the more others matter. Their Coils become broader in scope or need interaction to function. Their Scales eat up more resources and they need help to keep their work sufficiently under the radar. As a result, some ancient Dragons gather dedicated followers and support to create organizations or leech off existing ones to ensure they'll always have what they need. History books name one or two elder masters of the Mystery of the Voivode as literal monarchs of small nations, though these don't last long.

Nonetheless, an elder Dragon tends to view the Coils and Scales he develops over the course of his long career as the culmination of his Requiem's work and is reticent to share them with anyone. Such accomplishments only come after centuries of pursuing a Mystery to its most radical extremes or uncovering a new Mystery by virtue of experiences of which no mere ancilla could possibly conceive. Sharing them with peers is arguably an even worse idea. Why empower a rival to stand on the shoulders of his work to reap the benefits and credit?

That said, nothing stops younger or less powerful Kindred from learning such secrets if they manage to steal the elder's notes and replicate his experiments. More than a few deadly enmities have cropped up within the covenant because an elder claimed to have evidence of another vampire benefiting from his work without his permission.

The following is one example of the kinds of secrets the Ordo Dracul's ancients prize.

## *Coil of the Quintessence*

She's been here so long it rains when she cries. The city dies in tune with her unbeating heart, one night at a time. She feeds on its lifeblood as though it had a living pulse and gives of herself in turn, and it worships her as fervently as any human thrall. The Masquerade may hide her from the people, but the city knows. The city sees. The city succumbs.

Adherents of the Voivode's Mystery profess to be true vampiric kings, but those who go on to master the Coil of the Quintessence



refuse to settle for mere kingship. These ancient fixtures pass beyond rulership to become one with the domain itself, citing Dracula's close bond with his homeland as evidence that the secret to overcoming the Curse may lie in such a union. Elder Dragons who develop or discover this Coil usually do so after reaching the Coil of the Voivode's fifth dot, although one may initiate the occasional apprentice early if he shows particular promise, or she wants to groom him as a successor. For the purposes of Experience costs, consider this Coil to be part of the Mystery of the Voivode.

To learn the powers of this Coil, the vampire must have dwelled in a single domain for at least a hundred years. She needn't have spent all her time there, but she must call it home and have established herself as a power there, whether politically, socially, or simply by making sure all the ancillae know she's out there watching. If she ever uproots and settles in another domain, she can reinstate her claim on the new domain after spending a story establishing her dominance there. Nothing stops two Dragons from using this Coil to claim the same domain except political complications, though the widespread effects of its associated Scales don't stack. An elder who rises from torpor after long periods of slumber within the borders of her domain finds that her presence still haunts it, and younger vampires who become aware of a sleeping elder's influence may try to hunt her down to make room for themselves in the city's heart.

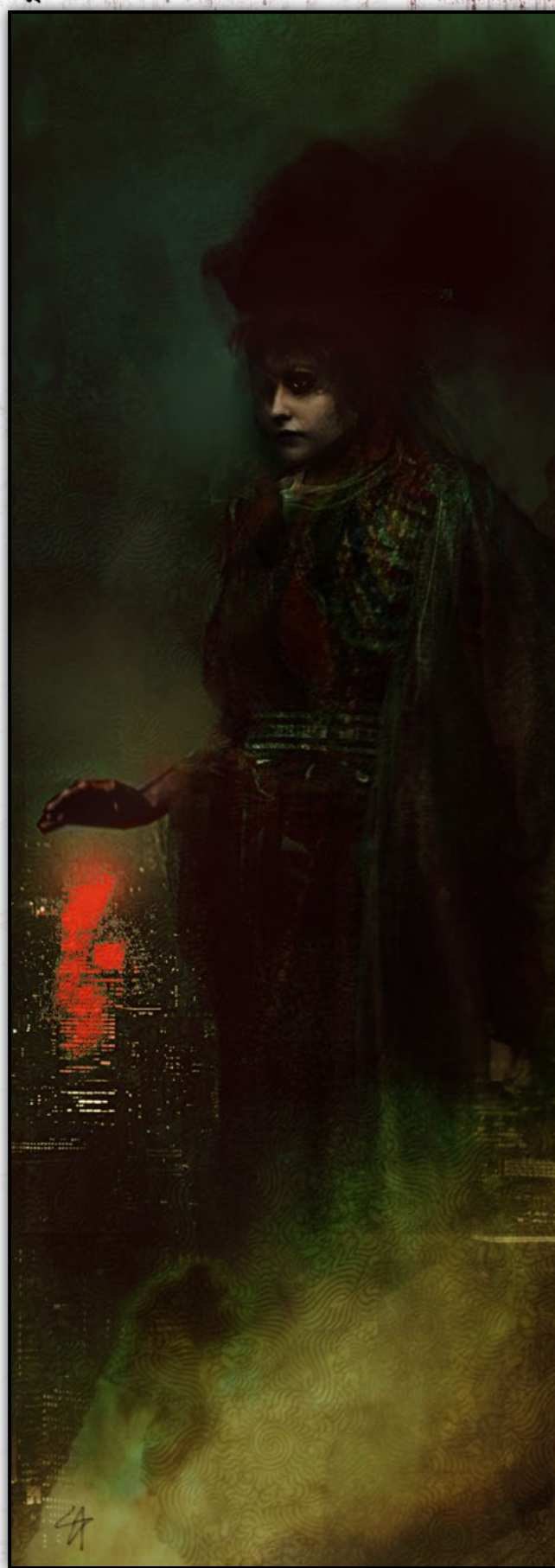
Scales the initiates of Quintessence develop are ambitious and insidious affairs that affect large swaths of the population. These Defiant drench municipal cemeteries in Vitae to claim all the city's dead places, bury ghouls alive to "plant" extensions of themselves in its roots, and infect its water supplies with arcane blood brews. Anything that brings the Dragon and her legend closer to the earth beneath her subjects' feet is fair game. And, they *are* subjects, everyone who lives within her domain — in more ways than one.

## FOREVER MINE •

The Dragon automatically becomes aware when another Kindred feeds or kills in her domain without her permission, although she doesn't learn any information about him. She may lash out with her predatory aura against such transgressors from wherever she is, no matter how far, and if she meets one face-to-face later, she knows it. If the domain is a Touchstone, she gains a Willpower point for lashing out at a transgressor whether she wins the contest or not.

## HOME TURF ••

The Dragon's domain offers its bounty up to her joyously, begging to sate her hunger. Any victim who is a denizen of her domain must spend a Willpower point to resist her feeding actions. This means that minor Storyteller characters without Willpower to spend can't resist at all.





## SMOTHER ...

The city makes way where its master walks and quiets its rage where it would do her harm. All natural fires in the Dragon's immediate vicinity are considered to be one step lower than usual on both the size and heat charts (**Vampire: the Requiem Second Edition**, p. 103) for damage purposes, and it takes two turns rather than one for combustible things to ignite. Whenever the Dragon is within her domain, she adds one to any Trait she uses to resist supernatural powers that generate fire or heat, and gains a +1 bonus to contested rolls against the same. If the vampire does encounter supernatural fire, she may reflexively spend three points of Vitae to initiate a Clash of Wills with the character who created it. If she wins, she extinguishes the fire in an area around her with a diameter equal to her Blood Potency in yards (meters).

## IN THE MOTHERLAND'S ARMS ....

The domain itself acts to protect the Dragon whenever she slumbers in its needy embrace, and its blood bond with her reaches out across the distance to punish those who would take advantage of their separation. Anytime she sleeps or falls into torpor within her domain's borders, she's considered to have dots of the Haven and Safe Place Merits equal to half her Blood Potency, even if she's not inside her haven at the time. When she does sleep in a haven for which she has the Merit — whether it's in her domain or not — she treats both Merits as one dot higher than they are, even if this would give her six effective dots. The effects are blatantly supernatural whether she's inside her haven or not, driving would-be intruders to distraction with whispers, visions, and overwhelming feelings of danger.

## FINGERS ON A DEAD PULSE .....

All the domain's darkest secrets and most shameful indulgences belong to the Dragon, filtering to her through a weak form of blood sympathy she shares with the whole city. She may pay one Vitae whenever she interacts with a denizen to immediately learn his Vice and any Conditions he currently suffers that reflect ignominious secrets, such as Guilty, Leveraged, or Notoriety. Once per scene, whenever she observes a denizen gaining Willpower from his Vice, she gains a Willpower point as well. At the Storyteller's discretion, major events within the domain that cause emotional responses in a large number of denizens may trigger the vampire's blood sympathy.

## *Sample Scales of the Quintessence*

The Scales of the Quintessence affect the entire domain, whether benefiting its vampire population, swaying its mortal population, or forcing the lifeblood of the city itself to flow as the Dragon desires. In every case, she may exclude an individual from an active Scale's benefits by touching him and spending one point of Vitae, or include an individual the same way.

## CODEPENDENCY

**Prerequisite Coil:** Fingers on a Dead Pulse

**Procedure:** The Dragon must gather a number of her own ghouls and bury them alive in locations that span the breadth her domain, effectively "planting" seeds of her own Vitae in the earth. She must wait until they perish, then spill all her own Vitae over the soil where the corpses rest, distributed as evenly as possible. Her Vitae pool must be full when she begins for this sacrifice to take effect. The larger her domain is, the more ghouls she needs — she must bury five ghouls if her realm is a town, small city, or single district of a larger city; ten if it's a medium sized city or single large borough; fifteen for a large city or a smaller city plus its surrounding suburbs; and twenty for a densely populated metropolis such as Tokyo or New York City.

**Outcome:** For the next year, the domain's personality comes to reflect its master's will and temperament, and she, in turn, becomes its dread avatar. Its active hours skew more nocturnal and the mortal herds tend toward unconscious behaviors that make them better prey. Any Social rolls or supernatural powers that anyone uses to convince a denizen to support one of the vampire's Aspirations gain the 9-again quality, even if the one doing the convincing doesn't know she exists. Such rolls or powers that anyone uses to convince a denizen to act *against* one of the Dragon's Aspirations loses the 10-again quality in similar fashion. Any vampire who calls the domain home benefits from the effects of Fingers on a Dead Pulse until Codependency ends, and all rolls to access or use the domain's Cacophony benefit from the 9-again quality.

## COLD OF THE GRAVE

**Prerequisite Coil:** Smother

**Procedure:** The elder calls upon the All Night Society in her domain to help her help them. She must collect at least five Vitae from one vampire per large neighborhood or district of her domain, though nothing says they need to give it willingly. Then, she spills her entire full Vitae pool into a basin and mixes it with that of the other vampires, along with the ground bones and rotted flesh of corpses exhumed from the cemeteries of the domain — at least one corpse per cemetery. Finally, the Dragon must build a pyre as close to the geographical center of the domain as possible and use this mixture to ritually extinguish it.



**Outcome:** For the next year, all vampires who call the domain home benefit from the effects of Smother while within its borders.

### *New Merits*

## AROUND THE BLOCK (••)

**Prerequisites:** At least one Skill at ••••• or higher, Elder

**Effect:** Your character is ancient enough to have seen and done it all. She considers nothing completely out of her experience anymore, even if she's never formally learned it, and knows how to lean on her incredible strengths to make up for her weaknesses. This Merit negates the untrained penalty for all Skills.

## BELOVED (••)

**Prerequisites:** Mortal or ghoul Touchstone

Your character's mortal beloved keeps her grounded. She might realize that the relationship can't last forever, but that only serves to make each fleeting moment more precious.

You gain an extra bonus die on detachment rolls made on nights that your character spent at least an hour with her Touchstone. Should her beloved die, however, you must immediately make a detachment roll to avoid Humanity loss, even if she has other Touchstones remaining.

## CALL THE BEAST (••••)

**Prerequisites:** Humanity 4 or lower

Your character spends her nights trying to decipher the revenant riddle; she may even have created one. She learned to capitalize on their weak state and speak directly to the Beast behind the man. She can use the Animalism Discipline, including Devotions, on revenants, though such rolls are opposed by the target's Resolve + current vitae. The revenant remembers how she controlled him when the power ends.

## CIVILIZATION STALKER (•••)

**Prerequisites:** Intelligence or Manipulation •••, Elder

**Effect:** Your character has seen cities, nations — perhaps even empires — rise and fall. He knows the cycles, knows all the games, and understands the stakes better than anyone. Gain the 9-again quality on rolls using Politics, Socialize, or Streetwise whenever his centuries of personal experience would grant him unnatural insight.

## HEART OF STONE (••)

**Prerequisites:** Feeding Grounds •

Rather than attach herself to a short-lived mortal, or even a lineage of mortals, your character invests her emotions in a lasting institution: either a physical building, or an organization. By attaching to an abstract of humanity rather than a person, she shields herself from loss.

The detachment roll penalty for losing all her Touchstones is only -1, but likewise her maximum bonus is only +2 (even if she has three Touchstones or more).

This Merit does not exempt your character from the Languid Condition if applicable.

## MAJOR DOMO (•••)

Your character owns a nightclub or other establishment where Kindred meet safely. As a sign of deference to her position, you gain +2 bonus die on Persuasion, Intimidation and Socialize rolls against other Kindred.

Your character is responsible for the sanctity of her Elysium, and suffers a -2 dice penalty on aforementioned rolls if any Kindred gets hurt under her watch. This penalty lasts until she makes reparations, i.e. by destroying the offender or paying the victim off.

## MARRIED BY BLOOD (•)

**Prerequisites:** Kindred Touchstone (your spouse)

Your character has taken a vampire spouse. This relationship is genuine, regardless of the emotions involved, and not one she is inclined to break: her gods sanctified the relationship, she genuinely loves her partner, or the marriage is affirmed through the Vinculum.

Your character and her spouse may share Haven and Retainers, effectively adding those dots together. Expenditures either makes count against this communal pool. Additionally, whenever one of them loses a dot of Status, the other does too. The All Night Society is always happy to judge a chain on its weakest link.

## MENTOR IN IMMORTALITY (• TO •••••)

**Prerequisites:** Elder

**Effect:** As a venerable elder, your character has taken a younger Kindred under his wing and shared his secrets with her. He trusts her not to betray him, and in turn, she trusts him to guide her well and make her powerful. Each dot in this Merit represents one student. Once per story per student, your



character can call in a favor. It can be anything she's capable of, from assassination, to giving him a prized possession, to letting him feed from her, to temporarily lending him her own Merits where it makes sense. In exchange, he must continue to share his secrets with her. If he ever stops doing so, he loses the benefits of this Merit with regard to that student until he relents.

**Drawback:** As the recipient of your secrets, your student is a weakness for your enemies to exploit. Once per story per student, the Storyteller can put the student – or the secrets she knows – in danger or otherwise inconvenience him in a major way through her. If this happens, you gain a Beat.

## MOTHER-GODDESS' ALTAR (•)

**Prerequisites:** Altar, Circle of the Crone Status •••••, Blood Potency 6+

**Effect:** Your character is a fabled priestess of the Mother's Army, and her Vitae is so potent that her fellow Acolytes draw strength from it when she leads them in a ritual. Whenever she uses the Altar Merit (*Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p. 109) to lead Crúac rituals performed with teamwork, you no longer need to double the time between rolls, even if some participants have no Crúac dots. If the character's Blood Potency falls below 6 due to torpor, this Merit ceases to function and you may trade it in via Sanctity of Merits if you like, or keep it in preparation for buying Blood Potency back up again.

## PRACTICED PUPPETEER (••)

**Prerequisites:** Any Discipline •••••, Elder

**Effect:** Your character has spent centuries or perhaps millennia influencing the world from the shadows. He's so much more powerful than most things in it now, it's laughable. Choose one Discipline for which you meet the prerequisite. Rolls you make to use that Discipline, or to activate Devotions that require the Discipline, gain the 9-again quality when targeting a mortal character or one with a Supernatural Tolerance Trait at least four dots lower than your character's Blood Potency. You can buy this Merit more than once for different Disciplines.

## PRIMA DONNA (• TO •••••)

**Prerequisites:** Elder

**Effect:** Your character has chosen to turn his back on the covenants entirely, pursuing private goals of his own instead. He may not have any pull in the largest Kindred circles, but in exchange he holds himself above their petty politics and has the freedom to revel in his personal power without obligation or consequence. Once per story for each dot you purchase in this Merit, you may

reflexively spend a Willpower point to do one of the following:

- Ignore the effects of soft leverage used against your character in Social maneuvering
- End a mundane Social Condition your character is currently suffering, such as Leveraged or Swooned, without taking a Beat
- Treat any Status Merit in which you have at least one dot as though it were one dot higher than it is, even if that means you effectively have six dots, for the scene
- Gain the 8-again quality on a Social roll you make against any member of a covenant

**Drawback:** If you purchase any Covenant Status, you lose Prima Donna.

## RECEPTIVE MIND (• TO •••••)

**Prerequisites:** Auspex •••••, Blood Potency 6+

**Effect:** Your character's long years and potent blood make his mind more receptive to the thoughts of others. This Merit allows him to apply Lay Open the Mind (*Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p. 130) to one extra target per dot he has in this Merit upon activation at no extra cost. Roll once and apply the result to each target's resistance roll separately. For every dot of Blood Potency your character drops below 6 due to torpor, he loses one effective dot in this Merit until you buy Blood Potency back up again.

## SAVIOR OF THE LOST (•••)

Your character can uplift a revenant (*Vampire: the Requiem Second Edition*, p. 94) without the immediate Humanity cost. Rather, you roll detachment: upon failure, you must spend a Humanity dot as normal, but upon success you may choose to spend a Willpower dot instead.

The revenant must accept the Embrace willingly, and more or less knowingly (your character need not reveal the entire truth about Kindred and the Embrace, but she cannot outright lie).

This Merit does not apply when your character uplifts a revenant of her own making.

## SPECIAL TREAT (•••)

**Prerequisites:** Ghoul Retainer

Your character owns a rare ghoul whose blood is addictive. It's up to her to make the most of this, and the Storyteller controls the ghoul and his attitude towards your character. The vampire isn't immune to her ghoul's blood, and risks becoming addicted to him as per the mechanics of vitae addiction (see *Vampire*



the *Requiem* 2e, p. 99). This ghoul also seems to burn through Vitae faster than others, requiring two points of Vitae, rather than one, to maintain monthly.

## SPECTRAL COMMUNION (....)

**Prerequisites:** Elder, Hollow Mekhet

**Effect:** Your character has coexisted with his Ka for so long that he's learned to tame it somewhat. Once per story, he can spill three points of Vitae, anointing a mirror with his blood. He engages his Ka in a battle of wills as an extended and contested action to call the spirit to him and temporarily bind it. Roll Resolve + Composure + Auspex, contested by the Ka's Power + Resistance, with a required number of total successes equal to (10 – the Mekhet's Humanity); each roll takes one turn.

If you succeed, the mirror gains the Anchor and Open Conditions for the Ka, which manifests inside. You may choose to simply trap it there, in which case you gain the Imprisoned Echo Condition (below). Alternatively, you may let it step through, in which case you gain the Quiet Echo Condition (below). Either way, the Hollow use this ritual to buy themselves time when their Ka are in the middle of causing chaos, or to grant their other halves peace, if only for a short while.

## UNDENIABLE AURA (...)

**Prerequisites:** Atrocious, Cutthroat, or Enticing; Elder

**Effect:** Your character's Beast has become so powerful that his predatory aura spills out from him at all times. Anyone who remains in his presence for longer than a few minutes must reflexively roll Resolve + Blood Potency against your usual roll to lash out with the aspect of your character's Beast represented by the prerequisite Merit you possess. If you win, the first Social roll you make against that character in the current scene achieves an exceptional success on three dice instead of five.

### *Carthian Law*

## STARE DECISIS (..)

**Prerequisites:** Carthian Status •••, Elder

**Effect:** The word of an elder trumps any petty disputes the ancillae can muster. Your character's opinions in matters of city law are considered legal precedent. Other characters must spend a Willpower point to take any action that would oppose her whenever she speaks on behalf of or against someone accused of breaking a law or Tradition. Anytime she convinces a political body or authority figure to pass judgment according to her preference, regain a Willpower point.

### *Dynastic Merits*

## DYNASTY PROGENITOR (..)

**Prerequisites:** Dynasty Membership •••, Elder

**Effect:** Your character is not only the matriarch or patriarch of her dynasty, she's the one who started it in the first place. Her Vitae runs strongly through its veins. Whenever she uses a Discipline or a Devotion on a member of her dynasty, double the blood sympathy bonus you add to the roll.

## OATH OF DYNASTY (...)

**Prerequisites:** Covenant Status •••, Dynasty Membership •••

**Effect:** Your character is part of a cyclical dynasty, whether it was sworn officially as an Oath by an Invictus Notary or affirmed some other way. This dynasty is a small subset of the larger one to which he belongs. Each character with this Merit shares a mystical bond with each other character in the cyclical dynasty. Once per chapter you may benefit from any Social Merit that any member of the cyclical dynasty possesses, provided that character's player agrees. Your character shares a thrice-removed blood sympathy connection with the other members. He can get through to a torpid member by speaking out loud to her as she slumbers and receiving a vague muttered response, filtered through her nightmares. Receiving clear enough replies to gain actual information or insight requires a Presence + Empathy roll, with a penalty equal to (10 – your character's Blood Potency), to a maximum of -5.

Your character can also try to rouse another member from torpor even if his Blood Potency wouldn't normally be high enough to do so, by feeding two Vitae to the sleeper. Roll his Blood Potency as a dice pool, with a penalty equal to (10 – the torpid vampire's Humanity), to a maximum of -5. If you roll an exceptional success, the vampire wakes. If you roll a dramatic failure, she's incapable of waking for any reason until at least one full story has passed.

Revoking the Oath of Dynasty requires spending a point of Willpower and a point of Vitae, spilling blood over a formal denouncement spoken to the entire group. Your character loses this Merit, and *all* of the characters involved gain the Spooked Condition.

**Drawback:** You always start Social maneuvering with one fewer Door than usual when another member of the cyclical dynasty takes Social actions against you.







# CHAPTER FOUR

## THE COMPANY WE KEEP

*"But frail as flowers are the lives of men,  
Passing phantoms of this world."*

– Reiko Chiba, *Hiroshige's Tokaido in Prints and Poetry*

Nothing lasts forever. Time rolls in like the tide, carrying away everything of value and grinding down even the mightiest fortress. Yet after losing everything she ever loved, the elder vampire keeps on going. She senses that her next great love is just around the corner. Or, maybe it's just habit, allowing her to fake enough shallow connections to scrape by one more night.

She did not survive this long by being kind, generous, or sentimental. Certainly, she *remembers* being kind. She clings to that feeling and the illusion of being kind still; or at least, as kind as anyone that far removed from humanity can be. Push aside the thin veneer though, and she is, by age and necessity, a selfish creature. She has become the tide that sweeps up everyone around her in ancient and inhumane machinations.

This chapter looks at the myriad connections Kindred forged over their long Requiems: to each other, to mortals and ghouls, and even to their prey. Some of these relationships are strong enough to serve as Touchstones, others merely exist to do her bidding, or entertain her as the nights pass endlessly. When reading this chapter – split in four parts: mortals, ghouls, revenants, and other vampires – ask: does the elder have bonds like these? And if she does: do they remind her of her humanity? If the answer to the latter is yes, that's a Touchstone. If the answer is no, they're a servant, distraction, ally, or rival. Elders should have enough Touchstones to keep them grounded, and all the servants, allies, and rivals befitting their age.

The end of this chapter, under *Broken Mirror* and *Last One Standing*, offers a glimpse of elders who have no Touchstones

### What's That?

Yes, animals can be companions, and even Touchstones (though they don't count as *human company* for purposes of detachment rolls). However, unless a rival Kindred makes off with the character's beloved Collie, it doesn't offer much in way of drama and intrigue. Which is why we're not explicitly including animals, or animal ghouls, in this chapter. Players and Storytellers are welcome to adapt the Merits and Conditions to an animal companion as it makes sense.

left. Their blood grows heavy and nothing holds them to this world; they'll slip into torpor soon. These creatures serve as a warning that even the most ancient of monsters *must* find things to care about. The tethers that bind the elder to the world may not be much, and it may die next night, but right now in this time and place, it still smolders.

This chapter offers several examples of each section. Feel free to use them for NPCs, or incorporate them into character backgrounds. They're exactly that though – examples – and not the definitive word on how that facet of elder relationships *must* work.

### *Spinning the Web*

One night you turn around and realize you're making a shiva call for your own great-granddaughter. The Prince you looked up to and feared as a neonate is long gone, ground into dust. The village you grew up in is a megaplex theater with IMAX 3D now and your name is a footnote in some history textbook.

You never could have imagined your nights being this fucked up. Congrats, you're an elder.

You might feel alone, but you didn't get here without touching countless lives and unives, and feeling them touch you in return. Good thing, too, because you need people now more than ever.



The more alien you become, the more they remind you why you shouldn't let yourself degenerate into a mindless horror. As the history of your existence stretches out over the centuries, you pick up threads here and there that connect you to something or someone you once knew. Maybe your favorite ghoul or your nigh-eternal rival is gone now, but his legacy remains. Over time, these threads become a web, with you as the spider: the one stable point in a kaleidoscope of death and progress.

While Climbing the Ladder (**Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition**, p. 282) is a series of steps that allows players to explore how their brand-new monsters learned to cope with their addictions, Spinning the Web is a network-building exercise that allows players to explore how their elder characters learned to cope with their growing malaise. It lets the group map out how these vampires endure as their peers disappear one by one, who they stay connected to and how, and how small an elder's world really is. It highlights nine pivotal points in the story of transitioning from rank-and-file to unliving god, and lets the players and the Storyteller see the ripples that each elder character and anyone they've influenced make across time. You don't need to address all nine points if you don't think they're all relevant to your character. You could also decide to hold some of them in reserve and discuss them later once your character has a few chapters under her belt.

Spinning the Web is designed to aid in making sure your elder character is still neck-deep in the Danse Macabre and has plenty of baggage to drag along and cause drama with. It helps you get into the mindset of such an ancient and unknowable being by walking you through how she got there, and why she didn't succumb to despair, loneliness, or the Beast long ago. The order listed here suggests a vague timeline, but you can rearrange them any way you like to lay out your elder's unique story. If your group comes up with other events or connections you want to explore, feel free to add more nodes to the web. Remember, anything you put down in the web should have some aspect that's still relevant centuries later; even if a character is dead and gone, something about his relationship to your Kindred lingers. What is it? How is it also relevant to another player's character?

Events you add to your web don't need to have happened recently in your character's existence. In fact, it's best if you spread them out over the long course of her personal timeline so the group ends up with a web spanning the entire breadth of experience that led the characters to their elder nights and connects them across centuries. It's easiest to wait to decide when each event took place until the web is complete, so you don't end up with untenable scenarios involving characters who couldn't have coexisted.

As with Climbing the Ladder, any nodes the group creates here can be notated as Touchstones or Merits for your character, including places and organizations.

### *Prologue or Interlude*

You can Spin the Web as a series of prologues, or as a collaborative brainstorming session during character creation,

if your troupe starts off making elder characters from scratch. Alternatively, you can do it as a series of downtime scenes or an interlude discussion that covers the passage of time during a chronicle with characters the players have already been playing through their younger nights, who are now making the transition to elder status. Either way, you'll want everyone involved.

If you're taking your character from zero to elder at character creation, you can treat Spinning the Web much like Climbing the Ladder: lay out a large sheet of paper, a pile of index cards, or some other method of tracking the nodes and lines between them, and fill them in one-by-one as everyone fleshes out the characters. You can hold off on drawing secondary connections until you have most or all the nodes completed, then figure out where the most interesting hooks are, or you can draw them as soon as another viable node arises to see what comes out of it; it's up to you. When creating elders this way, you may want to both Climb the Ladder and Spin the Web to figure out who your Kindred was and knew before, and build out her long existence on the backs of those answers. This can be time-consuming, though, and many of the people you would create for your ladder are long dead by the time the game begins. It's easier to focus on the web while keeping in mind that some of the answers to these questions stem from long-standing relationships or long-lost secrets.

If you as the Storyteller plan to progress a game through time to turn ancillae into elders, you can start laying the groundwork for Spinning the Web well before the troupe ever gets that far. Look ahead as players express interest in certain Storyteller characters and set pieces, and jot down notes on how they might survive in one form or another, leave behind legacies the Kindred can interact with later, or build something lasting. As in-game time passes, look for opportunities to fill in nodes of the web with story points that arise organically as you play. You can even use these nodes as deliberate story hooks to build into your ongoing game as you play through the transition gradually. Ask your players which ones they're interested in for their characters and plan accordingly.

Even if you don't plan to play elders, you can take a bit of time once it happens to pause and look back on the chronicle so far, pulling events, characters, and organizations from your own game history to see whether they might fit the bill for a node, or lead to one.

Regardless of your approach, once the players have filled in some or all the web's nodes, you can play through them as prologue or interlude scenes if your troupe is interested. See "Turn Back the Clock" in Chapter 2, p. 43, for more on how to run flashback scenes from an elder's past. The Storyteller could work with one player at a time during downtime and show the interconnectivity of nodes as a progression of unfolding events at different points in time. It could be especially rewarding to do this with multiple connections to the same person or institution, watching how each vampire made her mark on it over the years. In this case, the other players could take up various Storyteller



character roles in these scenes to keep everyone engaged, if they like. Alternatively, a scene could involve the entire group of player characters at once, if a node is particularly rife with connections.

Each node a player completes earns her one Experience to spend after completing the scene(s). Players can use these Experiences to flesh out their elders' character sheets with things they learned over the course of the events the web lays out. The group should keep in mind that players who choose to address all nine nodes receive more Experiences than players who don't.

### *Divergent Lessons*

Somebody taught you something that saved your undead bacon a century later. Without it, you'd be dust, or a torpid husk, or nothing but your Beast. Whether it was sage advice, a sacred rite, a powerful Devotion, or a well-guarded secret, it's the reason you're still here to lord over the night. Somebody else learned the same thing you did, but it sure as hell didn't save her, and guess what? She blames you.

#### *Looking Inward*

Tell the group about the vampire who took you under his wing and taught you what you needed to know to survive eternity. What was your relationship to him? Was he your sire, an elder you sought out in your younger nights, a Sanctified priest who heard your confessions, or your Humanity-minded lover? What did he give you that you couldn't have gotten anywhere else? Tell us about how it saved you, literally or not, and how you feel about him now. Are you grateful still, loyal to his memory? Do you begrudge having to credit him with your salvation? Why isn't he with you anymore?

#### *Looking Outside*

**The Rival:** You're not the only one who benefited from your mentor's wisdom. Another Kindred was just as close to him as you were and learned just as much. The trouble is, she took away completely different lessons from it, and it burned her. She resents you for daring to win where she lost. She hates you for having had the better relationship with your shared benefactor. Or, *she* had the better relationship and doesn't understand why that wasn't enough. How did the lesson fail her? What run-ins have you had with her over the years? How does she try taking her revenge and why hasn't it worked yet? Does she blame you for taking her sire away from her, or did *she* steal *yours* and end up with the short end of the stick anyway? Do you hate her just as much or do you proffer an olive branch that she repeatedly refuses?

Write down the name and covenant of your Kindred rival and draw an arrow from her to you. Put "Resents" on the line. Now ask another player to connect another character in the web to her with an arrow and write "Owes a debt" on the line.

### *Filling the Void*

You thought it would be there forever; the Kindred lover you pledged your eternity to, the city you ruled for a century, the haven in a monument that was ancient when you were Embraced, the enemy you filled your nights plotting against. Whatever it was, you lost it. It was by no means the first thing you lost, but it was the first one that left such a raw, gaping hole inside you. The first one that made you question whether immortality was worth the price. Filling that hole is impossible but you can't help trying.

#### *Looking Inward*

Tell the group about who, or what, you lost and what it meant to you. How did your actions lead to its loss and what form does your self-flagellation take? Who or what did you blame for the unspeakable tragedy, and what complicated your attempts at closure? As you stumbled around seeking a replacement for the irreplaceable, what attracted you to that replacement? What about it reminded you of what slipped through your fingers?

#### *Looking Outside*

**The Disappointment:** You tried to fill the void with a rebound, and it went about as well as any mortal rebound might. It was a honeymoon at first, but the more the new hotness didn't live up to your expectations, the more you took your bitterness out on it. Who or what did you hang all your hopes on and ruin? Was it a buried old rivalry you tried to rekindle? Someone else's lover you impulsively seduced? A domain in turmoil where you swept in like Napoleon to take the reins? A cult or childer you created to worship you? Did you try too hard to reform it in your lost one's image or let it sweep you away from yourself? How did it fail you, and how did you fail it?

Write down the name and covenant of a Kindred character or an organization that you broke somehow when you neglected to adequately fill your void. Draw an arrow from your name to that one and write "I ruined" on the line. Now ask another player to draw an arrow from the disappointment to another Kindred character in the web and write "Now belongs to" on the line.

### *The Long Sleep*

Sooner or later, every elder falls into torpor to sleep away the years, whether through misfortune or by design. Maybe it's a routine for you now, or maybe you're only just waking up to your first major period shift. Either way, this node explores your first deep slumber, how it changed you, and who helped you readjust to the world afterward.

#### *Looking Inward*

Tell the group about what sent you into torpor and what vows you made as you went under. Did you swear vengeance against the one who bled or starved you? Did you go to sleep longing to





find something worth existing for, meaning in the tedium of hunt-feed-kill? Tell us what you dreamed, what sibylline nightmares you couldn't wake from, what glorious delusions haunt you still. Tell us when you went into darkness, how long you slept, and whether it was longer than you intended or not nearly long enough.

### *Looking Outside*

**The Psychopomp:** When you finally rose again from your tomb, someone was there to feed you and bring you up to speed. Someone helped you trade your outmoded clothes for

modern duds and exchange your gold marks for euros and a MasterCard. Someone shepherded you through the transition from godlike power and mastery of your domain to blinking in the moonlight like a wide-eyed fledgling and rediscovering the heady high of mortal blood. Who was it? Did she do it willingly or did blood conditioning draw her to you? Was it an accident that she stumbled into you? Does she serve you reluctantly or show you the sights with gusto?

Write down the name of a person — kine, Kindred, or otherwise — who guided you through your waking into a new time period and stayed by your side until you could reliably tell





slang from nonsense. On the arrow from that name to yours, write “Waking Guide.” Then ask another player to draw an arrow from your psychopomp to an organization, family, or institution somewhere else in the web and write “Beholden to” on the line.

### *Long Live the Queen*

A hundred years ago, you had everything. Power, thralls, respect, notoriety, riches. Then you took a dirt nap, and when

you woke up, someone had stepped into the vacuum you left behind and taken it all. The city that once trembled at the sound of your name didn’t even remember it anymore. Your bank accounts were empty; maybe your bank no longer existed. Cheeky neonates laughed at your anachronistic mannerisms and old-school speech, not realizing or caring that once you could have destroyed them with the merest effort. And now, someone else sits on your throne, basking in stolen grandeur, claiming credit for all your ancient deeds and feeding her blood to your childer. The Queen was dead. Long live the Queen.

### *Looking Inward*

Tell the group about the most valuable things you used to have and how losing them shattered you. Did you prize your carefully chosen hunting ground above all else? Did you pass your innermost secrets to a trusted advisor only to find that your usurper now flaunted those secrets to all and sundry? Was your favorite ghoul now thrall to another? Tell us about the indignities you suffered and the rage or despair they caused. Were you reduced to sleeping in some common crypt? Did your fellow Dragons dismiss the theories you worked so hard to develop? Did you deal with it gracefully, or did your Beast deal with it *for* you? What plans did you make to regain all that was taken from you and how did they fail or give you Pyrrhic victories? How did you move on knowing you couldn’t get it all back?

### *Looking Outside*

**The Usurper:** She’s the one who passed your hard-earned reputation off as her own. She’s the one who laughed as you shook your fists and swore vengeance. She’s the one who dared you to make a move with your weakened potency and your empty pockets. When you did, you regretted it. You lost big and had to leave town and start all over. Maybe you recovered everything but the one thing you never wanted to endure without, or you won your lover back again but now the usurper’s face haunts every conversation. Even if you climbed back to the heights of power you once knew, she’s always there, reminding you of how far you once fell.

Write down the name and covenant of the vampire who screwed you over. Now draw an arrow from her to three other nodes on the web, of any kind, and write “Took this from [your character name]” on each line.

### *The Anachronism*

It was bound to happen eventually. No matter how quickly you pick up the new gadgets and mores of whatever “modern” means on any given night, you always forget yourself, even if it’s just the once. Once was all you needed to fuck up royally. You grossly misunderstood something about contemporary society, morality, or technology, and not only did you pay for it, but so did someone else.



### *Looking Inward*

You only meant to drum up a good healthy fear of you among the neonates. You never meant for this. Tell the group how you vastly underestimated the mortal media of these nights, the instantaneousness of the flow of information. Tell us how you resorted to casual violence and atrocity before you understood how much modern humanity has grown to value each other's lives. Did you fail to adequately hide the evidence of your living sacrifices from impossibly thorough FBI forensics? What did you learn from this disastrous gaffe and what did you lose in the process? Respect, ghouls, a home? Tell us how you defended your actions and preserved your ancient mystique, or owned the mistake so completely that you set a new dangerous trend.

### *Looking Outside*

**The Scapegoat:** Sure, you suffered for your blunder, but you made sure somebody else suffered more. Who took the blame for your error? Who protested when you ensured the anachronism was back in vogue, and saw your new followers eat him alive? Who did you throw to the wolves? How powerful or influential is he and what dirt could he dig up on you to turn the tables?

Write down the name of your scapegoat, Kindred or kine, and draw an arrow from him to you. Write "Seeks vengeance" on the line. Then ask another player to draw an arrow from another character in the web to that person and write a short sentence on the line describing how the character benefited from his downfall.

### *The Vicious Cycle*

You've existed long enough to see history's cyclical nature firsthand. You know that no matter how much humanity changes from one century to the next, some things never do. It might drive you mad with the monotony of it all, or fascinate you enough to try your hand at millennium-long social experiments. Either way, you've noticed something profoundly disturbing about the circles society runs itself in, and it sets you apart from them in ways you've never experienced before.

### *Looking Inward*

Tell the group about the weighty insight you've had, what aspect of "the more things change, the more they stay the same" you've picked up through long observation of humanity and why it stood out to you. What comfort did you take from it that helped you endure eternity with a bit more equanimity? What horror did you see in it that drove you to despair? What single event imprinted the realization like a brand in your mind and what did you do to prolong or disrupt the cycle? What did you see in this iteration that reminded you of something from your distant past?

### *Looking Outside*

**The Exemplar:** This group perfectly encapsulated the maddening truth you've discovered through immortality. The city you ruled swung back on the pendulum from piety to godlessness, just as it had the first time you set foot in it. Another Kindred's ghoulish family revolted against him and you couldn't help seeing the familiar signs. Whatever the case, you got involved, pulled back into a conflict you've seen a dozen times the world over. You bloodily disrupted it, subtly manipulated it, or brazenly joined it. And, regardless of your intentions, you made it worse.

Write down the name or identifying description of an organization or institution that embodies the cycle that obsessed you, even if it's a loose or unofficial one. Draw an arrow connecting you to it and write "Fanned the flames." Now ask another player to draw an arrow from another character in the web to that group and write "Belongs to" on it.

### *High Contrast*

As the nights passed you lost track of what it was like to be human. Memories of mortal limitations and passions and pleasures faded the longer you persisted, supplanted by the experience of what you became. It happened so gradually that you just let it go, barely even realizing it was happening and hardly caring until something punched you in the gut with a wake-up call. Your monstrous reality highlighted in sharp contrast, black shape against a bright white backdrop. It dredged up questions you never thought or wanted to consider. You felt naked, exposed for the world to point at and say "What the hell is that?" So, what the hell is that? Do you even know?

### *Looking Inward*

Tell the group about your rude awakening, and what caused it. Did you witness one of the dread Owls' atrocities and realize it was just like you? Did the heartbreaking kindness of a mortal stop you in your tracks? Were you blindsided when even your fellow Kindred couldn't understand what you'd done? Did you wake up into a world so unfamiliar you couldn't even parse it? Tell us about the disaster you provoked with your reaction. Did your Beast lash out to teach you just how far removed you really were? Did you beg someone to scrub the stains from your soul somehow? Did you retreat further into darkness, embracing your inhumanity, or studying it in fascination with your own alien nature?

### *Looking Outside*

**The Reminder:** She begs you to come home and doesn't realize you literally can't. She refuses to drink from humans and you can't tell if she pities or blames you when you do. She's a mortal child who draws pictures of you under a shining sun. She's a monster even worse than you are, insisting you're the same. It's a spirit of shadow and spite, and you understand it better than you understand your own lover. Whoever it is



reminds you of things you thought you'd forgotten, and of how impossible it is to ever go back. You cling to her in shame and desperation, or you want to cut ties but find yourself perversely attached. You look for a reflection of yourself in her eyes, or you pray you never find one.

Write down the name of a character and on the arrow that connects you to her, write "Reminds me I'm a monster." Then ask another player to draw an arrow from any other node in the web to that character and write "Threatens" on the line.

### *The Reunion*

You hadn't seen him in five hundred years. You weren't even sure he was still walking and talking until he showed up at your door, or you followed his exploits from afar all this time thinking he'd never want anything more to do with you. When you saw him again, sparks flew, of one kind or another. Whatever you built in the interim forever changed when he waltzed back into your Requiem.

### *Looking Inward*

Tell the group about what you once had with this character and how it all fell apart. Did he leave you, did you leave him? Did you think he'd met Final Death? Was it betrayal, sorrow, anger, or circumstance that separated you? Did your childe need to make his own way in the world, or did your sire abandon you when you needed him most? Did your partner in crime take all the profits and split? Did your human paramour finally shuffle off his mortal coil? What do you regret about the separation and what relieves you? Tell us how you coped without him, what lies you told yourself to soothe your shame, or how you blossomed once you were out from under his thumb. When you finally reunited, how long had it been since you'd seen him?

### *Looking Outside*

**The Wayward One:** He came back, and forced you to make room for him in your night-to-night existence again. Did you welcome him with open arms or dread the sight of him? Did one of you seek out the other, or did this reunion happen by chance, or by someone else's grim design? Did you know he still lurked around somewhere, or did his appearance hit you like a blow? What brought about the reunion, and were your tears joyful or bitter? Was being with him again alien because everything had changed, or was it like slipping on your most comfortable pair of shoes? If he wasn't the original person you knew, what about him reminded you of the original and what old baggage did this new person dig up for you?

Write down the name of your wayward one. He could be Kindred or someone else who's still around, or he could be the descendant or childe of the one you once knew. He could be the product of a legacy you created, the recent subject of an experiment series you started, or the grandson of the mortal

offspring you didn't realize you had. Draw an arrow from you to him and write "Reunited with" on the line. Then choose someone else in the web to connect to him, and ask another player to decide what kind of relationship to write on the line. Feel free to make this connection an incestuous tangle with the subject of your "Filling the Void" node, if you want to tie the events of the two nodes together — but if you do, repeat the last step here with another arrow pointing to a third connection somewhere else in the web.

### *Footprints of a Giant*

Your fingers have been digging into every pie you touched since the nights when this city had a different name and spoke a different language. Long ago, you singlehandedly built something for the kine: a university, a religion, a gang, a union, a ball club, whatever — that still persists centuries later. Maybe you even built what would become this city in the first place. Even slipping into torpor again and again, you wake to find your pet project going strong. Whether it's still what you intended it to be, though, is another matter.

### *Looking Inward*

Tell the group how the stability and flattery of a flourishing mortal institution that bears your name affects you. Is it a comfort that lets you hold onto scraps of humanity? Is it an ego trip every time you see its name on the news, or does its success shame you now? Do you encourage filmmakers to make documentaries about your enduring legacy, or do you write yourself out of its history altogether? Do you like looking yourself up in the local archives or does it unnerve you to hear strangers talk about your baby? Tell us how you stay active in the organization. Do you anonymously donate to the charity you created, or do you embezzle funds to support your lavish estate and unholy rites? Do you sit on the board of directors and send ghoulish proxies to all the meetings? Are you the mysterious benefactor that offers promising young students internships in your Carthian activist group, or too-good-to-be-true scholarships that lead them into inescapable hell?

### *Looking Outside*

**The Fixture:** When you outlive most everyone you've ever known, watching something endure along with you through the centuries helps ground you in the here and now, keeping you from detaching from the world. At the same time, like anything, it evolves. Just like childer, nothing you create stays the way you made it forever. How has the institution changed and grown? Has it far surpassed your wildest dreams? Taken on a new mission or warped the old one beyond recognition? How it has spiraled out of your control or come to stand for something you loathe?

Write down the name of the lingering organization you



created and on the arrow you draw from you to it, write “I created.” Then have each other player draw an arrow to or from your fixture to any other node in the web and fill in the line with a descriptive phrase of her choice.

## *Elder Banes*

Vampires who persist long enough can develop even stranger banes when they lose Humanity, as their nature becomes more inhuman. Here’s a list of sample elder banes not commonly seen in younger Kindred. At the Storyteller’s discretion, elder vampires may also gain banes that are normally associated with the Strix, such as Counting or Running Water.

**Blood Synchronicity:** Your character forms an unnatural connection to those she feeds from. Whenever she gains more Vitae in a single feeding than she has Humanity dots, she gains the Synchronized Condition. If her victim dies during the feeding, she instead immediately rolls to resist frenzy, with a dice penalty equal to (10 – Humanity).

**Dead Name:** Your character’s mortal name makes his warped soul shudder and his Beast writhe. If he hears the name specifically in the context of addressing him with it, he gains the Tempted Condition (*Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p. 307) as though he had resisted frenzy, and further rolls to resist frenzy are capped by his Humanity dots.

**Enemy of Light:** For your character, any bright light is like

a miniature sun, punishing the Beast and the dead flesh that enwraps it for daring to step out of the dark. This includes firelight and artificial light. Spending more than a minute in bright light inflicts the Blinded Tilt (*Chronicles of Darkness*, p. 281) which cannot end until the vampire escapes the light. Every subsequent minute of exposure causes (10 – Humanity) dice of bashing damage.

**Incurable Addict:** Unlike most elders, your character still suffers Vitae addiction even if he only gains sustenance from Kindred Vitae.

**Mortal Haunts:** Your character can’t easily return to any city or comparably sized place she lived while mortal. If she enters the borders of such a place, she immediately gains the Jaded or Humbled Condition (*Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p. 304) and can’t resolve it as long as she remains there. If she spends one full day of sleep there, she also gains the Obsession Condition (*Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p. 305) pertaining to her mortal life and haunts, which can’t resolve until she spends a number of consecutive nights away from that place equal to (10 – Humanity).

**Ritual Feeding:** Your character must enact some ritual, chosen when you take this bane, to gain full sustenance from feeding. Rituals could be elaborate religious ceremonies, courtship and seduction routines, a requirement for a certain type of locale and mood, or anything else that seems appropriate. If she feeds without the ritual, her maximum Vitae is capped by her Humanity score until she next wakes from day sleep.

## *Touchstones*

In the face of mortal frailty, the elder learns to forge connections more quickly – if more shallowly – than other Kindred. For every Touchstone normally granted to her, either by Humanity or Merits, she instead gains two. These Touchstones only provide a +1 bonus each to detachment rolls, up to a total of +3 for three or more Touchstones. She still suffers a -2 penalty on detachment rolls if she loses all her Touchstones, nor is she exempt from the Languid Condition.

This chapter also introduces Simulacra Touchstones. These Touchstone no longer represent a connection to people and

places that keep her grounded, but rather a way of keeping memories alive. A poor substitute for an actual relationship, Simulacra are the last clawing, desperate hold of an elder before she loses her grip on the world. Simulacra Touchstones still offset the -2 penalty on detachment rolls, but no longer provide the +1 bonus.

The player of an elder chooses whether to use this method, or the regular one (see *Vampire: the Requiem Second Edition*, p. 278) when she creates her character.

## *Ships Passing in the Night: Mortals*

An elder vampire is a force of nature: unstoppable, unknowable, and terrifying. One thing that gets harder with age though, is blending in. The first time she stops in the middle of a crossroad, dazed and confused, mortals dismiss it as “a brain freeze.” If she plays her cards right, it might even be “that’s so like Jenny.” But, when it happens every single time? Now tongues wag that “something is seriously wrong with Jenny.” People begin to notice; stories spread to the wrong ears, and the Masquerade forces the Kindred to move on and discard any Touchstones she had in the domain.

Even if the elder miraculously navigated the ages without picking up additional banes (and she won’t have), her clan’s curse crushes

down on her. The Daeva still falls in love with her vessels, and the chapel she built for them houses piles of bones stretching back hundreds of years. A Gangrel runs with wolves and crows, barely remembering how to speak in a human tongue. The Mekhet searches symbolism for the meaning of his Requiem, until he’s no more than a walking archetype. The Nosferatu wears her bitterness like a cloak, withdrawing from human contact to preempt the pain of being scorned. A Ventrue looks down on the city from her glittering tower of steel, and feels *absolutely nothing*. Her own nature makes it impossible for the elder to interact with humans.

Mortals makes the best Touchstones. He is grounded in life, and reminds the elder of her own long-gone life, makes her yearn



for the sun and weep red tears of pain and joy alike. A mortal's life is also fleeting though, especially compared to a creature who has seen kingdoms rise and fall. The elder, battered by loss, might discard her relationship to an individual mortal in favor of bloodlines, or even institutions; these still change over time, but they don't abandon her so quickly.

### *The Telltale Heart*

*Amelie felt the corners of her mouth tug up in the rictus of a smile. She could spend all night watching Marie. As if sensing the predator watching, Marie tensed and slowly scanned the crowd gathered for the last round. She relaxed when she spotted Amelie, raising her hand to wave and coming over to the elder's table.*

*Amelie's heart broke right there, as it did every evening, at the likeness between Marie and the daughter she never got to see grow up. Opportunities for women were scarce back then, and even an undead protector was no match for disease. The modern era was different though, and Amelie liked to think she got a do-over with Marie. She signaled the bartender for a glass of wine for Marie – she, of course, was still nursing the one she'd ordered an hour ago.*

*"You look well, dear," she greeted her companion. "How go your studies?"*

An elder clings to people with a desperation born of necessity – not to care means to die (or at least slip into torpor). She fakes the signs of life, goes out to meet people and feigns interest in their small existence. Fake something for long enough, and it becomes real. For the first time in three decades, she genuinely laughs and feels her heart flutter like a sickly bird. The experience is even more potent for the eons dividing her from mortality. In that single fleeting moment, she is no longer an ancient unstoppable force, but a lost soul drifting among the dead. That mortal before her, though, lifts her up. Finding love, laughing with friends, calling a place home – and shedding tears of blood when they are lost – are the stuff the Requiem is made of. Relationships with mortals, where the elder doesn't get anything out of it but their company, are definitely Touchstones.

- The little mortal is lost in an alien city. She studies entomology at the local university, or she should, but she hasn't been to class in a fortnight. Jindo's own doctors called it an excess of black bile, but modern psychologists call it "depression." Jindo has – what's the expression they use again? – "got her back" though. The ancient has already paid off her professor: she'll pass the year with high marks, even if she doesn't attend a single class. The coffee shop around the corner serves her favorite blend all year-round now, after Jindo bent the owner's mind. He just needs to get her out of bed, show her that the world is still beautiful, and he's found the perfect gift: a living *Dryococelus Australis*, to leave on her pillow tonight.
- Eloise attends four funerals every year. A child in spring, a mother in summer, a lover for autumn splendor, and an old man in winter. She befriends all of them; offering a new job, sugary treats when the entire house is quiet, or her own flesh, still nubile after centuries of use. She builds a relationship,

adopts their life, and knows their habits and family. Most are sickly when she chooses them and not long for this world. A few she helps. They all die when their season passes though, and Eloise weeps for them, clutching every memento and wallowing in the grief of the ones they left behind. She's six hundred years into her Requiem, and those funerals are the only time she still feels anything at all.

### *Ancient Ties*

*Clark Emerson lives in his old family house in Massachusetts. Rot eats at the foundation of the colonial home and the family funds long dried up, but Clark cannot leave. Worse, cancer spreads through his bones and he'll have to consign his beloved granddaughter to take up the vigil soon. Something lurks under these hardwood floors, trapped in ageless slumber. When it awakens, Clark's blood must guide it safely into the new world, lest the creature unleashes hell in its wake.*

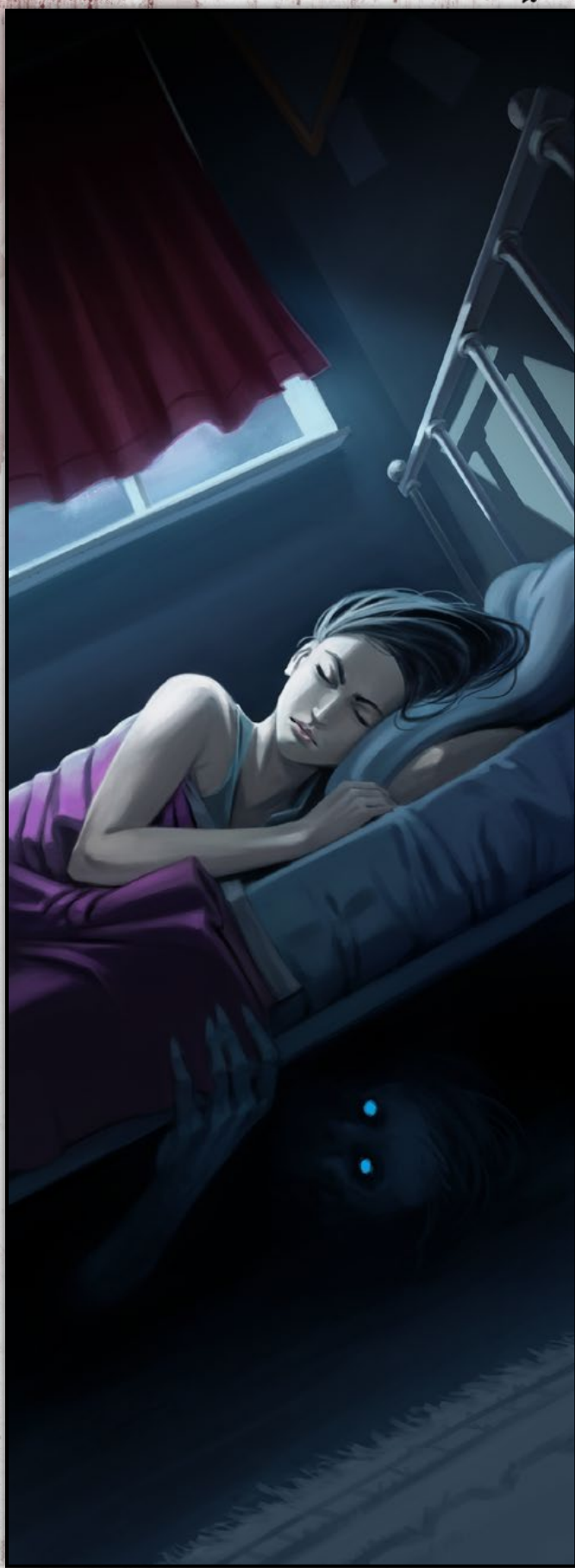
The nights wear on, and the elder anchors herself with a chain of flesh. She relies on mortal families to pass on the secret and guard her while she sleeps in torpor. She has forged connections unrivaled by other Kindred, and some of these carry in the blood. The player can choose a mortal lineage, and establish Blood Sympathy between their character and that family without the exchange of Vitae. This bond expresses spontaneously in game; no one knows how, or even why it works. It's an amazing, wondrous miracle that grants purpose and sometimes love in one fell swoop. It's also utterly terrifying; she now has a helpless mortal (or multiples!) running around connected to her in a way enemies are sure to exploit.

The player and Storyteller determine how close the sympathy is, depending on the elder's history with the family and how many are left. Her ties to a large, sprawling family might be four times removed, while her bond to the last surviving scion could be only twice removed.

Families these can serve as Allies, Contacts, Herd, or Retainers. If the elder also connects to them for who they are, rather than what they do for her, they can double as Touchstone.

- The Shadow lairs under a girl's bed. It scratches the underside of the mattress and feels her stiffen; she knows it's there. It moves with her when she goes to college, and fear is her constant companion. One night, her best friend rooies her drink, but she wakes up untouched. The "friend" is never seen again, and the girl tells the police she doesn't know what happened, but the Shadow knows she does. She marries and the Shadow still follows her. Living under the matrimonial bed is a little awkward, but the Shadow and the girl both make do. One night it's gone, and now the girl's child lies frozen in her bed, staring in wide-eyed terror at the ceiling. The Shadow visits the girl again when she dies, and smiles at her; it's the only time in centuries any mortal sees its face.
- The Verdacce family owns half the night life in town, from exclusive clubs to dive bars. Not a single location has a mirror. The Verdacce didn't make that decision consciously – in fact, they're barely aware of it – despite frequent complaints of





bathroom goes. This works well for Badr, an ancient Lord whose eyes glow in mirrors. He hasn't tampered with the family for years — the old and ailing matriarch is the last he made his ghoul — but it looks like some things just stuck.

- Marianna wakes up bathed in red sweat. Her abdomen hurts like it's ripped apart, and she hears the sound of metal tearing. It takes her a moment to realize, fighting through the rising tide of frenzy, that the pain isn't hers, it's Dominique's. Even the sun can't pull her back to sleep now, and she spends hours pacing and waiting for sunset. She feels Dominique slipping away though, and it's already too late when she arrives at the hospital. The Daeva spends the night weakened by grief and fatigue — which is just what her enemies planned.

### *Dark Appetites*

Naomi breathed deep, taking in the scent of the woman opposite her. Moonlight filtered through the canopy, and for a moment she wasn't just standing in a public park. She was at home, where ancient woods towered over the Danube river and wolves hunted along the banks. That's what she recognized the scent from. The Savage grinned, fangs sliding out at the prospect of a rare and exquisite treat. She locked eyes with her target, reaching out with the force of her mind and... No — no coercion. This little puppy would come to her willingly, and taste all the sweeter for it.

Feeding carries the same physical thrill for an elder as any neonate. Fresh blood fills her veins, sending her heart aflutter — if only weakly — and bringing the lost scent of home to her nostrils. The latter, those glimpses of her mortal life, is potent to an elder and she chases it as a junkie does her fix. Dark Appetites serves a dual purpose: to remind the character of home, making for great psychological drama, and to shape how she relates to people: how does she hunt for her type, how does she treat them, and can she maintain a relationship to other mortals or does she lose interest if she can't feed off them? An individual favored prey could become a Touchstone, if the elder learns to value them for more than just their blood.

- Michael hates himself. His sister had a stalker — though his contemporaries likened the obsessed madman to a “persistent suitor” — and she killed herself for it. He knows what it's like. Yet he can't help himself; the Shadow needs to see his vessel's building terror, their shock when they receive his gifts, and finally the mortal fear when he reveals himself. Every time he feeds, he sees his sister's face and cries tears of joy, even as it rends his soul.

- Rose's skin glistens wet and red in the moonlight. Dahlia, slithering up against her, is similarly painted. Their master had named them for flowers, thinking them lovely and delicate, but he forgot that roses have thorns and dahlias, poisonous roots. The Succubi are still together centuries later, their feeding locked in a replay of their master's murder as they slit the throat of abusers to bathe in their blood.



## Broken Silence

Carmilla's ill-kept silence has spawned books and movies, murals, and whispers. She doesn't mean to. Her lovers just notice the coldness of her skin, the stillness of her heart, and the sweet heady scent of Vitae that surrounds her. Surely, she doesn't want the resulting heartbreak, as lovers recoil in horror and cast her out. It just happens to her, a tragedy that plays out in a bittersweet harmony of pain. She really doesn't mean to – except she does.

Does a secret become easier or harder to keep, after telling it a thousand times? Every elder is supremely skilled at keeping the Masquerade. She knows exactly how to hide the signs of her predatory nature, and how to spot the subtle clues that a mortal has caught on. Yet for the same reason, she often chooses to break the silence. She's been found out before, after all, and surely mortals with cellphones in 2017 aren't more dangerous than those with actual pitchforks and torches in 1417. Or, maybe she's dutifully kept the secret for a thousand years, but this mortal is different – this is *true* love. She's so powerful, surely, she can contain the fall-out of one little mortal knowing.

She has her reasons – a myriad of them, and most reasonable – but they're all excuses to mask that she simply does as she pleases. No one can stop her either – any attempt by the All Night Society to curtail her whims ends in a trail of cold corpses meeting the dawn. When the situation finally blows up – and it always does – the elder departs for greener pastures, and leaves the local ancillae and neonates to pick up the pieces.

If the elder has an honest bond with *this* mortal, the one she broke the silence to, that person is a Touchstone. If, however, that mortal could have been anyone really, and it's more about the thrill of revealing the truth: select the Broken Silence Simulacrum instead. Broken Silence remains as long as the mortal is a threat to the Masquerade; once he is neutralized, the elder has a week to find and groom a new mortal as recipient of her secret. If she doesn't find anyone, either out of her own discretion, or because her peers finally found a way to stop her, the Touchstone is lost.

- *Prince Alexander of Lyons keeps a mortal lover. He doesn't bind him to his blood, or his will. He has no plans to Embrace him. He does stalk Jon in the night though, to see how long he keeps the secret. His previous lover, Marie, lasted 45 days and 14 hours before finally telling her sister that she was in love "with a man that isn't a man." Modern gender notions caused some confusion and nearly saved Marie, but finally the sheriff had to step in. The sheriff is under strict orders not to kill or violate Alexander's lovers, but she has different ways – Marie spent three years in a mental institution before she recanted. Now that was dedication, but Alexander still hopes that Jon can beat her record.*
- *Dolores didn't intend for this to happen, but he looks so much like her Antonio. She's been alone for five hundred years, as lovers drift in and out of her bed. Surely, she's afforded some comfort, a companion who truly knows her? She's going to tell him tonight. She has it all planned out: a romantic stroll by the river, and a long talk to build up to her revelation. She hopes he takes it well. If not, though? Well, she still has the river.*

## Adoring Masses

Anfortas sat on his bone throne, regarding the flood of supplicants before him with hollow eyes. Some teemed with young life, eager to become legends through their impossible quest. Others dead like he, seeking out the mysteries of the grail – as if Anfortas ever did anything other than guard the bloody thing – and even that not well. He hated them all with a passion, their pomp and pretense, but now they've stopped coming. The land around him isn't just black and barren, it's drifted away from mortal memory. One night, mortals will forget about Anfortas completely, and he will cease to exist.

Ancillae must actively cultivate mortal followers, but the elder attracts them without effort. She is like the shining light that attracts life, or the roiling darkness that sends terror through the city. Her personality spreads like ripples in a pond, tainting everything around her and acting like a beacon. Even elders who hide their face are not immune to this effect: the reclusive Haunt attracts an online following as Slenderman, whilst the Mekhet seeps into a writer's dreams and is immortalized in his next best seller.

Adoring Masses can count as a Touchstone if the elder treats them with kindness, and uses them to remind herself what humanity looks like. Less scrupulous elders can also use them as Contacts, Herd, and Retainers.

- *Nitokris, avatar of Typhon Seth, sits on her basalt throne as mortals beg for the honor of death. She chooses only the finest, those who have risen above the squalor of life: a new father, the CEO of a large company, the girl who landed her first job. It's not about Typhon Seth though, or even the disemboweled bodies at her feet, it's about how good the blind adoration makes Nitokris feel.*
- *Alison Monroe is a punk rock singer. She's not a huge star, but she has enough fawning groupies to provide her with sex, drugs, and blood. Alison is really Danesh, and over two thousand years old. She led a Dionysus cult during her mortal life, and she spent her Requiem trying to recreate the high. It's not a lofty pursuit, and being on the road constantly prevents her from building a kingdom like her peers, but it keeps her going into the night.*

## Mortal Souls

Aringheri put his brush to canvas. A single hair pulled delicately and softly across the matte red surface. He was Martin once. He drove a van with a wizard on it. But, Martin was gone now, buried under layers of red. He was Susan too. She liked dogs. Then Tomas, and Jane, and Levine. Too many to remember. Rattling around in his brain like whispers carried by a tornado. Too many to handle. Aringheri dipped the hair in another red droplet, pushed up from his dead skin, and expelled the souls of his victims to the canvas.

Every elder leaves a trail of empty husks – victims to their ever-lasting rage and hunger. Sometimes though, she drinks more than just life; she steals her vessel's soul. One elder does it on purpose, a way to collect people like others collect



butterflies. Another didn't mean to; the void of her soul has grown so large that it sucks in mortal souls like a black hole does light.

Amaranth on mortals is exceedingly rare. The All Night Society denies it even exists, claiming it should be much more common otherwise, given the prevalence of feeding mishaps. They're partially right. Committing diablerie on a mortal is impossible for most Kindred. Only an elder with a Humanity of 6+ hosts a Beast ancient enough to commit such a blasphemy, while maintaining the polish of humanity to fool and lure a soul in.

The rolls to commit diablerie on a mortal are the same as on a vampire (see **Vampire: the Requiem Second Edition**, p. 101), though the Kindred rolls against her victim's Integrity, rather than Blood Potency. Diablerie on a mortal yields no Blood Potency or Disciplines, but it may yield a Skill dot from the highest of the victim's Skills that the vampire does not have. The vampire also undergoes a breaking point and gains the Tainted Condition (see **Vampire: the Requiem Second Edition** p. 306).

Drinking a soul is an exhilarating experience that allows the Kindred to relive the mortal's life as she sucks out his soul: a beautiful and grisly reminder of what it's like to be human. The player rolls Resolve + Composure, with a -1 die penalty for each past victim. If she fails, her character gains the Addicted Condition (see **Vampire: the Requiem Second Edition** p. 301) and seeks out further mortals to commit Amaranth on. Dark rumors persist of elders who are nothing but a collection of mortal souls; their own personalities long lost, as they hunger to add more memories to the cacophony.

A diablerized mortal can never serve as Touchstone. No matter how much she loved him, no matter how noble her intentions of keeping him at her side forever, the act of diablerie is simply too heinous.

- Lorel loved his wife more than anything. He stayed by her side until she died, even after his Embrace, and watched over their children and grandchildren. Seven generations and the Shadow has come to the end of the line: one last descendant remains. He sees his wife in the lines around his eyes, and his son in the set of his mouth. Everyone Lorel ever loved, packed into this mortal body. He's dying. Lorel won't make him a slave, nor curse him to spend eternity in the dark. But, maybe he has another way to keep him? The Mekhet is still not sure, but it's now or never. Blood welling up in the corners of his eyes, he bends over to drink his soul.
- Nila was born with the wrong sex. She suffered under a family who cast her out, and a vicious sire who refused to let her be a woman. A thousand years later and society still heaps scorn on women like her, denouncing them as abominations and predators. She can't take it anymore. She has found a way out in an ancient Dragon's tome that taught her to drink the souls of men and drown out her own. She won't be herself anymore, but maybe she'll finally fit the body the gods cursed her with.

## Hearts of Stone

*A baroque cathedral sits on the bank of Meuse in Maastricht. Abandoned for forty years – its congregation slowly bleeding away to other churches even long before that. The ancient creature in the church catacombs stirs for the first time since the Second World War, and tongues now wag in the city council: should we fix up the church? Give it new purpose, new life? A night club, perhaps? The creature smiles in its sleep, pale gums baring fangs eager for new blood.*

The elder forms connections to places as much as she does to mortals. She stocks up resources and influences, builds a great empire, and one night realizes that starting over is simply too great a risk. Maybe everyone she ever loved was snatched away by death, all that remains is the family home, and the church she visited as a child. Her dead soul entwines with that stone, giving her purchase as the nights go on, even as it changes to suit her evolving needs. She makes no deliberate plans to convert the church into a nightclub, yet it's ready – waiting – when she wakes up.

That contamination is a two-way street though; the elder doesn't just alter her surroundings, she sucks out its essence like a leech. She rises from slumber, and suddenly hard beats appeal more than the comforting hymns from her youth. She knows that a "car" is a mode of transportation, or that phones now come without cords. This is a survival mechanism, allowing her to pick up modern habits and languages quickly. It's also utterly terrifying; she likens herself immutable, but picks up on modern slang without even wanting to.

Hearts of Stone can be a Touchstone, if chosen for its relation to the elder's humanity, or a Feeding Ground, Haven, or Resource.

- Anateus hates London; it offers nothing but rain, cold, and buses filled with turtlenecked tourists. He wouldn't even be here, if the Britons hadn't stolen the Elgin Marbles. Ancient hands carved his wife's likeness into those warring gods. The Lord can't remember her face when he wakes, so he visits the museum – first thing every night – to remind himself. Anateus is so focused on his love for her (and his disdain for the foreigners who stole her likeness), that he doesn't even notice that he called the doorkeeper "bloke." or that he paid in "quid" rather than "pounds."
- Amara lairs under the theater building – has for centuries – though the play changes with the times. Roman tragedies at first, of course, followed by Shakespearean groups and now experimental one-woman plays. The theater runs down when she nears torpor – the cleaning crews no longer bother to replace the dirty carpet, nor does anyone fix the broken stage lights – and then prepares for a grand re-opening when she awakens. The place is always ready when she wakes up: comfortable, familiar, and predictable. The concession stand hasn't been refilled in three nights, and Amara's enemies have noticed. They prepare to strike when she next sleeps.



## *Immutable Habits*

Once a ruler of the dragon court, Lady Zao refused to bow to foreign invaders. She fled South from Beijing, until she came to the walled city of Kowloon. Here she basked in the devotion of Qing loyalists, used her considerable pull to keep both the communists and British at bay. Her enemies followed her though, and so focused was she on the dual threats from outside, that she never noticed the score of Haunts and Shadows changing Kowloon from the inside. Her power waned alongside loyalty to the Empire, and Lady Zao now sleeps eternally under the Chinese Temple in Kowloon Walled City Park.

Some elders can't bear to see people change. More than just a single mortal life, she needs those old-time values to anchor her Requiem. She uses her resources and personal might to seal off an entire community, in an attempt to ward off the intrusions of modern life. Now she's stuck eating her own tail: her reliance on that perfect world grows, even as it becomes increasingly difficult to preserve it. She doesn't build the variety of connections that other elders do, she has no alternative; this is the single basket to hold all her eggs. It can never last — time erodes all things — but doesn't stop her from trying.

People and places related to Immutable Habits make for dangerous Touchstones, as the elder cannot replace them with modern Touchstones when they're lost; the "new way" is too alien to her. Rather than gain one Humanity dot to replace the Touchstone, the character must gain two Humanity, or gain a Humanity, lose one and regain another. In essence, she undergoes significant change before adapting to the modern era.

- Kenskillin looks exactly like it did during the Great Famine of 1845: stone cottages, potato fields, and townsfolk plying their trade. Aidan works hard to keep it that way; every villager must bow under the force of his personality, and the woods are rife with shallow graves of unwanted visitors. The taint is beginning to show: inbreeding and the constant pressure from the ancient predator has sapped their strength. The village will die soon, but the Lord isn't ready to let go.
- Lozen's heart breaks every time one of the children leaves. She fought so hard to keep time from soiling her home, but it crept unbidden. One phone, one television set, one car, and the human drive to explore has seen her best laid plans fall to dust. She could force them to stay and be happy about it, but... Lozen has always treated her people gently, and she is loath to abuse them now. Her village depletes and the Succubus fights a twin battle against the pull of the grave, and her baser nature demanding she makes them stay. She sees a glimmer of hope though: maybe, when the last of her people finally leaves, she can go with him and they'll both escape this prison she wrought.

## *Love Beyond Death*

Chong rolled onto his side, gazing dreamily at the man beside him. He looked so much like Kyon, from his thick eyelashes to the beautiful curve of his buttocks. Chong was transfixed when they met, remembering his cowardice centuries ago when he denounced Kyon and let his lover die alone. All that was in the past now, his sins forgiven by this new Kyon in a more tolerant era. Caught in his fantasies, Chong never noticed sunlight creeping through the window, until his hand burst into flame. He howled in panic, snatching his hand, and retreating to the back of the room — away from the baleful light. His heart was still racing as his lover slapped the flames away. His heart was racing — the sudden realization stopped him cold. Even the sun, burning bright with vengeance, brought no forced sleep. Chong's eyes narrowed, as he studied his lover and mentally retraced his steps from the previous night.

Inamorata. The reincarnated, betrayed lover of a vampire. A creature so rare that it's a disbelieved whisper even amongst the damned. A creature so vaunted, that it spawned a covenant in one vampire's quest to retain his immortality as he waited for the cycle of reincarnation to birth his wife anew.

Reuniting with an inamorata forces the vampire to relive her greatest heights and lowest lows. It also grants fleeting moments of mortality. This is not a happy ending, but rather a new fiendish temptation. Seeing the morning sun. Feeling her own heartbeat. These are heady toxins to any vampire, but even more so to an elder burdened by the ages. Can their love survive this new heady "fix," or does he become another means to an end? What if drinking him fully — life and soul both — could make the effects permanent?

Inamorata make great Touchstones, as they embody the elder's love. They're also frail Touchstones though, as hunger corrupts the relationship. Whenever a vampire feeds from her Inamorata, she must make a detachment roll; the Touchstone is lost on a failure, as the vampire chooses blood and power over love.

- All Kindred know the legend of Dracula, who defied God to transcend the curse. All mortals know the legend of Dracula, who denounced God after his wife's death only to find her again centuries later. Can both be true? Does the Dragon use Mina for his own purposes; taint her blood and consume her soul, to become the greatest terror the world has ever seen. Or, does lost love, found again, quicken the heart of the most dreaded Kindred — does he, in the most unthinkable act — finally let her go?
- Zoia is reunited with their wife. She is a beautiful, dark-haired siren who makes even Zoia's dead heart beat again, even if she no longer listens to the same name. Love and happiness made the Succubus weak though, and now their coterie knows. They implore with Zoia, calling their wife an "Inamorata" and whispering of the power her blood carries. They offer riches and power, to double or triple what Zoia has now, to give up their wife. They threaten Zoia's Requiem if they refuse. They think they're considering it. Zoia is not. Come dawn, they unleash hell on those who threaten their love.



## The Halfway Port: Ghouls

Kindred rely on ghouls to aid and protect them, and elders are no exception. Ancillae and neonates imagine this relationship as if the elder were a walking anachronism who needs her ghoul to operate a phone, or navigate the internet. They are sorely mistaken: elders are very adept at maneuvering the modern world, often even more so than ancillae. An ancilla can scrape by on landlines and modems; it's inconvenient and inefficient, but still (somewhat) doable. An elder, though, can't rely on "making do" — the jump from carrier pigeon to internet is just too great. She *must* master current technologies, or get left behind (and that is *not* an option to any Kindred).

Nor does the elder rely solely on her ghoul for mundane daytime tasks, though those might be *part* of his duty. She has enough influence and resources to get those done without forging such an intimate bond — money adds up over the years, even if left in a simple investment fund, and it makes the world go round. She can hire people to perform just about any task for her (especially now that she has access to the internet) and pay them to never speak of it. Yet for all that an elder doesn't necessarily need a ghoul for *practical* reasons, she still keeps one around; he may not be entirely human, but he's closer to it than she is, and unlike actual mortals he can spend the ages with her.

A Ghoul makes the best servant: he can act during the day and is unflinchingly loyal. He doesn't make as good a Touchstone, as his own life revolves around his regnant and her vitae. An elder can force her ghoul to maintain a "normal life" — go to classes, start a business — to create the illusion of humanity. Such ghouls, if treated with kindness and dignity, can serve as a Touchstone. An old ghoul could serve as Touchstone by reminding the elder of her own mortal life. Given how easy it is to neglect and abuse a ghoul though, maintaining a ghoul as Touchstone requires deliberate care. Ghouls don't count as human company for the purposes of detachment rolls.

### Chains of Love

*Jan dreamed of a red ocean dragging him down to its dark, putrid depths. It enveloped him, washing away all notions of sin and redemption, and leaving him free of remorse. A weight was lifted off him, and he wanted, so badly, to stay. To not wake up. To let the nights pass without him. To let Olivia continue her life free of his taint.*

*Olivia.*

*Guilt rushed back as he remembered the life he stole from her. Followed on its heels came love, a bond forged through the ages, and an overwhelming desperate need to be with her. The waters pushed him back up, into the cold air of the night where owls reigned. He woke bathed in a bloody sweat. Olivia's deep green eyes studied him intently. His ghoul's brow creased with worry. He woke later every night, but how could he tell her that he just wanted to sleep? That she was the only reason he came back at all.*

A ghoul is the one constant in an ocean of lost loves, the emotional chain that binds the elder to her Requiem. The

### Ghoulish Benefits

Elder Vitae is heady and potent, and remains so even when it leaves her body. A ghoul belonging to an elder Kindred begins play with 4 Discipline dots: 2 of which must be in-clan for his regnant, and 2 which can be out-of-clan though the regnant must still know them (Coils and Scales of the Dragon excluded). The rest of character creation follows the normal rules (see **Vampire: the Requiem Second Edition**, p. 297), though a long-lived ghoul starts with experience points to purchase more dots.

elder could Embrace her servant — she has the political clout to demand permission from the Prince — yet chooses not to. She doesn't want to curse him like her sire did. Or, since elders are rarely that altruistic, she simply wants to keep the leverage of blood dangling over his head — a leash to keep him tied to her whims. Either way he serves as an anchor: the object of her affection. She doesn't notice the simmering resentment behind his eyes, doesn't care that she's put his life on hold; all that matters is her need to have him.

A ghoul can double as Retainer and Touchstone. Given that he is already further removed from humanity, and how inhuman feeding is, he cannot double as Herd and Touchstone.

- Japed and his ghoul haven't spoken in five nights. The Lord because he feels guilty, and his servant because she can't. He didn't mean to snap, to tell her to *Shut Up!* but he did and now — silence. He would never treat her badly, but she needs to learn to accept no for an answer: The Embrace is a curse that he won't grant her. Really, he's just looking out for her. Two more nights and the guilt fades: he did it for her own good. He's so busy patting himself on the back, that he no longer notices her silence.
- Guyan has had a hundred ghouls, but this one is special. He makes her laugh, and try new things: like going to a fusion restaurant (where she watches him eat), or cut her hair. She resists every time, makes him persuade her. She likes the way his passion flares. He's lost that fire as the years go by though; he no longer talks back, and only takes her to places she's visited before and enjoyed. He's trying to mold himself to her needs, when she liked the sharp angles.

### Ancient Bonds (Simulacrum)

Biorna ran her hands over the cold body of her mistress. She massaged scented oils deep into her skin, even if the rubbery surface resisted such intrusions, as she'd done a thousand times before. The ritual brought



comfort to them both, transporting them from a world of dead steel to one of living marble. Biorna was a slave when she entered her mistress' service, and she was a slave still. She didn't care though, for centuries of loneliness bound her mistress just as firmly to her.

Frenzy, primeval punishments, and simple neglect lead to a high mortality rate amongst ghouls. Sometimes though, often with more than a little luck, a ghoul survives the centuries alongside his regnant. He may even be as old as the vampire herself: sisters, slaves, and husbands all make excellent "immortal" ghouls. These servants are invaluable for their expertise and loyalty, but they also serve as something more: they're a walking, half-living reminder of home. Therein also lies danger: rather than value her servant for the assets he brings, let alone the person he is, the elder only views him through the lens of memories she clings to. At this point the ghoul no longer serves as a true Touchstone, but as a Simulacrum.

- Malachai and Phinon are twins, even if you can't tell now. Malachai destroyed his own sire so he could Embrace his brother, but by then Phinon had already grown old. The mortal had also seen first-hand what the Beast did to his brother, and steadfastly refused the Embrace. Centuries later they are still together; bound in blood — for Phinon's blood is as addictive as his Malachai's — and circling around each other like sun and moon.
- Even after a loveless marriage and eight children of her own, Hulda could not escape her overbearing, condescending bitch of a mother. Her sire gave her power though, and a chance to get even. Hulda made her mother a slave. Centuries later, getting even for all those slights has lost its shine. The smell of her mother's hair, even under the reek of Vitae, is the only thing to remind Hulda of home; they've moved from mutual disdain to dependency.

## Communal Assets

Ming Li regarded the fawning creature before her. A thousand apologies, yes, but the cur was still insisting that she submit to torpor. Admittedly that was the deal she'd made with her coterie, but... She regarded his thin, frail neck. She could just kill him. Of course, if she did, her existence would be forfeit the moment her coterie-mates woke up. Could she make him tell her where they were, and kill them in their sleep? No. His loyalty was absolute: to her, to them, to the fiendish deal that bound them. He would die, apologizing all the while for refusing to answer, before he betrayed them. Li laid down in the solid stone coffin, still glaring as her ghoul closed the lid.

Elders hail from a less individualistic time, when the needs of a community outweighed the needs of any single member. It's not that humanity was purer or kinder back then, but people simply needed each other more; it's hard to survive on your own when your next meal isn't waiting in the corner supermarket, or without steel and concrete to keep predators out. The elder — self-serving as she may be — is used to sharing resources to enhance her own chance of survival. Communal ghouls are a means to an end; a steward at best, though often merely a tool

for use. As such, they don't qualify as a Touchstone. They have other uses though: sharing a ghoul, carefully bound to each regnant in equal measure, is a good way to ensure an impartial caretaker: someone who can mediate disputes, or guard the bargains of a coterie.

An elder coterie can bind their ghoul by blood — if all of them are of equal blood potency, they can mix their vitae and serve it as a single drink to create an equal blood bond to all of them. This bond must be reinforced yearly (though regular ghoul upkeep remains monthly), and if one elder lets it lapse, she's out permanently — the bond puts such strain on the ghoul — a vampire cannot work her way in later. Missing the re-dedicating ceremony isn't usually an accident: a treacherous coterie-mate blocked her deliberately. Removing a rival from the resources a communal ghoul controls, is an excellent opening salvo in elder warfare.

- Janel and his husband have been together for three centuries. Marceau was with them just as long: a wedding gift, though Janel no longer remembers from who to whom. The ghoul relays messages between havens (Janel is too smart to share a sleeping space with his Vitae-addicted paramour), and manages the pair's communal resources. Marceau now advocates against the law firm Janel wants to buy, citing a looming sex scandal. The elder knows he can bend Marceau to his will and silence his protests, but if his husband finds out, the marriage is forfeit. Both Kindred rely on Marceau, and that makes the ghoul inviolate.
- Francis Rose shares a dozen ghouls with his Kindred acolytes. The Kindred are bound to him, as are the ghouls, and the former provide blood to preserve the latter (in a carefully scheduled rotation, so they don't accidentally conflict with Rose's Vinculi). It's a big pyramid scheme really, created for one purpose: to guard Rose's body as he lies in torpor, and provide a ready-to-go cult when he wakes up. It's perfect, as long as the ancient doesn't sleep so long that that the Vinculi break.

## The Vitae Jar

Mambu had stalked for hours. His prey had entered the club with a gaggle of friends, and they'd clung together as if sensing the predator watching. Normally he'd seek easier prey, but this one was special. He could smell the blood, softly bitter on the air, and it was intoxicating. He followed the man, even getting in the cab with him while shadows shielded him from sight (though the driver nearly had an accident, so often did his eyes shift to the seemingly empty seat beside him). It was all worth it; Mambu's reward came now. Stepping from the shadows, he dragged the mortal to him and sank fangs deep into his neck. Blood rushed onto his tongue and down his throat, richer than anything he'd ever tasted.

Elder vitae, heady with the taste of ancient realms and buried kingdoms, retains its potency even in a ghoul's veins. It's not like proper Vitae, and can't establish a blood bond, but it is certainly addictive. Drinking it triggers a Vitae Addiction roll as normal (see **Vampire: the Requiem Second Edition**, p. 99). Even the ghoul's own regnant isn't immune to this effect, as



his half-living body uplifts the Vitae to a new melody. An elder, once she becomes aware of her ghoul's uniqueness, abuses her slave as a trap to ensnare her rivals. Another jealously keeps the ghoul to herself, and gorges herself on his blood. Her emotional dependency takes on a physical, addictive dimension; one that is sure to alter every dynamic in the relationship, if the ghoul survives. These ghouls cannot serve as Touchstones, but they offer a wealth of intrigue and complications.

- Donovan loves Mark. The ghoul smells so good — and he tastes amazing, too — but the Savage loves leverage even more. So, he sends Mark to “bump into” the only Kindred who can rival Donovan's power. Once she's hooked on Mark's

blood, he'll yank the ghoul back, reveal his ownership, and let negotiations begin.

- Leader Ming has taken to vampire blood. Her people considered it a normal development, until Kindred stopped returning from their feeding duties. The Bone Sorcerers created new Vitae-infused mortals to sate the Leader's appetite. Ming has diminished since starting her new diet, but she hasn't complained yet; the Bones got the taste right, if not the potency of true vitae. Should Leader Ming be lulled into complacency and slowly slip into torpor, they shall appropriately mourn her loss.

## *The Death Barge: Revenants*

Despite all the bodies Kindred leave in their long wake, the number of revenants remains low. The curse *wants* to spread, seeking new hosts to suck the humanity out of, but is left futilely raging against the gates of mortal death — most of the time. Where a neonate has never even heard of revenants, an elder has encountered one, or even two. She knows other elders who have seen these half creatures. It's not that revenants are more drawn to elders (as far as anyone can tell), but rather that centuries of walking the night increase the odds.

Revenants hold a dark mirror to elders. Revenants are cast out and hunted, whereas an elder is surrounded by bowing lackeys. A revenant is the utter failure, the dark inversion of an elder's success. And the elder knows, looking at the creature, that it *could be her*. Maybe not anymore, no, but she had plenty of pitfalls along the way. One misstep and she could have been trapped at the bottom of the food chain. She looks at the revenant and shudders — there but for the grace of God — and her own considerable cleverness, of course. This insight draws the elder to the revenant; this makes it *personal*.

This section lists three relationships an elder may have to a revenant: as their unintentional, or cursed, sire, or as savior. It also details elder revenants, created decades ago that — against all odds — survive to this night. Revenants make great complications and dark secrets. Their suitability as a Touchstone is complicated: does the elder *care* about this cursed semi-childe? Revenants don't count as human company for the purposes of detachment rolls.

### *The Source*

*She feels it. Crawling under her skin, eager for the black blood in her veins. Calling to its mother. She abandoned a babe once, mewling for milk with cries that grew ever softer. The church took it and she never looked back. But, who would take this accursed wretch from her?*

*A soft scratching on the door. She's been running ever since it rose, going from haven to haven, calling in boons for places to stay. She could destroy it; her ancient deadwood hands are no match for its neck, still soft and puckered as if it were human. But she can't — can't — face it.*

Control is key. The elder maps out the ages, leaving nothing unaccounted for, from her Havens to the alliances she makes. And then this: the shadow she left behind, the bloody footprint

that shouldn't be. The elder is as terrified of creating a revenant as any neonate, perhaps even more so. Creating a revenant carries a social rebuke, as it's a clear sign she didn't clean up after herself, but also psychological trauma. That revenant — to her — is the latest mockery of the cruel god that abandoned her to the nights, another blow that proves she is *still* only a pawn of fate.

An accidental revenant is unlikely to be a Touchstone, though it's not impossible. However, they make excellent dark secrets and blackmail material, to make the elder's life difficult.

- Haza rules their city as an omniscient god. Nothing escapes this Shadow's gaze; they can see through every pair of eyes in their domain. Well, almost nothing. They cannot see the eyes of the half-childe they left for dead. The revenant dwells in the twilight between the Requiem and true death, just outside Haza's reach. That makes him dangerous. It also makes him invaluable: the one guilty pleasure of unpredictability in the elder's perfect world.
- Grean has hunted the thing for a full year, and tonight she finally caught up. Her plan was always to kill the creature, erase that little mistake before her peers found out, but now she hesitates. Did the gods intend for her to learn from this ill-begotten childe? Grean has learned no lessons. Maybe, rather than kill it, she should continue to stalk and watch?

### *The Curse*

*Under the streets of ancient Rome lairs Thrice-Damned Lavinia. She survived amidst the slaughter of her kin, stealing away to the underground tombs of her family, but survival offers no succor. She steals out on moonless nights when darkness hides her from death on silent wings, to feed and — when she feels foolhardy — to create new childer. She should know better by now — she may have survived, but she did not escape her clan's death. Her childer are all half-creatures, barely able to survive and unworthy to be called a Propinqui.*

Revenants are mistakes. No one chose them for the Embrace, the grave just kicked them back up, unwanted. Every Kindred knows that. Except it's not true. Some vampires are incapable



of extending the Embrace. Their blood isn't barren, but it's not fully potent either. These sires always suffered grave personal trauma — suggesting that enough of a beating can weaken even the vitae, or that subconscious barriers can block a successful Embrace — or labor under a curse. They keep their weak blood a secret, upon social stigma or even penalty of death.

A revenant created in a botched Embrace can serve as Touchstone. Did she try to Embrace him because he reminds her of her humanity? That's twisted — and appropriate for a vampire — but eligible. Does she seek to rectify her mistake and ease his suffering? That works too.

- The Children of Utukku died a slow second death, as the desert swallowed Ur and the clan's food source moved on to greener pastures. Ishin attached himself to a group of mortal nomads though, following the trail of their blood as he abandoned his god. Younger Kindred, raised on the religion of science, tell him the Moon is the same anywhere in the world. Ishin knows better, and his blood has grown impotent in the absence of his god. Last night though, he could Create for the first time in two-and-a-half thousand years. Something is wrong with his childe though, and Ishin isn't sure how to fix him.
- Echidna sacrificed her fertility to the Witch when she was still alive, and that curse followed her unto death. She has tried, again and again, to create a childe with whom to navigate the eternal night, but all she creates is wretches. She killed the first four, but doesn't have the strength anymore. She just sent her fifth abomination into the night, silently hoping that someone else kills it for her.

### *The Samaritan*

"Shhh," Lady Maril held her hands out from her body, palm turned upwards. "I want to help you." She forced thick blood through the wound on her wrist. The creature's head whipped up and it sniffed the air. No, not a creature, she admonished herself, a lost man. "Come here, pet," she offered, "drink and be whole."

For a single lost heartbeat, she thought she was getting through to him, but then he growled: "Pet?"

Later, as she washed the blood off her hands, she told herself she had no other choice.

Revenants suffer the full brunt of the Kindred's curse, but gain only a fraction of their strengths. They are pitiful creatures and, just as some mortals collect stray cats — fleas, mangy fur, and all — this elder collects them. She seeks to help, even if this harkens to her own need to feel good about herself rather than true altruism. She offers a source of nightly Vitae until the revenant properly learns to hunt (a proposal that always backfires as addiction rears its ugly head), or even to uplift the wretch. A second Embrace does nothing to ease the curse, but true darkness is better than eternal twilight. All she asks in return is undying gratitude, and maybe a helping hand every now and then.

If the elder genuinely seeks to help the revenant, she can take him as a Touchstone — altruism and kindness are very human properties. If she only plans to use him for her own ends, not so much (though they *can* overlap).

- Iram has never Embraced — not once in the cold, eternal night. His religion forbids it — even if Ahriman cursed him, he must continue to choose good. But, he has grown so very lonely. Tonight though, he found the perfect loophole: a revenant recently arisen in the domain. Surely lifting the creature up is an act of kindness?
- Kayla's council wants to sentence the revenant to death — without a sire, they say, he is a risk to them all. Something in his eyes though, reminds the Succubus of the desolation she felt after her own Embrace. Rather than accept the council's advice, she takes him under her wing. She tutors him, even grooms him to be her heir. If that enrages the members of her court — vultures all, waiting to pick off her kingdom — then all the better.
- Aliz is an ancient Dragon. They have mastered one Coil and even developed a new one. At least, they think so — either it's a new Coil, or a slow and painful path to Final Death. They were about to test it, when rumors about a revenant reached their ears. Aliz decides to track the revenant down, teach her the Coil and, if she survives, Embrace her as reward.

### *The Fluke*

How long since his sire died? Centuries? Aeons? But, Icarus hadn't drowned. He survived in an ocean of blood, until damnation finally spat him out on the far shore. He hid in the night, ever wary of his damned kin. He's learned to weed the young and confused from the older ones, and these he deals with: promising boons or threatening with blackmail. They call themselves "Kindred" and he feels so lonely watching them, but even after all this time he's too scared to come in from the cold.

Revenants are weak and vulnerable, even compared to the lowliest neonate. They lack a sire to guide and protect them, nor does the All Night Society recognize them. When they do run into Kindred, it rarely ends well; vampires have a lot of uses for defenseless, unaligned sacks of Vitae, and all of them unpleasant. Some revenants, however, miraculously survive the slog of nights. A vampire playing good Samaritan might shelter her, while she learns to rely on her wits and stay away from anything more powerful than herself (which is just about anyone). Maybe she rose in a time of such turmoil that she managed to slip through the cracks of a domain falling apart. Even then, most revenants don't survive *as* revenants. Kindred poach everything of value, and that includes revenants by offering (or forcing) the Embrace. From this brutal survival of the fittest though, emerges an impossible winner: an elder revenant.

Elder revenants make great enemies (to their creator surely), or allies (to other Kindred who offer the right bargain). Their





skill and knowledge makes them valuable, even if they pale to vampires when it comes to raw power.

- The tall woman keeps Nicodemus in a white room. She promises to release him, if Nicodemus finds someone first. He tries to help, he really does, but the woman never finds who she's looking for. He has lost track of time, and the walls of his room are painted black in tiny stripes that count the nights. Tonight, is different though; he dreamt of a moonlit forest and a terrifying, raven-clawed woman. She told him she's finally

coming to get him, and they'll destroy his captor together.

- Nyx nests in the sewers. Every night she catches a mortal — a homeless man, or junkie who no one will miss — and takes them to her lair. She stores them until morning, just in case she wakes so hungry, the Red takes over. One time she forgot, and she “woke up” to six dead sewer workers. She moves nests as soon as she sees one of the “others.” Preparation and staying on the move: it's kept her alive for nearly two centuries.

## *Barren Shores: Kindred*

Only a vampire can offer eternal companionship to another vampire. That's also the most dangerous companionship, despite the cozy “Kindred” moniker. Sharks are solitary creatures for a reason, and vampires are both deadlier and far more savage. The remnant of their humanity demands company though, someone to talk to (*just don't argue!*) and laugh with (*but don't show too much teeth!*).

These relationships, barring premature violent ends, can survive the rigors of time; but they can never escape the curse of the damned. The relationship between a vampire and a mortal ends when the latter dies, allowing the Kindred to look back with warm and fond memories. A Kindred companion, however, isn't afforded the luxury of death; he remains by her

side night after night, long after the relationships sours.

Kindred make great allies and enemies. They don't make Touchstones though. An elder *might* make a Simulacra of a peer whom she's known since they were both mortals: he is a walking reminder of her own mortal days. Kindred never count as human company for the purposes of detachment rolls.

## *Sharing the Curse*

Sylvie truly loves Marie. Or at least, she once did. The constant rejection hurts. Why won't Marie realize that she was chosen for love, a chance to spend a beautiful eternity together? All Marie sees though, is the darkness before her and the woman who wouldn't let her rest



in her grave. They haven't spoken in seventy years, and their mutual resentment envelops the town like a cancer.

Memories don't last forever. The brain can only store so much information before events bleed into each other, and decades of dream-plagued torpor doesn't help. The elder has lost her loved ones again and again, and she even loses the memories of them. She remembers a first kiss under the peach blossom, but what did the blossom smell like? Was it warm or cold that day? Were his lips soft? This event should be seared into her memory, but it's little more than a shadow. Now she has another love, and she won't add him to the unending list of people she has forgotten. This one she'll keep and take with her into the eternal night.

It never works out.

The relationship between sire and childe needn't be bad from the start, but eternal nights whittle at the best relationships. Imagine spending a century with someone who doesn't pick up his socks: it's a small thing, that becomes intolerable over time; and vampires do *far* worse than discard dirty laundry. If the elder is the childe, imagine that her sire will not release her because she is his Touchstone: she's ready to strike out on her own, but *dad* won't let her. An elder might have a positive relationship with her young childe, who needs and adores her, while ignoring – at best – her older childer. Blood Sympathy ensures the elder can never escape her sire and childer though, and the Storyteller should milk that drama for all it's worth.

- Andrew the Tanner is a foul-smelling, blood-stained giant of a Kindred. Elders react to him with disdain, neonates with fear, and both prey on the fact that Andrew just awoke from torpor and needs to adjust to the times. He needs an ally and, though he'd never admit it, a friend to see him through the nights. Tanner won't Embrace just anyone though; he needs someone strong enough to not be cowed by him, and adroit enough to steer Tanner into the modern world. He thinks he's found him now – a science major from the local university – and his mounting loneliness turns to obsession as he studies his childe-to-be.
- Matushka stalks the city every Samhain, and kills. She's not indiscriminate, but follows a train of connections – friends, family, and classmates – and decimates that circle one by one. Very rarely a prey outwits her and survives the night. Those she notices, and she returns for them next year – and the next, and the next, until they finally fall to her. She Embraces and abandons the really hardy ones, as a reward for their perseverance and token of her respect. The Dragon doesn't know that one of her childer has sought out the others, and that this new coterie – three of them so far – is finally coming to kill their mother.

## *The Sanctity of Elysium*

The Hellfire Club travels the East Coast, setting up for a night or two in an abandoned subway station before moving to a new city. No one knows who owns the club – rumors range from a coterie of elders, to a gang of Garou – but it's one of the hottest Kindred hangouts

in the US. The Hellfire Club, steeped in wards that prohibit bodily violence, is the one place where vampires are guaranteed a safe meeting point. It's not the powerless that seek shelter in its underground halls though, but the elders at the top of the food chain. The centuries have made them cautious, weighing them down with riches too great to risk.

Gaining power is a vicious cycle. The elder needs power to survive: a safe haven, established herd, and a voice in local politics contribute to a long, if not necessarily happy, Requiem. Once she has those things though, she needs to protect them: more domain to use as a buffer around her resting place, more blood dolls to hand out for favors, more sway in politics. She builds a fortress of dominoes: her resources stand together, or they all fall. The elder sits in the center of this web, a bloated lynchpin, unable to move lest she becomes her own undoing.

Elders are amongst the greatest defenders of Elysium. Sure, they can read the Cacophony – better than most ancillae – in fact. But, the Cacophony offers no protection. It's a way to communicate, which comes without verification. A clueless scribble accidentally revealing a neonate's habits, might be a cunningly constructed trap. Elders *need* Elysium to meet; they just have too much at stake if they come to blows. Elders passionately defend Elysium even in the midst of broiling conflict, and even if they personally despise the Kindred in charge (though in that case they might be arguing the sanctity of Elysium, and simultaneously the ineptness of the current organizer).

- Petrojan owns a dozen clubs in town, all of them declared Elysium under his personal authority. He loves meeting younger Kindred, and can spend the entire night talking about their passions, family, and whatever other topic comes up. It makes him feel connected and, frankly, less lonely. The Carthian knows that the Prince set up a rotation in which all Kindred must spend an hour each night in a club, so Petrojan may “run into them,” but he forgives her the condescension.
- Lorna is terrified to go outside. She made so many enemies along the road, and that's not counting natural predators, like her own kin, eager for her Vitae. She hasn't been outside in a decade, running an empire through the internet, cellphones, and servants who receive their instructions through a closed (and fortified) door. The Prince of the city is loath to tell the elder Invictus what to do, but he worries that solitude is affecting her sanity, and making her a threat to his domain. He's happy to enforce any Elysium Lorna desires, if that helps to draw her out.

## *Eternal Marriage*

Amunet wiggled her toes in the sand. The room around her was decked in gold and lapis, like the temples of her youth, and the floor covered in Nile sand. She was, in this moment at least, genuinely happy; it was almost enough to make her forget that she was in Las Vegas, banished from her home by creatures even older and more terrifying than she. A long stream of Kindred supplicants, bowing and scraping for her pleasure, heightened the illusion. She glanced briefly



at her lover beside her – what was his name again? – and attempted a re-assuring smile. She did so love a wedding; she really should have another one next century.

Everyone loves a tragic romance; it's the reason *Romeo and Juliet* is considered a great love story, rather than a teenage fuckery. The All Night Society agrees that two Kindred should not enter a mutual blood bond: it creates a mockery of love, a plethora of problems, and always ends in tears (or death). Yet Kindred still do it, firmly believing that *their* relationship is the one that survives. Elders are no different. In fact, they take perversion to the next level: marriage. Kindred weddings come with bells and whistles, bulls sacrificed to Ishtar, and prayers to Hera. It crosses modern contrivances of gender, and frequently dips into polygamy (what good is marriage if you can't share it with *all* your lovers). They sent out invitations, handwritten in blood on the most elegant stationary, and the entire domain is expected to attend. An elder might marry a neonate, or even Embrace a childe during the ceremony. It's the perfect win: she gets a ready blood donor who can still feed on mortals himself, while protecting herself from betrayal with a mutual blood bond (and preventing a Vinculum to other Kindred she feeds on). For the spouse, however, it's a double trap: he becomes lover, food, and vassal in a relationship that is vastly unequal in power.

A Kindred spouse can serve as Touchstone, depending on the relationship. That's not the only aspect of this bond though – the story should focus on all the pains and privileges of marriage: the effort the elder must expend to keep her spouse safe, the leverage he offers to her immortal enemies, and – yes – the humanity his presence grants her.

- Conmar has a type: newly Embraced, curious, and just a little defiant. He drinks from them – he has long soured on mortal blood – but makes sure not to bond them in return, for he likes them independent. Then he watches as they explore his haven and uncover his secrets. They seek leverage against him – a way to reclaim their freedom from the ancient Haunt. He always kills them when they find it. He played the game of love and heartbreak six times before. Now he prepares to marry spouse seven.
- Queen Anne and King Edward married out of political convenience (it was that, or fight and let the ancillae make off with the pieces), but they've grown attuned to each other after two hundred years together. Their relationship recently grows strained though, as Edward feels that North Ireland should remain British, whilst Anne wishes to join the Republic. The Vinculum prevents them from acting against each other, but constant arguments slowly grate on that bond.

### *Predator's Allure*

Ashanti slithered up against the neonate, fangs brushing softly against his skin and leaving a trail of red droplets. She could feel his Beast, rising in defiance and dread, and purred softly in his ear. His cock stirred under her alabaster hands, and she offered her own neck to him.

The thrill of the hunt and the sweet taste of blood are like cocaine to vampires. As decades, and then centuries, pass though, mortal blood no longer suffices; and even the hunt grows stale if she can't even remember the last time she failed. She likes to spice things up: add a little kink, a little danger. Turning to Vitae, the elder finds it infinitely sweeter than mortal's blood, and her prey's power makes the taste even better. After all, nothing can hurt her. She shrugs off the mightiest of mortal weapons and is five hundred years older than the Prince of this domain; but in that blissful moment between the sheets, she's vulnerable and *that* makes her feel more alive than she has in a long time.

Yes, this is a thing. It's very niche though, and has a high mortality rate. Put two tigers in a cage and teach them to cannibalize each other while fucking. That's about as safe as this practice. Given the properties of Kindred blood, the elder is certainly a Vitae addict. Furthermore, animal or mortal blood only provide half sustenance for her – rounded down – *if any* (see **Vampire: the Requiem Second Edition**, pp. 89-90 for Blood Potency and feeding restrictions).

- Tenebros likes when other Kindred control him, so he pretends to be a blood doll. He always sneaks in a quick bite at the height of passion, and they never notice. What the Succubus likes best though, is when he reveals himself to the ones that were too rough. The looks on their faces when he drops the mask and drains them is just hilarious. It also saves the next blood doll from getting hurt, so he's performing a community service really.
- Queen Elisabeth of Canterbury lets her Seneschal oversee the nightly business of her court, handling minor disputes, and ensuring that the city sees enough tourists to feed the Kindred population. He also procures "dinner dates" for her, which he seems to find a little awkward (silly Victorian man). He's proposed a Kindred-exclusive dating app and Elisabeth is happy to oblige, as long as he doesn't also shirk from cleaning up her occasional over-enthusiastic mishap.

### *Blood in the Mirror*

The creature sits in the dark and dreams of blood. Mortals and Kindred obey his call, like moths to the flame, to quench his thirst, but they don't come as easily now. The ancient one has taken to rats while he waits – the vermin taste bad – but he gnaws on his own fingers and hands while he eats them and that helps. He's not sure how long he's been here. He doesn't remember his name. He is hunger incarnate.

Not all elders survive with their hold on humanity intact. Everyone they ever loved is gone. Anything to remind them of their mortal life is lost. Nothing left but an eternity ahead, and the night has never seemed so dark. They drift into torpor, to awaken decades later and start from scratch. Some though, can't even find release in blessed sleep; hunger keeps them awake. She's addicted to the stuff, rich and thick and so good on her tongue. She can't go without, not a single night, not even for the blessed oblivion of torpor. She remains awake, feeding off other



Kindred and trading favors. She had standards at first, but they faded with her sense of self. She's scraping at the bottom of the barrel now, drinking from the dead veins of any diseased pariah that lets her. Finally, that's not enough anymore either. Vitae is all she wants, all the time. So, she cuts herself and drinks the blood, while she waits for her fix to come around. She's like a broken mirror, shards alluding to a greater whole that was once a person, and all she cares about is blood.

- Jack is lost in the darkness under London. He cuts himself open, ripping out shriveled organs and sucking them dry. His ancient blood heals him, to start again when he next rises. This night though, he felt the first pangs of hunger; even Jack's long dead veins are running dry. He'll fall to torpor soon, waiting to be found by the next sewer crew that ventures this far.

- Princess Wakan can't think about anything but blood. She tried to focus when the Chancellor gave her the latest news about her domain, but really, she just wants to tear open his veins and drink him. She manages to control herself – barely – and waits until she's alone to slit open her own wrists. She no longer has the strength to hide the wounds she inflicts on herself, and her perfumed robes barely hide the stench of dead blood.

### *The Last One Standing*

*Akashan feels the souls of the dead rattling around in her veins. Her kin were never numerous – thirteen, her included – and they were easy prey to the Kindred that shared their homeland. Akashan has tracked eleven of them down through the millennia, the shards of ancient souls*

*passed from usurper sire to childe. Now she seeks the twelfth, her sister, who was murdered by an ancient Savage. She's found the beast, and spends her nights counting his childe and all those who come after – she knows she'll be reunited with her sister, once she consumes them all.*

The Pijavica in Eastern Europe. The Julii of Rome. The Utukku of Ur. A string of broken lineages, the first going back to a time long before Gilgamesh was even born. Elders know the terrible truth: not even clans are eternal. For a few though, the stories of lost blood are more than rumors passed on from sire to grandchilde: she was there. She is the last of her kind – hunted by ancient enemies who do not forget – even if the rest of the world did. Some nights she goes on for their sake: for all her kin who died on the nights that she did not. Other nights, her own selfish nature rises and she simply continues because she does not want to face the end. She has no more company to keep: she is alone in the dark.

- The last Pijavica still walks the land of their ancestors. Their name is Chernobog, and they consume the flesh of their victims to sustain their own rotting, promethean form. They've found that their shape changes if they consume the blood of the ephemeral: once they ate a fae, and giant bone wings sprouted from their back. They search for a creature whose blood can finally stop the rot.
- Mortals abandoned Cahokia six hundred years ago, driven out by disease, famine, and the leeches in their midst. The vampire population however, souls bound to the land, had no such choice. They remained, feeding on animals first and finally turning on each other in an orgy of Amaranth. The last still slumbers under the Monks Mound, and she stirs as scores of tourists trample across her grave.







# CHAPTER FIVE

## WOLVES at the gate

*I can't trust you! Brad was a sap. You weren't. You were with him, and so you were playing him. So you're a player. With you behind me I'd have to tie one eye up watching both your hands, and I can't spare it.*

— Brendan Frye Brick (2005)

Elders who have survived and thrived over the course of several centuries not only gather wisdom and followers and a rich tapestry of experience throughout their long lives, they make a fair share of enemies as well. Some Kindred are ruthless enough to dispose of anyone who might become a problem in decades to come, but it's impossible to eliminate everyone

who poses a threat. Or, to know where all those threats might spring from.

What hunts night's greatest hunters? What predators view elder vampires as their prey? What enemies hide within the halls of Elysium, biding their time and sharpening their knives... and what foes await without?

### *Creatures of Legend*

Over the ages, other, non-human predators have come to the vampires' attention, stalking them through the nights. Some are monsters of the Elders' own making, mistakes made long ago that come back to haunt the Kindred, centuries later. Others are creatures the vampire angered, ones long-lived enough to nurture their grudges and wait for their vengeance... even if it means waiting hundreds of years.

These enemies are not always out bringing about an Elders' Final Death. A creature that serves as a reminder of the vampire's human past can cause her to confront aspects of her life she'd rather leave unexamined. Enemies with damning information from her nights as a neonate might threaten the empire she's spent lifetimes building.

Following are a few examples of monsters that hunt the Kindred.

### *Inamorata*

Some faces, you never forget. Even after nearly half a million nights, on the other side of the world, on the other side of *history*, she'd know him anywhere. He wasn't her first love, not by a long shot, but he's the one she's never forgotten, the one whose touch her cold skin still recalls. And, here he is, the low growl of his voice sending her memory spiraling back across the centuries.

It can't be him. She dug his grave herself five hundred years gone, racing the sunrise with every shovelful of earth. He's nothing more than bones and rags by now, if that. And, yet. He smiles the same, says her name the same way: the way she

said it back then, with all the lilt of the old country, not the flat Americanized version she'd introduced herself by.

His blood? That tastes the same, too. The only thing different is how it makes her feel: warm, alive, like she could walk beneath the noonday sun. He laughs when she says as much, the edge of it just a little cruel, the way she remembers, the way she loved.

• • •

You ever heard about the Lonely Marquise? No? Well, then, let me tell you. The villagers talk about a woman who ruled this land centuries ago, whose pale, hungry ghost can still be spotted roaming the hills where her fine house once stood. They say she wanders the ruins in search of her lost love, the peasant girl who served first as her handmaiden, then as her confidante, and finally as her advisor. They say plague took the peasant girl while the Marquise was away, and grief drove the Lady away from her lands. They say once every fifty years, the two are reunited. What happens between them, no one knows.

A girl came through here a few hours ago, said she was on her way up to the ruins. She was the spitting image of the woman in the portrait over the fireplace, the woman standing behind the Marquise. If I didn't know better, I'd say she'd stepped right out of the painting.

...You know, it's funny. In this light, you almost look like our Lonely Marquise.

• • •

He's trying to kill me, I'm sure of it. For good reason, I suppose — he gave up everything for me — and I... I can hardly



remember the last time I saw him. He was my favorite, until he wasn't. Until another came along, younger, prettier, *newer*. I lost track of him, and by the time I thought to seek him out once more, to enjoy his company anew, he'd grown old and I had not.

I was selfish in those nights. Times have changed. *I've* changed. All I want to do is show him how much.

### *What is Known*

Kindred records on Inamorata are spotty and inconsistent, though they have one common thread: The Inamorata appears to be a dead love, reborn. Scholars debate whether this is the case — the lover's soul spat out of the afterlife into a new and eerily identical body — or whether the Inamorata is some other kind of creature, capable of taking on the shape of its quarry's heart's desire. Evidence supporting either (or any) theory is thin, as the affected Kindred is often too consumed by his beloved's sudden reappearance to study it objectively.

Vampires who drink the blood of their Inamorata experience feelings of euphoria akin to being mortal again. Their flesh grows warm, their bellies growl for more than blood, and when the sun rises, they are confident they can bask in its rays.

Which, of course, they can't.

Though it feels like a cure for death, or another chance at living, the Inamorata's blood is poison to the Kindred who drinks it, exposing them to threats suffered by mortal and vampire alike. The affected party believes herself capable of taking actions she hasn't been able to since her Embrace. Though she may be able to stay awake during the day, sunlight still burns. The vampire is also greatly weakened, unable to rely upon her preternatural strength or other benefits granted to her by her Disciplines.

### *Theories and Speculations*

When proven facts are scarce, wild speculations abound. Following are some of the more commonly postulated beliefs about the Inamorata, their natures, and their goals:

Inamorata are angels created by the God Machine, sent to steer the Kindred toward a particular goal, or destroy her utterly should she fail to be led.

Alternately, Inamorata are a subset of Demons, with their own agendas that *conflict* with that of the angels and the God-Machine. (See more on Demons in the Crossovers section below.)

Inamorata are humans whose blood has unique, almost drug-like qualities. When they can capture one, the Ordo Dracul use the Inamorata's blood as a source of Solace.

The blood of an Inamorata works like a virus, changing the Kindred's brain chemistry and thus his behavior, forcing him to destroy himself rather than replicate.

An Inamorata is born when a soul's desire for vengeance is so strong, even the grave can't keep her from seeking out the justice denied to her in life.

### *The Eternal Dance*

Kindred whose lives span centuries find themselves playing out these reunions over and over, as their Inamorata returns in a new era, with a new name, new clothes, but the same face. These encounters are deeply personal, and whether they are dreaded or keenly anticipated varies widely. Some Kindred welcome the nights when fate puts their long-lost love in their paths. They court the danger the way they court their beloved, and believe the risk is well worth the reward. Others live in fear of their darling's return, knowing that one of these times, they'll succumb to the call of that golden blood and face the coming dawn, or that their enemies will find them in their weakened state and strike.

### *Creating Inamorata*

Players creating a Kindred with an Inamorata should discuss the nature of that relationship with their Storyteller. How and when did they meet? What was your character like in those days? How did the relationship end? Have they been reunited before, and if so, when? What happened? How does your character feel about their long-lost love *now*?

When players are fleshing out their group's history together (see *Spinning the Web*, Chapter 4), Inamorata might be among the enemies and allies members of the coterie have encountered.

An Inamorata's starting stats are the same as a mortal's. All Inamorata receive the Enticing Merit for free.

**Notes:** Drinking the blood of an Inamorata causes the effectiveness of the Kindred's Disciplines to be reduced by half while she is under her Inamorata's sway. This state lasts two days per point of Vitae the Kindred takes. During that time the vampire gains the Blush of Life without spending Vitae, and feels as though she could step out into the sunlight, which will indeed burn her.

## DANIEL HOWELL

*"I feel like we've always known each other. Being with you is like coming home. Do you feel it, too?"*

He's just like you remember him: tall if he was tall, slim if he was slim, hands that were delicate or blunt, calloused, or soft. His name's different, and it's for the better he doesn't have the hairstyle that was in when last you saw him, but oh, it's him. Your heart knows it. Your skin knows it where he laid his fingers on your wrist. He's come back to you.

Daniel writes travel guides for a living, touring the world and noting down the best places to eat and sleep, writing up snippets of local lore for future visitors. He claims some places feel familiar to him, even when he's setting foot in those cities for the first time. The last time the Elder saw him he was doing much the same, only a century earlier. That café in Paris that's been around since the 1800s? Daniel's writeup evokes a meal you shared with him when it first opened.



**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Investigation 2, Politics (Scandals) 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Firearms 2, Stealth 1, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Emotions) 4, Expression 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize (Bar Hopping) 3, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Enticing

**Health:** 8

**Willpower:** 6

**Humanity:** 8

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 12

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

## *Draugr*

Angela never liked exploring catacombs. She'd had more than her fair share of them, back in the bad old nights when it was the only place her coterie felt safe. Once she'd left them and found a way to live in the open, or at least aboveground, she'd never gone back.

It wasn't only because of the coterie. Those nights down beneath Paris, she knew they hadn't been alone. Other things stalked the night, old nightmares that refused to lay down and fade away. She only saw them a few times, their once-human eyes blinking at her from down the long tunnels. They'd hated her. Their raw loathing had crashed against her like a wave.

Then, of course, she'd run like hell, expecting with every terrified step that their footsteps would begin splashing along behind her.

Not long after that, she left; she couldn't stand it anymore down there in the dark and damp. Then, barely even half-a-year after her escape, word came that her former friends were dead, torn apart in the catacombs by some unknown assailant. But, Angela knew exactly what had done it. Those things.

The ones who'd once been vampires like her.

She'd gone to the Prince and pled her case, but he refused to gather up a handful of his best to go down below. Angela couldn't help but feel like it was political, like he'd wanted her coterie dead. The way he suggested *she* might want to go down and take care of the problem told her as much.

Easy enough, to put those horrors out of your mind when you move to a new city. She'd traded Paris for Odessa, and started anew.

Now, though, people are dying. Three Kindred in as many months met their Final Deaths, and no one's stepping up to take

the blame. The rumor mill hasn't heard about any Hunters in town, and no one's offering any other helpful theories.

Angela's seen what is left of the victims, the hatred entwined within the crimes, and she knows. Odessa has its own labyrinthine network of catacombs, some parts of them only just rediscovered. She hopes she's wrong, that it's something else coming after the Kindred.

Something that doesn't look like a warning of what they might all become.

• • •

Draugr were vampires, once, before their Humanity fell away completely. These creatures are driven only by their Beasts, full of the desire to hunt and destroy, and little else. Pieces of who they were remain sometimes, causing those draugr to seek out the places they knew well. What small part of them remembers their lives as Kindred reacts with hatred to other Kindred they encounter.

In places like Odessa and Prague, networks of catacombs sprawl beneath the city. Some alcoves have been bricked up for hundreds of years, not only sealing in the bones of the dead but also, in a few cases, bands of draugr. Now, as explorers reopen lost passageways, the lost ones roam free. While there's very little left of who a draugr once was, a few have enough of a spark of memory to hunt down their former kin.

The draugr are also the embodiment of many Elders' fears: *is this what we all become in the end?* What does it mean if you spend lifetimes delving deep into history and philosophy, becoming a master at art and music and rhetoric, only for your Beast to win out and leave nothing more than a shambling husk behind?

Some Elders see it as an inevitability: they've witnessed other Kindred lose their last dregs of Humanity and become draugr. Perhaps he spent time hunting them down for his Prince and never knew who his prey had been in its previous life. Or maybe she's seen contemporaries, members of her coterie, her own childer, descend into this terrible state.

While many draugr act solely on instinct and hate, a few keep pieces of their old lives. Their lack of humanity makes them shrewd predators, able to set traps, protect their lair, and lure their prey away from safety. An Elders who identifies a draugr as someone she once knew — or who is recognized in return — may find herself faced with a very personal choice.

Many vampires, when faced with a draugr, kill it as quickly as possible. Maybe they view it as a final act of mercy. Maybe they do it with a sneer of disgust. However, there are rumors of vampires who capture these creatures and experiment on them, searching for a way to redeem and restore the draugr to a semblance of her former self.

## *Creating Draugr*

Depending on how long it's been since they shed their last bit of Humanity, a draugr can look, at first glance, like any other Kindred who's flown into a rage. The longer they survive, the





more their appearance deteriorates. Their clothing ends up in tatters, their skin draws taut against their skulls, and the Beast is ever-present in their gaze.

Draugr follow the same character creation rules as a vampire. If the draugr has spent several centuries surviving and evading any who might hunt him, calculate and spend Experiences the way you would when creating an Elder. A draugr's Humanity is always 0. Storytellers and players should consider who the character was before, and how those Attributes and Skills might affect their habits and strategies tonight. Did the Presence that once sent an awed hush over a crowd become a powerful, creeping dread? Has the former houndmaster's Animal Ken made him the leader of a pack of feral dogs?

## JACK

"hsssssss."

In the early 1800s, he was Jack Lacroix, a trapper and a trader in the territory that would soon become the state of Wisconsin. Even as a mortal, he preferred the wilderness to the bustle of towns. At first, his Embrace didn't have much of an effect on his life: he could stay away from people, feed on the animals he trapped, live in the wild. His business model needed some fine-tuning, but even that wasn't hard. Then came the railroads, and more settlements, and people everywhere he turned.

His Humanity fell away bit by bit over the years until at last, all that remained was the draugr with a trapper's keen

instincts. Jack doesn't hunt deer and bears anymore, and he ranges closer to cities than he once cared to. He's developed a taste for Kindred blood — the more potent the better — and uses those old skills (and his collection of traps and knives and snares) to catch any who come wandering.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Medicine 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 5, Brawl 4, Stealth (Moving in Woods) 6, Survival (Traps) 8

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 4, Intimidation (Physical Threats) 5

**Merits:** Bloodhound, Danger Sense, Direction Sense

**Disciplines:** Animalism 5, Celerity 7, Dominate 3, Obfuscate 3, Protean 4, Resilience 3

**Blood Potency:** 7

**Health:** 7

**Willpower:** 6

**Humanity:** 0

**Size:** 5



**Speed: 6**  
**Initiative: 4**  
**Defense: 7**

## *Empusa and Lamia*

They wait at the crossroads, the snake woman and the one with a donkey's leg. No one sees them for what they are but me. Maybe it's one monster looking at another, and recognizing the evil inside. I wonder whether they see my true face, whether their keen gazes cut through the shadows beneath my hood. They're not here for me; they're here for the other travelers, the road-weary ones who see nothing more than a pair of tired women grabbing a cup of coffee in the only 24-hour diner in town.

I can't tell which poor fuckers they've got their eyes on. Too many of us here with the storm about to hit. Better to take shelter and eat bad, greasy hamburgers, with worse, greasier fries than be out driving in that at three A.M. So, the ladies have their pick, and I'll have mine. At least we're not going to end up fighting for our food.

My coffee gets cold as I wait for the right person. The women seem capable of digesting the food, or at least choking it down. God knows if it's truly digestible. They don't pick anyone, and neither do I. Too many people here in twos or threes. That's the problem with it being a family diner, I guess, makes it harder to lure someone off on their own who won't be missed. The rain's let up, and I guess I'd better get on my way, find somewhere else to be, come sunup.

The women follow me to the parking lot. Flank me as I reach my car. "Plenty better eats inside, ladies," I say, but something tells me I've miscalculated.

The snake woman laughs, and I see a flash of fangs. "Them? Their blood's too thin," she says.

Her companion smiles. "And their flesh is too tender. You'll be a treat."

• • •

Kindred aren't the only blood-drinking monsters in the world, but as time has passed, many of the stories about the Kindred themselves began weaving in aspects of other classical horrors. Vampires take the blame for the actions of Lamia and Succubi, when in reality, they're different beings with different tastes.

In Greek mythology, Empusa was a daughter of the goddess Hecate, and Lamia was one of Zeus' many mistresses who invoked Hera's wrath. Both had reputations for seducing men before drinking their blood, or devouring children. While neither demigoddess still roams the world, their namesake monsters do. Sometimes they're content to stick to human prey, but much as the older a vampire is, the less mortal blood can satisfy him, so too do these flesh-eating monsters crave something a bit more substantial.

Theories abound about the origins of Empusa and Lamia. Perhaps they were Kindred once, a clan forgotten by time or

stricken from all records. Could they be an offshoot of the Nosferatu? A bloodline sprung from an ancient Daeva?

Elders of the Ordo Dracul wonder if they were created as part of a ritual gone wrong, while the Circle of the Crone wonder if such a ritual can be recreated. Both Covenants reward their members dearly should they capture one of these creatures and bring her back for examination... and experimentation.

Or what if, just maybe, they're more like the Strix than the Kindred?

To the mortal eye, Empusa and Lamia are striking to look at. An Empusa tends to have a shock of flame-red hair. A Lamia's movements are languid and sinuous. A Kindred looking at them with Beast's Hackles (**Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition** p. 128) sees that the Lamia is a snake from the waist down, and an Empusa has one donkey's leg and one bronze leg.

## *Creating Empusa and Lamia*

Empusa and Lamia characters are created from the Vampire template. They won't have Touchstones, Clans, or Covenants, but as they are also blood drinkers, should follow the rules for assigning Blood Potency and starting Disciplines. (Note that these characters do not have access to Crúac, Theban Sorcery, or the Coils of the Dragon.)

## *Bethenelle and Melina*

*"Run if you like. You'll taste all the sweeter when we catch you."*

When you find a good thing, you hang on to it. That's what Bethenelle and Melina learned several decades ago, when they first ran across one another. What might have been a turf war instead became an ideal partnership between the women. They hunt and feed together, and have fended off their fair share of Dragons and Witches over the years. Rather than being wary of the Kindred out to capture them, the women take great pride and pleasure in turning their hunters into their prey.

## **BETHENELLE (EMPUSA)**

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 3, Occult (Supernatural Creatures) 4, Politics 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Stealth 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy (Emotions) 4, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Subterfuge (Misdirection) 5

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2, Majesty 4, Nightmare 3, Resilience 2

**Blood Potency:** 4



**Health:** 8  
**Willpower:** 5  
**Humanity:** 7  
**Size:** 5  
**Speed:** 10  
**Initiative:** 6  
**Defense:** 4

## MELINA (LAMIA)

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Investigation (Body Language) 3, Medicine 2, Occult 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Throwing) 5, Brawl (Dirty Tricks) 4, Firearms 4, Larceny 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Weaponry (Knives) 4

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 3, Intimidation (Stare-Down) 5, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 3

**Disciplines:** Celerity 4, Dominate 2, Protean 3, Vigor 4

**Blood Potency:** 4

**Health:** 10

**Willpower:** 5

**Humanity:** 7

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 10

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

## Methuselahs

While tonight's eldest vampires can recall nights lit by candles and oil lamps rather than tungsten filaments and electric currents, others far, far older remember times when night's cloak covered more of the world in shadow, and mortal settlements were few and far between. These vampires' lifespans far outstrip those of their descendants, and they've survived beyond centuries, into millennia. Methuselahs remember back to those early nights, and, though they may have spent decades or centuries in the deep sleep of torpor, they awaken as powerful as they were when they first closed their eyes.

Most Methuselahs keep themselves hidden from other Kindred. Zealous mortals, other supernatural creatures, even their own childer hunt them through the eons, leaving the Methuselahs wary and clever, and above all: *prepared*. Their havens are well-hidden and fortified, their ghouls loyal. Methuselahs know how to play the long game, setting plans into motion that might take human lifetimes to play out.

The long years and their thickening blood have allowed these ancients to master many abilities, studying Disciplines and sorcery that most elder Kindred can only begin to learn before they succumb to sleep, or fall at the hands of their enemies.

### *Ann Harlow, The Barrow Queen*

*"I could tell you your fortune, but you already know you're going to die."*

Colfax had to be growing soft in his old age. He'd never have indulged his other childer like this. But, the entire reason he'd Embraced Marie in the first place was so the world would never have to lose her scholarly mind to old age and death. Why should she ever stop discovering? Her hands would never know pain, would be sifting through ruins a hundred years from now. A thousand.

Of course, there was some selfishness in Colfax' choice to Embrace this particular archaeologist. Even before he'd discovered her lectures online, she'd been on the verge of unearthing a legend. To Marie, the Barrow Queen was simply a story. One based in fact, predicated on the life of a peasant girl in ancient England, but Marie had been certain the grave she was digging would yield nothing but bones.

Colfax got to her before she could make *that* mistake.

The Mekhet were a bit wary about him indulging her line of research. Some even suggested that, as her sire, he should forbid her to continue. A few went so far as to suggest placing her under a Vinculum if necessary.

*Some things*, they whispered, *shouldn't be found*.

Colfax hated the idea of Kindred history wasting away, and Marie had followed a trail of documents, folk tales, and brilliant intuition to this place, nestled deep in the English countryside. The Barrow Queen had been a legend when *he* was a neonate, and here they were, seeking her out at last.

He worried that there'd be nothing more than a pile of ash, or worse, a mound of undisturbed earth. But, no. Marie's instincts were solid. There'd be something there. There'd be *someone* there. He had with him all the offerings he'd heard she demanded. Those were probably more tale than true: a basket of lemons, a baby's blanket, and a bottle of whiskey... what could she need any of them for? Still, better to have and not need.

The moon sailed high overhead, peeking at them through the trees, throwing speckled shadows on the path.

The... path. When had they started along a path? Last Colfax remembered, he'd been pushing branches aside, trying not to lose his footing. And, the moon. It hung low and heavy in the sky – wait, no, a moment ago, it had been much higher, the



canopy hiding its face. But, low or high, it wasn't supposed to be full at all. Last night it had been barely a sliver.

Fear-sweat broke out on his brow, and a drop of blood trickled into his eye, turning the impossible moon dark, dark red.

*You shouldn't have come*, said a voice. It made him think of dust and grave dirt. Marie. Where was she?

Terror churned within him, his Beast grasping for control.

*Yes. Run.*

Colfax fled.

• • •

By the time Pytheas made his journey around the British Isles around 330 BCE, Ann Harlow had already been roaming the nights for fifty years. Her name wasn't Harlow then, not for another few hundred years, but the locals already knew her as the Barrow Queen for her home among the graves. The people thought her a witch back then, and brought her offerings so she'd tell their fortunes. She drank from some, though few ever remembered it. She collected stories from those who travelled and traded, and it was as fine a life as ever she'd wanted.

She ignored other vampires and they ignored her back, unless they wanted a divining. For a long time, she was as content as a member of the All Night Society could be.

Then came a coterie who wanted to assert their dominance. What human followers of Ann's they didn't kill, they turned against her. The territory that had been hers for a hundred years was no longer home, and Ann swore vengeance on her own kind.

Over the centuries, she's lured Kindred into her forest, hunted them and any who accompanied them. She's allied with VII here and there, when they've revealed themselves to her. Mostly she stays in her home deep in the woods and hopes for solitude. But, there are too many stories about her floating about the night, and the curious always come looking.

## ANN HARLOW

Ann is a plain woman, with the type of uninteresting features most people dismiss in a crowd. Her medium-brown hair is shoulder length and blunt cut, her clothes are functional but drab. Her voice is the most remarkable thing about her, the weight of years dripping from every raspy syllable. It's only when she's hunting that she seems to come alive, but the vampires who see her do so rarely live to pass that on.

**Clan:** Daeva

**Covenant:** None, but has worked with VII.

**Touchstone:** The forest in which she's made her home

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 5

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 7, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6

**Social Attributes:** Presence 8, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Folklore) 6, Crafts 3, Medicine (Natural Remedies) 4, Occult (Divination) 6

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 7, Brawl 4, Stealth (Sneaking) 5, Survival 5

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Emotion) 7, Intimidation 6, Persuasion 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Omen Sensitivity, Relentless

**Disciplines:** Auspex 4, Celerity 3, Dominate 4, Majesty 3, Nightmare 4, Obfuscate 5, Resilience 3

**Devotions:** Crush of Years, Gargoyle's Vigilance, Preternatural Instinct

**Blood Potency:** 8

**Health:** 8

**Willpower:** 7

**Humanity:** 6

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 13

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 7

### *Ezekiel of Sodom*

*"I am the cleansing flame that burns away the darkness. My wrath is unquenchable."*

Ezekiel of Sodom, ancient before time was recorded, a member of the Akhud, walks the night eternally young. Born in the gutter and never leaving it, he learned the art of manipulating men and women to fulfill his needs, either by his words or his body. He never went hungry.

Then the five dead kings came. Corruption seeped into everything and everyone. No one was safe in an orgy of sex and death, and Ezekiel became a thing of the night touched by the Kings. Left on a heap of bodies and believed dead, he rose with no Sire, just full of hunger and power. The cities burned and fell in upon themselves. A whispering in his mind kept him one step ahead of the impending destruction.

Ezekiel wandered into the desert with a mission; to redeem the damned through fire and steel. He terrorized Kindred from the moment of his Embrace, became the thing that elders warn neonates about, a deranged ancient seeking redemption or justice for some forgotten sin through their destruction.

Adaptability defines Ezekiel; every single advancement of science or philosophy adds to his arsenal of tricks and keeps him "young." Only he knows his history; bits dribble out from those he Embraces when the need arises.



## Modern Nights

For his own amusement, Ezekiel operates a Private Investigation and Retrieval firm in New Orleans with a staff of three ghouls whom have been with him for over five centuries. Elizabeth and Montgomery are investigators, and Tara is the support staff. Each ghoul is easily capable of rivaling an ancilla, or even possibly an elder.

He has cataloged all the Kindred in the state and is planning a purge in one swoop, as to minimize the chance of any escaping. Until then, he takes cases and interacts with the kine, remembering his own distant past.

## EZEKIEL OF SODOM

Ezekiel is still a waif of a man from over a millennium ago. Short for the modern age, he dresses in jeans, flannel shirt with a thin black jacket over it, shades, and an empty pistol on a hip holster. Elizabeth's suggestion, because to appear human in this line of business and with no weapon is a red flag.

**Clan:** Akhud

**Covenant:** None

**Touchstone:** Homeless children in need, they remind him of his human past.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 8, Resolve 8

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 8, Stamina 8

**Social Attributes:** Presence 6, Manipulation 4, Composure 6

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Occult (Ghost, Sorcery, Witchcraft) 6, Politics 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Archery) 4, Brawl (Claws, Throws) 5, Larceny (Security Systems) 4, Stealth (Staying Motionless) 5, Survival (Hunting) 4, Weaponry (Improvised Weapons, Spears) 5

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Empathy (Motivations) 4, Intimidation (Stare Down) 4, Persuasion (Confidence Scam, Inspiring, Majesty) 6, Streetwise (Black Market) 4, Subterfuge (Detect Lies, Misdirection) 6

**Merits:** Bloodhound, Claws of the Unholy, Eidetic Memory, Haven 3, Multilingual (English, Arabic), Multilingual (French, Swahili), Swarm Form

**Disciplines:** Animalism 1, Auspex 3, Celerity 2, Dominate 5, Majesty 2, Protean 5, Resilience 4, Vigor 3

**Devotions:** Body of Will, Dominate, Force of Nature, Gargoyle's Vigilance, Quicken Sight, Shatter the Shroud, Stalwart Servant, The Wish

**Blood Potency:** 10

**Health:** 17

**Willpower:** 10

**Humanity:** 5

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 18

**Initiative:** 14

**Defense:** 12

## ELIZABETH WHATELEY

*"Are you sure you want to do this? We can do this the easy way. My insurance premiums go up every time I break someone's face."*

Elizabeth's stature fully displays the strength and confidence she has. The most well-rounded member of the team and best investigator, she frequently finds herself tackling problems before Ezekiel knows about them. Then she slyly hands over the case files the following day outlining everything. She is also the one actively performing data aggregation matrices on vampire feeding habits in New Orleans.

**Clan:** Ancient Ghoul

**Covenant:** None

**Touchstone:**

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Computer 2, Investigation (Crime Scenes) 4, Science 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawling 2, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Larceny 2, Stealth (Obfuscate) 4

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 2, Persuasion (Fast Talk) 3, Streetwise (Undercover) 3

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Fast Talk 3, Indomitable, Investigative Prodigy 2, Multilingual (Spanish, Russian), Parkour, Resources 3, Trained Observer

**Disciplines:** Dominate 2, Obfuscate 2, Resilience 3, Vigor 3

**Devotions:** N/A

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Health:** 12

**Willpower:** 8

**Humanity:** 6

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 13

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 7

**Armor:** 2 (Kevlar)



## Lost Clans

Though the dead are unchanging, the Blood itself is not. The clans that rule these modern nights are not the only ones to ever exist. Most of the Kindred who belonged to ancient clans have died off, their names and those of their Blood lost to history. Others are more myth than fact, the particulars of those clans and their accomplishments more akin to the types of stories swapped in bullshitting sessions than handed down by one's sire. Yet some of those once-lost Kindred survived and sired childer of their own, hidden from the watchful eyes of the Camarilla.

### The Julii

*My Darlings,*

*You are invited to a grand event, to be celebrated the last Saturday in May. I won't quite declare it a Bacchanal, but that I'll leave up to you. Come dressed as they did in the glorious early days of the Camarilla. Togas and laurel leaves encouraged. We'll toast to lost friends and forgotten days.*

*Refreshments will be provided. Bring your appetites.*  
*Patrizia*

To neonates, stories of the Julii are both grand Kindred history and a cautionary tale. In one breath, they're the famed clan who molded vampire society and created the Camarilla. In the next, they're Kindred who grew lazy with power and blood and feasted while Rome fell. Tonight, they're called the Dead Julii, assuring new vampires that the once-thriving clan is gone, and even the mightiest can fall.

Some suggest that a long line of siring and begetting turned the remnants of the Julii into the Ventruue, but that's a topic best breached with caution. Perhaps the vampire suggesting as much will only be laughed at, or frozen out of the conversation. No one has ever found direct evidence to truly link one clan to the other.

And, how *did* the Julii peter out? Did they burn when Rome did, as some legends suggest? Were their members glutted on blood and too deep in their torpor to escape? Did they make a terrible bargain with the Strix, forcing them to hide from the Kindred over whom they'd once held sway? Might they have betrayed the Strix instead, and the Julii who escaped retribution forced deep underground?

As far as modern Kindred believe, the Julii are long gone; dead — or Exceedingly Dead — as some like to say.

But they forget that the Julii didn't just practice the Masquerade, they invented it.

A few members of clan Julii made it out of Rome in those long-ago nights. The details of how they disappeared — and why — are lost or well-guarded, but in the millennia since, the remaining Julii and the vampires they sired have flourished despite their diminished numbers. Though they are few, the

### Story Hooks

**Keeping Secrets:** The elders uncover information suggesting the Julii still exist. Perhaps they recognize Priscus or Patrizia, or a Julii neonate comes to the elders seeking protection from the two, putting the elder in possession of a deadly secret.

**Invitation to a Feast:** Patrizia throws one of her grand fêtes, but those on the guest list have been invited either as food or sacrifice. It's a game: a murder mystery whose victim isn't yet dead, and whose reward is participation in a ritual long believed lost to the ages.

Julii who sire childer do so selectively, and as in-keeping with the traditions they practiced in Rome as possible.

Of the handful of Julii who escaped from Rome, three are still alive tonight. One shuns Kindred society, but the other two have insinuated themselves into other clans, letting their peers believe them to be of this or that bloodline, but all the while carefully cultivating their own factions within. They pass down their blood and the tales of Rome's glory days only to those they trust utterly, and have no compunctions about destroying childer who prove themselves unworthy of such secrets. While it's near-impossible to trace modern-day mortals' ancestry to that of the Caesars, the Julii do their best to ensure those they Embrace are tied to Ancient Rome in some form.

## PRISCUS

*"My child, I assure you the Julii met their end centuries ago. If any were still around, surely I'd have heard of them."*

Priscus poses as a Mekhet, using his place within the clan and, further, within the Invictus to hide, destroy, or alter evidence of his true clan's existence. He is the embodiment of a Masquerade within the Masquerade, and takes any attempts by other vampires — neonate, ancilla, and elder alike — for the threats they are, and deals with them accordingly.

Priscus is a dour-looking man who appears to be in his early thirties. He often wears a pinched expression: eyes narrowed, his wide mouth set in a firm line, brow perpetually furrowed. It tends to send the timid scurrying, which is how he likes it. His impeccably tailored suits show off modern sensibilities, but his cuffs often carry a coating of paper dust.

**Clan:** Julii, posing as Mekhet

**Covenant:** Invictus



**Touchstone:** Giatina Rossi, youngest descendent of Priscus' mortal family

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 6, Wits 6, Resolve 5

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 6, Manipulation 5, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Research) 5, Computer 3, Investigation 5, Occult 4, Politics (Clans and Covenants) 7

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Firearms 3, Larceny (Security Systems) 6, Stealth 4, Survival 4

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Lies) 6, Intimidation 6, Persuasion (Fast Talking) 5, Subterfuge (Misdirection) 5

**Merits:** Closed Book, Friends in High Places, Practiced Puppeteer

**Disciplines:** Dominate 5, Majesty 3, Obfuscate 3, Resilience 3

**Devotions:** Consumption, Summoning

**Blood Potency:** 6

**Health:** 11

**Willpower:** 8

**Humanity:** 6

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 11

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 5

## PATRIZIA

*"Oh darling, you must come to my party. Everyone who's anyone will be there. I have such surprises in store for you all."*

Patrizia hides among the Ventrue. If other Kindred are going to suggest her clan begat theirs, she figures it can only help her charade to dwell within their ranks. Why fight the rumor, right? Patrizia is quite possibly the one who first whispered the suggestion that the Julii birthed the Ventrue, and is known to "speculate" about where the Julii might be now to keep their memory relevant to modern vampires. She still displays many characteristics of the Julii: a fondness for extravagance, a legion of servants and underlings, and a reputation for throwing the kinds of parties other Kindred remember for decades. She no longer lives in Rome's Necropolis, though Patrizia owns a mansion that borders on a cemetery, allowing her to celebrate some of the remembered Roman rituals to honor the dead.

Patrizia is small in stature, but the sheer force of her personality means she'll never be lost in a crowd. She arranges her long dark hair in intricate styles, evoking those found in ancient Roman art. Her clothing, though modern and

opulent, also harkens back to a much older era. Patrizia carries herself like someone who expects to be obeyed and, perhaps, worshiped. When she's throwing one of her parties, she's a charming and welcoming host.

**Clan:** Julii, posing as Ventrue

**Covenant:** None

**Touchstone:** Donia, a favorite ghoul

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 6

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 7, Manipulation 5, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 4, Crafts 4, Occult (Ritual) 7, Politics 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Personalities) 5, Expression (Dance) 4, Persuasion 5, Socialize (Formal events) 7

**Merits:** Striking Looks 2, Sympathetic 2

**Disciplines:** Animalism 5, Auspex 3, Dominate 3, Majesty 5, Resilience 2

**Devotions:** Celebrity, Legion

**Blood Potency:** 7

**Health:** 8

**Willpower:** 7

**Humanity:** 4

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 10

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 6

## Pijavica

Long ago, before records of bloated corpses turning into seeping oozing masses of blood, the Pijavica lived as the Kindred do. They sustained themselves on blood, and kept themselves in a balance between human form and blood form. Older Pijavica helped usher the newly Embraced into sentience by feeding them a glut of blood. The clan never boasted many, and those who survived were only the most powerful and dedicated of them. The rest, relegated to simply strange, oozing companions.

## Vlastislav

*"Bodies are tools for the those with the will. Tools are meant to be tempered, used, abused. Let me help you temper yours, for greater purpose."*

Vlastislav walked slowly toward the stage, fresh vitae flowing from his freshly opened scars. His eyes locked onto the form of the young



neonate kneeling before him, patiently waiting for his blessing. Each movement measured and planned. His mind rolled through the slowly increasing clan numbers. Time to bring forth another. His mind raced back to the Dragon from a few centuries ago.

He was merely an experiment then — they all were. He thought of the feeding, the blood sorcery, of his body broken down time after time to pools of thickening blood. Many became one, and one became a few. When the werewolves attacked, Vlastislav seeped into the earth from the confines of his destroyed cage, and went into torpor. When he awoke, centuries had passed, and so had his brethren.

Those years of sorrow were painful, but this was a new day. The neonate in front of him stood for the growing army of his kind. A gift given to him through strange torpor dreams. Maybe he had the Dragon to thank, but he didn't care about that woman any more.

He turned his focus back to the neonate, and his arms became crimson fluid, flowing into the unsuspecting vampire. Moments later, the childe dropped to the stone floor, a contorted and bubbling body, like a bloated animal left in the sun.

He spoke in a low voice to the cocoon before him. "Many believe the Pijavica are extinct. Possibly true, possibly false. I don't know what you will become, but you will be my childe."

### *Eighty Nights of Seeking*

Vlastislav is the last of his clan. Knowing strength comes from numbers, he Embraced with reckless abandon for a year, and every childe died. The Dragon's sorcery broke him but did not beat him. He studied their arts and ancient Kindred lore over six decades before stumbling upon a possible "cure" for his condition.

He started a fanatical cult that attracts both kine and Kindred with his message. They worship dark lords beyond the scope of space, believing that they can gain forbidden power through blood sharing. When the Kindred feed on the kine followers, Vlastislav induces them to frenzy and explain that only the Embrace will save them. Before the new neonate can even feed her first, he infects her with his own blood, passing along his blessing — in reality, his curse.

## VLASTISLAV

Vlastislav's body is a mask of ritualistic scars, carvings, and occult symbols. Blood openly weeps through his scars, as he reopens them each night. While performing ceremonies, he wears long flowing crimson robes with silver jewelry and carries a glass ritual dagger. At the end of each ceremony, he sheds the fleshy form, becoming a sentient mass of blood. He is the cult's ultimate symbol of the Beast and Devil incarnate.

Vlastislav acts the part of the fanatical leader. It keeps him in power and offers him a fertile breeding ground to rebirth his clan by infecting members of the cult. Only, he finds that his children need to be older and older each time he tries to make a new Pijavica. And the ones he does create only live for





a year before dissolving. Maybe if he tries the older Kindred in his cult, he will get better results.

**Clan:** Pijavica

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Investigations (Riddles) 3, Medicine 2, Occult (Rites) 4, Politics 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl (Claws) 3, Stealth 4, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression (Religious Ceremonies) 4, Persuasion 3, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge (Lies) 5

**Merits:** Contacts (City Hall) 3, Cult Status (High Ritualist) 3, Retainer (Doulosi Ghoul) 2, Unnatural Affinity Merit, Resources 4

**Disciplines:** Celerity 3, Dominate 5, Majesty 4, Protean 3, Resilience 3, Vigor 2.

**Devotions:** Kin Maker (see below), Body of Will

**Blood Potency:** 6

**Health:** 10

**Willpower:** 7

**Humanity:** 5

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 11

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 6

*Kin Maker (Dominate 5, Protean 3)*

Pijavica reproduction is turbulent at best, but Vlastislav has learned a new ability from the experiments of the Dragon his torpor dreams. He can infect a willing Kindred with a massive supply of his own Vitae, eventually creating a new Pijavica.

**Cost:** 10 Vitae + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult

**Action:** Instant

If successful, this Devotion causes the Kindred to erode from the inside, leaving only a shell with a new Pijavica inside. This process takes 4 days, and if the cocoon is disrupted or destroyed before the gestation period is over, the vampire dies. This Devotion can only be used on a willing Kindred with a Blood Potency rating lower than the user's.

## *Eternal Allegiances*

The five Covenants are not the only Covenants to ever exist, and they are certainly not the only Kindred-run organizations surviving into current nights. Kindred create coterie, cults, convoluted vassalage chains, and any number of alliances to make themselves feel safe through their eternal nights. Even the All Night Society is a construct created to keep Kindred connected with each other, to allow them to exist in a society outside the kine. The Covenants have traction, codified belief systems, and a growing fan base lends them power.

Those who have been around for a while know that the Covenants have power because the Kindred who support them are powerful. Covenants rise and fall, and even the most eternal-seeming group is in danger of passing into the halls of obscurity if their elders decide to go play in some other sandbox. Elders know this more than any other, and sometimes find themselves drifting between options, seeking something more substantial. Coterie help, and sometimes a powerful coterie turns into something bigger, and eventually someone starts calling it a Covenant. Just ask an elder how the Carthian Movement really got started.

### *Conspiracies*

But, what about the other Covenants? Why don't all Kindred know about them? The best answer is because they don't want

to be known. Such organizations spring from a small group, and gain traction with other like-minded individuals. The originators don't want to share the power they have. If everyone knows about the society, then they want to join. Then they want to have a say in how it works. Then they want to climb their way to the top and take over. Best to just stop all that before it starts and keep it hush hush. That doesn't mean these conspiracies don't recruit or grow, simply that they are more discerning in their recruitment process.

Some Conspiracies are famous, usually for spiraling out of control in fantastic destruction. The ones that the average Kindred hasn't ever heard of, not even a hint? Those are the ones with the real power, the ones to be afraid of. Generally run by elders, these organizations wield immense power and maintain utmost secrecy. Anyone poking into their affairs is just as likely to die as get recruited.

### *Body of a Nation*

"Fuck." The word blares through Diana's mind as she glances from side to side down the seemingly endless hallway. "I can't believe they are making me do this" She slides into an open office door as the two-armed security guards around the corner, and instinctively holds her breath. She holds the door tightly in front of herself, willing herself to be part of the wall. Their



footfalls eventually pass by her, and around another corner.

"Diana. You are risking everything for these people." In her sweaty right hand, she slides the president's ID card into the card reader. She stops breathing, waiting... waiting... hoping... Then a sickly, but welcomed, green light greets her vision, as the steel reinforced door opens just long enough for her to leap into the freezing server room.

Fumbling for a moment, she pulls out a hairpin-sized device and attaches it to the underside of a server. The device clicks into place and pulses for only a moment. "Ok. Done. Now I just need to get out of here unseen."

"*You have always been seen.*" A voice echoes in the back of her mind. Diana scans the room for the speaker, but only hears herself breathing faster and faster. "*Don't be afraid child. I do not wish for your mission to fail. Just know who your masters truly serve.*"

"Listen, fucker. I am done and leaving." Diana feels the Beast rushing through her. Her amber eyes turn a bright crimson as she scans the room, looking for whatever specter is tormenting her. The distant footfalls of the patrol, walking back down the hall, ring in her ears. A long thin blade slides down her left arm into her hand as she takes a fighting stance. Her blood pumps more, increasing her mass ever so slightly, but magnifying her might exponentially.

A shadow flicks across the room, only visible with her enhanced senses. "Ghoul, your determination is inspiring. You won't remember this, I wish only the best for the Nation, but their leaders don't need this information...yet." With that, darkness engulfs the top floor of the building.

Days later, Diana is in the park across from her office and at her designated mission drop site. She puts an empty cup of coffee with the device into a trash can, thinking to herself that her mission went perfectly and her job is still secure, not knowing that she has lost two days and most of the files are corrupt. Hopefully, they won't need her again. A few minutes later as they play, a group of kids knocks the can over, spilling the contents. The janitor rights the can, placing everything but one coffee cup into it.

### *The Organization*

The secret society, Body of a Nation, has existed since the birth of the United States, leading back to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In the very room with those honorable kine, lurked the corrupting touch of the Kindred.

Rosamund, Charlotte, Doyle, and Svetlana all have survived a few centuries of night and came to the New World decades ago, knowing they could not achieve any real power, Temporal or Kindred, with the power bases in Europe. Rosamund, along with a few writers and acquaintances of Thomas Jefferson, exchanged correspondence with the founding father, and knew the closeness of the revolt at hand. They prepared for war, as the young nation did, and used this knowledge to change the power dynamic of the states. The five slew and committed

diablerie on many of their own kind during the revolution, adding to their power.

The Nation knew that the only way to have true power and fealty is to breed it in, and reinforce it with small benefits to the serf – the serf forever feeling indebted for the smallest of gifts. As the government formed, the Nation inbred itself with wealthy families and led the charge to educate their children and the children of their children, teaching each generation what it meant to serve their betters, while they acquired power and prestige. The serfs made all their accomplishments, influence and power secretly available to the Nation.

In the late 1800s, the Nation had secreted itself into the most prestigious institutions in the United States, holding rituals and rites while their pawns attended university. Whatever happened during the initiations and ceremonies to bind the members is a closely guarded secret known only to members; no one speaks of it, but every member has it burned into their very souls. It could be blood magic, possibly blood bonds or something older and far more sinister, but until a member exposes the information, the secret remains theirs.

The Nation's numbers swelled over the centuries but the Body limited the knowledge membership of each year to only members of that year. The Nation has no visible identifier, only a code word, which is different for each group.

The Nation set a number of protocols in place if they are exposed. The level of exposure determines the protocol from simply killing the person to burning down everything except for the Body. Their preferred move is for the elders to initiate Ghosting Protocol Charlie by shedding a layer of their organization and creating a media cover up that was linked back to it, spending trillions of dollars to debunk anyone who tried to expose the rest of the group. The elders knew this would likely increase interest in that faux group and allow them to reconstitute elsewhere, focusing on reorganizing and likely targeting the person that discovered the truth for later action.

The outer layer, The Bilderberg Group, is traceable by conspiracy nuts or the media back to the mid-1950s and became known for its annual conferences of incredibly influential people from academia, business, and politics. The group is known to be made up of those from the noble class. Numerous conspiracy theories circulate about them causing the Great Depression, arranging terrorist attacks, and trying to controlling the world. No one can actually prove any of that, and their secrecy keeps the theorists guessing and the journalists wasting their lives attempting to expose the group.

It is all little more than a front for the true organization that sits from afar. Watching. Safe. Prosperous.

### *A Bit of Truth*

The Body of the Nation believe they rule unseen, with agents everywhere who – with the slightest word – can crush their opponents with espionage, the media, political might, or the police. Over the centuries, the Nation has risked exposure three



times. Each exposure linked to a move that would have fully secured their power base. The most recent being in the 1950s, which forced them to hide again and use valuable resources, delaying plans for a century, if not longer.

Unknown to the Body, something older is using them and waiting. Waiting for the right moment, it has kept them in check when needed but uses their power, just as the Body uses the power of the kine serving them. Charlotte discovered the truth and met her Final Death, with the reasons for her death being falsified.

### *The Body*

They range from 400-700 years old and all are far more powerful than they should be. The exhilarated diablerie during the revolution lead them to think of themselves as Methuselah, as Vitae of more powerful Kindred courses through them.

## ROSAMUND, THE HEAD

*"I've destroyed men twice as powerful as you without even chipping a nail. Go bother someone who cares."*

Known only as Rosamund, she claims to have been born in 1280 and the third cousin of some defunded British Lord who was executed before his family a decade later, as they were tossed into prison. Despair, disease, and death quickly claimed Rosamund's family over the next five years. Eventually Rosamund escaped, a prison-hardened street fighter with a lust to get back everything that was taken away.

Eventually she was embraced by Julia, a Ventrue, and spent a century in her service, never to be advanced in rank because Julia prized Rosamund. Then early one evening, the childe fell upon the sire: the first of many diableries for Rosamund.

Fleeing Europe and the justice of multiple princes, she saw the power-hungry Ventrue in the New World seeking allies who could shield her in case of discovery. The closeness of Rosamund's relationship with Benjamin Franklin, known for his love of women, allowed her to provide constant input into the rising need to be free of England, birthing the idea of the Body of the Nation.

**Clan:** Ventrue

**Covenant:** None

**Touchstone:** A young girl who reminds her of what she was like before her time in prison.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 6, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

**Social Attributes:** Presence 6, Manipulation 4, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Occult 2, Politics (Bureaucracy, Cutting through Red Tape) 5

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawling (Street Fighting) 5, Survival 2, Weaponry 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Wolves) 3, Empathy 3, Expression (Dance) 2, Intimidation 5, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Allies (Corporate) 3, Distinguished Palate (Blue Eyes), Resources 4

**Disciplines:** Animalism 3, Dominate 4, Resilience 5, Vigor 3

**Devotions:** Conditioning, Juggernaut's Gait, Undying Familiar

**Blood Potency:** 7

**Health:** 10

**Willpower:** 9

**Humanity:** 4

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 12

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 6

**Notes:** Rosamund prefers to fight dirty, and keeps a pack of wolves trained to attack at her command. She keeps at least one such wolf with her at all times.

## DOYLE, THE MOUTH

*"It only takes the right soul to change a revolution. Is it you? You? Or you?"*

Franklin Doyle never met a fight, hopeless cause, or argument that could not boil the blood. According to Doyle, the Irish tossed the rogue out in 1638, at 24 years, forced him to move to the New World where a woman with alluring eyes gave him the night of his life; after that, he walked hand in hand with eternity.

The Body has little reason to question Doyle, as they care little for each other's past, only loyalty to the future. Each member upholds their function, and Doyle's is to recruit and keep the wealthy and powerful coming in. Doyle's smile, passionate speeches, and actions do just that.

**Clan:** Daeva

**Covenant:** None

**Touchstone:** A cause the people would die for.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 5, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Computers 2, Occult 2, Politics 2,



**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Stealth 2, Weaponry (Swords) 4

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Lies) 4, Expression (Speeches) 5, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 4, Socialize 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Acute Senses, Enticing, Honey Trap, Resources 5

**Disciplines:** Auspex 3, Celerity 3, Majesty 5, Nightmare 1, Vigor 3

**Devotions:** Cult of Personality, Cross-Contamination, Quicken Sight, Summoning

**Blood Potency:** 7

**Health:** 7

**Willpower:** 8

**Humanity:** 5

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 15

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 6

**Notes:** Doyle digs a fair fight but won't bother with it, as he can usually talk anyone down and convert them to his side.

## SVETLANA, THE FIST

*"..." The sound of snapping necks*

Svetlana's life is mostly unknown, even to the rest of the Body. Other than when angered, Svetlana does not stop until the aggressor is dead.

Description: Svetlana stands close to six feet under her mass of flowing, rotting clothes. Any garment she wears rots within the hour, her face is little more than an amalgamation of writhing, wiggling worms with a pair of azure orbs staring out.

**Clan:** Nosferatu

**Covenant:** None

**Touchstone:** Anyone tied to a stake and left to burn alive.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Investigation (Crime Scenes) 4, Occult 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawling (Street Fighting) 4, Larceny 3, Stealth (Obfuscate, Shadowing) 5, Survival 2, Weaponry 4

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Torture) 4, Streetwise (Navigation) 4, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Resources 3

**Disciplines:** Nightmare 4, Obfuscate 5, Resilience 3, Vigor 3

**Devotions:** Cloak the Gathering, Wraith's Presence

**Blood Potency:** 7

**Health:** 14

**Willpower:** 8

**Humanity:** 4

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 18

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 7

**Notes:** Svetlana never leaves anyone alive after a fight. If forced to retreat, she makes her prey and attacks from the shadows hours later.

### *The Eyes: Vacant*

Charlotte d'Avesnes was a futurist before the word even existed in 1600s France. She studied the sciences and longed to live longer to learn more. She excelled in the medical arts, against all expectations, working to understand the body and its functions.

Captivated by her brilliance, Ducal became her patron for over a decade. He watched the young woman dance on the doorstep of discovery but forever denied finding a cure. Ducal would surely have let her spend a lifetime studying, but a deadly riot erupts in the small town killing her, which forced Ducal to Embrace her and bring her into the Mekhet clan.

Charlotte reveled in afterlife and eventually traveled to the new world. For centuries, she served as the Eyes of the Body, uncovering truths and making small scientific pushes when needed. Charlotte noted that the near discovery of the Nation only occurred when they would have gained substantial global power, almost as if something was keeping them on a leash.

It took a century to discover the truth late one night. It was the last night of Charlotte's existence, as she was then caught by the rising sun and all her knowledge vanished in a pile of ash.

### *The Feet: Vacant*

Robert Jefferson, born in 1782, was a member of the Nation who quickly rose through the ranks using family influence and wealth. Doing the unthinkable, the Body created a new appendage for the exemplary member. He showed the Nation that anything was possible through devotion.

Success seemed to follow this Daeva with even the smallest of deeds, until a run in with the Sheriff of Chicago in 1927. The press discovered Robert during the middle of a feeding sex



orgy. His tendencies to be overindulgent and dependent on good fortune created a reckless side of The Feet. The battle with the Sheriff was quick and vicious. The centuries-old enforcer of the Prince of Chicago dispatched the young Kindred in moments.

### *Ghouls*

Every ghoul of the Nation undergoes rigorous training and conditioning no matter what they did in life, once they become a ghoul of the Nation. Afterwards each ghoul is best at what they do. Their old lives fall away with only fragments of memories surviving, making it better they aren't seen in public around their old lives; their deaths are faked and they only serve the Nation.

## *That Which Does Not Die*

She was fast, but they were faster, and prepared: the elder had warned them of her. A dozen blood-bound children were rushing at her, eager to die for their fiendish sire. A pat on the head if they kill the demon hunting her; the thing that even the beast fears. The first four had extended bloodied fangs dripping venom, others had blades, and the rest tried to entice her with powers of the mind. The fangs ripped through her flesh that knits itself back together before their eyes, as fast as the wound occurs.

Dvora dispatched the dozen Kindred with a detached work woman attitude. A millennium of fighting makes this ritual of dispensing justice all too common. One of the childer fled, but an offhanded hurled stake rips into his heart and he falls to the ground, unmoving. Dvora walks toward the office holding the elder, slamming a blade into the vampire's skull without even pausing. As she begins to sing, the temperature in the room plummets and ice freezes over the windows, sealing the doors closed and leaving only one way out... through her.

She is what the monsters fear; only the oldest of elders know her and that may have escaped her grasp centuries ago. But they know she never forgets, forever dispensing justice.

### *Deborah (Modern Dvora)*

*"I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will send Sisera into the hand of a woman."*

Judge. Prophet. Wife. Warrior. Eternal.

The Jewish people were suffering under Jabin, King of Canaan and his general, Sisera, for twenty years. Sisera commanded cavalry with a legion of iron chariots and a well-trained army. The Prophetess Deborah came to her people in their time of need, the fourth Judge after Shamgar. She judged from under a palm tree in the open air between Ramah and Beth-El. She spread wisdom to the people and preached from the Torah in the open air to unite the people. As time passed, her reputation and influence grew.

After a vision, she called for Barak, a general, and they raised an army of 10,000 souls to attack the well-trained and well-armed Canaanites. She told Barak of her vision: that Barak would have glory, but the highest victory would go to a woman. At the same time, the Jewish people were forbidden from learning the art of the forge. They had no swords, axes, or

shields. Armed with little more than courage, the army marched under Deborah, with Barak at her side.

Sisera and his forces easily overwhelmed the Jewish force, at first. Iron chariots crushed bone under wheels, metal blades easily sliced through the clubs of the rebels, and blood coated the sand. The blistering heat of the sun and the battle raged on. Deborah fought with a recovered blade, and seeing the corrupt Canaanites defeating her forces, she called out to the heavens. Clouds filled the skies, blocking out the sun; and moments later, heavy rains began. The rain instantly turned the battlefield into a muddy soup, trapping the chariots and placing the Canaanites at the mercy of the Jewish army. With their defeat at hand, Sisera's warriors fled, as did their general. There was no escape for the Canaanites; the Jewish forces found and killed them all.

The duo sought Sisera who had fled the battlefield. Jael, wife of Heber, came forward and asked them to follow her back to her tent. Inside the tent, lay Sisera with a long crimson covered metal tent pin rammed through his skull, having been killed by Jael, and fulfilling Deborah's prophecy. For four decades Deborah judged, advised, and spread the word from the open air under her palm tree before passing away.

A decade later, a band of draugr descended on the tribe one night, slaughtering everything in sight, draining everyone they came across. Those bestial Kindred, having lost all trace of what once made them human, leaving dried husk of kine in their wake as a gluttonous display of power, tossing a drained victim aside only to leap onto another.

A bloodied and nearly dead tribesman ran to Deborah's palm; he prayed for a miracle...prayed for salvation...prayed for justice. He was mage before the word existed, reaching out and willing a miracle into existence. As a draugr fell upon him, Deborah, in the same full vigor as when she led the Israelites against the Canaanites decades before, slew the monstrous Kindred with her bare hands. Picking up a sword, she walked toward town and began to sing. The remaining tribe people felt a swell of courage and the blade blazed with fire.

### *Modern Nights*

Deborah's existence is in constant debate by scholars; some consider her an amalgamation of different myths. She laughs at the questioning of her deeds and focuses on the mission.



Always the mission. Only her mission — and the visions that lead her — matter.

She has led battalions, divisions, platoons, and squads, but works better alone in the field against these foul creatures of the night. Their abilities to warp the minds of allies make them too much of a risk to themselves and bystanders, but not her. She is eternal.

Instead, Deborah, three centuries ago — a blink in time to her — turned to her descendants in a holy quest. Deborah's power flows through her family line, manifesting differently in each, with the one commonality of mental fortitude. Asher, her current grandchild is the latest in a line of protégés. She notices a spark in him, something similar to the fire that burns in her, a possible kin-in-arms.

## DEBORAH

Tall for her time, Deborah is five feet and four inches, short by the standard of current day. Her features, are striking, memorable due to her noble bearing. When she speaks, people stop to listen. Even if it is a simple request for directions, or a shout at innocents to flee.

Her raven hair is darker than the blackest night. She wears flowing clothes, such as coats and dresses — whatever would be useful to conceal her weapons. She is frequently unfashionable for the time and prefers comfort first. Asher took it upon himself to create her a fake id and passport.

Deborah's family has helped her for centuries and showed her that there is more than the mission. Eternity is long and the enemy is sly. She must be ever-vigilant but must live life not to become them. She hunts them, but the mission does not define her.

**Apparent Age:** Late 30s

**Virtue:** Faith

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Wrath

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 6

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Stamina 8

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics (History, Law) 3, Craft (Forging) 3, Investigation 4, Medicine 1, Occult (Draugr, Ghouls, Witchcraft) 5, Politics 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Throwing) 5, Brawl (Silat) 4, Drive 2, Firearms 4, Larceny 3, Stealth 5, Survival 3, Weaponry 5 (Swords, Improvised Weaponry, Duels)

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 4 (Calming), Expression 4 (Singing), Intimidation 4, Persuasion 5 (Inspiration), Socialize 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4 (Detect Lies)

**Merits:** Fighting Style: Heavy Weapons 3, Fleet of Foot 3, Laying on Hands, Multilingual (Italian, Hebrew), Multilingual (English, German), Safe Place 4, Trained Observer 3, True Friend (Family Member - Asher), Unseen Sense (Vampires)

**Health:** 13

**Willpower:** 11

**Integrity:** 7

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 27

**Initiative:** 12

**Defense:** 10

**Armor:** 1/3

**Notes:** The following Merits can be found in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook:** Fighting Style: Heavy Weapons (p. 62), Laying on Hands (p. 57), Multilingual (p. 46)

### *Gifts*

Deborah accounts her resurrection and powers to her faith, and has not sought other answers. She knows that she must live her faith properly to dispense justice. Whatever the source of her Gifts, she seems to lose access if she wavers in her faith for any reason.

### *Peak Potential*

Deborah's resurrection has gifted her with limitless potential, enabling her to reach a maximum of 10 in all her Attributes, given time, training, and prayer. As long as she spends an hour each night in silent meditation, she can access her inhuman abilities. If she is incapable of doing so, the next day her Attributes are capped at 5.

### *Regeneration*

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Action:** None

This limitless potential has made her very flesh supernatural, enabling her to soak any kind of damage (Bashing, Lethal, and Aggravated). Through force of will alone, Deborah heals her body with bones, flesh, and severed limbs reconstructing themselves. One Willpower point heals two bashing wounds or one lethal wound. An aggravated wound requires three Willpower points and one hour of mediation. Aggravated wounds leave scars to remind her that she is still human.

### *The Torah*

Deborah is known for her words, wisdom, and sound judgment. With the power of her voice, she can call upon the very primordial forces of nature to do her bidding for a short time. The sound of her voice inspires allies and strikes terror



in her foes.

Once per round, Deborah can recite words from Torah and spend 1 Willpower point to have the primal forces of the world aid her.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Expression

**Action:** 1 Turn

**Duration:** 1 Scene

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The weight of eternity and her mission, because Deborah doubted herself for a moment. That moment is all it takes and she directed her powers against herself. Deborah suffers the number of dice as aggravated damage, as fire rages over her for second.

**Failure:** Doubt crumbles faith and nothing happens, but everyone is alerted to her presence.

**Success:** The forces of the universe adhere to her command. She calls forth a single element to enhance a single object. Each success gained on her activation roll adds a +1 bonus to the element's effect. Ice increases the Structure of the item, fire increases the damage rating of an item (or gives an item a damage rating if it is not normally a weapon), Earth adds Armor rating to an item, though items not normally worn gain little from this element.

**Exceptional Success:** Deborah's faith is strong and her mission just. An exceptional success allows her to call forth two elements to command for the rest of the scene.

## ASHER "CRUSADER" HAREL

*"Who am I? What do I stand for?" That is what 'granny' asked me a year ago. Who does that? So... I told her. I hack. I fight. I game. I am black and doing what is right. Here I am now, on some holy quest for Justice. Yeah. Justice."*

Asher has always been smarter than everyone else in the room but being black instantly means they assume he is an idiot. They look for the smallest things to reinforce that; maybe his grammar is off or he uses a word they consider odd. He has used that to his advantage. Taking up the mantle of a Hactivist, he has helped those in need. He also helped himself and his bank account a bit to pay for helping those in need. But, it's not like the corrupt corporations will miss a few million spread out over the masses.

That was until a hit team broke into his old apartment to kill him, but Deborah showed up to save him at the last minute. She had been watching him for months, debating if she could trust him. Family or not, trust is hard. The mission is harder but he's all in. Granny needs the help.

### Description

Asher's dark skin stands in stark contrast to the white tattoos of Doctor Who's TARDIS on his back. The smattering of short

cropped black dreads hang right above his red glasses. Asher has the look of a man that was once athletic but has dedicated the last years of his life to a computer.

Tall with a striking sardonic smile when he chooses to share it, his 5'11 frame easily supports his 220 lbs.

**Age:** 25

**Virtue:** Idealism

**Vice:** Arrogant

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 4, Athletics 1, Computer (Hacking) 5, Investigation 2, Occult 1, Science (Particle Physics) 2

**Physical Skills:** Drive 1, Firearms 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Expression (Journalism) 3, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Ambidextrous, Eidetic Memory, Indomitable, Iron Will, Resources 3

**Health:** 9

**Willpower:** 7

**Integrity:** 7

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 10

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 4

**Notes:** The Merits Ambidextrous and Eidetic Memory can be found in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook** p. 47 and p. 44 respectively. Deborah knows that she may be cut down at any time and has chosen Asher to replace her if she dies in his lifetime. She is teaching him all she knows and grants him minor powers through their bond. He currently can't be Dominated, Blood Bonded or Embraced.

### King Kitamba

*"Oftimes when you slay the demons – their blood stains more than your flesh and soul."*

Soundlessly the man walks over the plush-carpeted floor that cost more than most families make in a year. Pale moonlight washes over his form, as he moves slowly across the room. His muscular arm reaches outward toward a body strapped to a table.

"Fear not." The man leans over the body. "The moment has been prepared for." On the right arm, a tarnished jeweled



bracelet glistens even as light fails to touch it, the glow increasing as his hand moves closer to the struggling form. Inches from the victim before him, the man smiles. The form's eyes glow a crimson red and the vampire hisses at his captor with crimson spittle erupting from his fanged mouth.

"My coterie will come for you!" the Gangrel roars out as it struggles to free itself, to flee into the night from this horror that brings only true death. Fear races through its form, remembering how the kine must feel.

"I can only hope they find me, youngling. My need is great and your numbers are few." With that, the man grasps the Kindred's arm and it convulses for only a moment and howls in pain. It is a pain so great that it put its first death to shame; it crumbles to ashes. The jewelry bracelet, no longer tarnished, glistens in the moonlight.

### *History*

Kitamba kia Shiba was born countless lifetimes ago and loved a woman, named Muhongo, more than anything else in this world and married her. Their happiness was a thing of legend, the tribe knew only joy and prosperity for a time. A fever overtook Muhongo one night that no medicine man could cure. Muhongo died and sorrow overtook Kitamba for days. It did not leave him, and as king of his tribe, his sorrow became their sorrow; his broken heart became their grief. He refused to eat or talk, and demanded the same of his tribe. The children could not shout, the women could not drum, and no one could speak or eat. Everyone must mourn with him in memory of Muhongo until her return.

The wise men saw their king, their powerless leader, and called forth a medicine man to bring Muhongo back from the dead. The medicine man listened to the king's tale, witnessed the grief of the people, and once paid, agreed to travel to the land of the dead to search for Muhongo.

He gathered herbs and mixed them in his mortar, as he ordered the tribe to dig him a hole deep enough to reach the darkness of the world. He ordered the king and the tribe to bathe in the mystical elixir. The medicine man and his young son entered the grave, as the tribesmen filled it in. His wife poured water on the grave once a day as the two traveled on down a long road until they reached a village in the Land of the Dead.

They found Queen Muhongo delicately weaving a basket. The living pair, father and son, pleaded with her to return to her love, King Kitamba. The dead queen simply shook her head "no" and pointed to a nearby man watching them. She explained he was Lord Kalunga-ngomne and he would consume everyone. The medicine man saw only coldness in the black eyes of the Lord of the Underworld. The medicine man looked to the right of Kalunga-ngomne only to see another man...King Kitamba. Queen Muhongo explained that Kitamba only had a few years of life left before joining her in the Land of the Dead. She gave the boy her bracelet to give to King Kitamba as proof they found her, and begged them not to tell the King of his fate.

Father and son walked back down the long-blackened road, neither eating nor drinking in the Land of the Dead, for fear of never returning to the living. Upon returning to King Kitamba, they told their tale to the still-alive man. He rewarded them, lifted the ban of mourning from the village, and wore the bracelet of his dead wife, as that is what she would want.

Kitamba's grief subsided, and for a time, he awaited his own death. He longed to feel the warm embrace of Muhongo again, but his days never grew shorter. No longer able to endure, he sliced his own throat with a stone blade, the mortal wound not affecting him. After a failed drowning and beating, Kitamba called forth his Council of the Wise and demanded they find a cure for life. He would not submit, and so the council searched. They sought sorcerers, scholars, and mystics. None could aid the King. Finally, a man, Devorix, arrived with a cure for the King. He whispered in the King's ear, and promised him a peaceful release of existence the royal man sought.

Devorix's cold fingers gripped Kitamba's arm, akin to a vice. The bracelet flared, as the elder Venture sank his teeth into Kitamba's throat. The beast yelled in pain, as blackness overtook his form, an ebony ichor running the length of his teeth. Then the ichor ran through the veins of the vampire's face and down through his body, finally crumbling into to a pile of ash. The vampire's essence washed over the King and peeled away the years, reinvigorating him for a time. Rush of life made the King understand, his beloved Muhongo wanted him to live.

### *Modern Times*

Kitamba runs a small Fortune 500 company, JICHO, headquartered in Washington, DC, specializing in state-of-the-art surveillance working with numerous government contracts under the alias of Jabari Badejo. The company's hundred consultants are all former Special Forces soldiers from various countries, deployment ready at a moment's notice to capture their next nocturnal target to feed Kitamba's eternal life. Technology has served the eternal king well, allowing him to locate Kindred with ease.

## KING KITAMBA

Kitamba towered over his tribe, in his time, but finds himself frequently overshadowed by modern standards at his 5'6" height. While short, he is a wall of muscles from a lifetime of training. As Jabari, he dresses in the finest of dark colored suits with mirrored shades and a Bluetooth earpiece. A knowing smile is his constant companion and an easy joke for any useful contact.

In private, he sheds the skin of his alias, reverting to his true self. He dons himself in black tactical gear and a few high caliber pistols, with four of his consultants close at hand.

Kitamba is royalty, even in these nights where the world burns. He knows his power, wealth, and influence enable him to live life to the fullest. He embraces every aspect of it since this eternal life can end at any time and crush Muhongo's



wishes. Kitamba fights to live for her and never lets anyone near Muhongo's bracelet. It is the only thing he has of her; the source of her love and his life. Few things can rattle him, other than that pickpocket who tried to steal the bracelet, and he beat him to death in the streets.

**Mask:** Social Chameleon

**Dirge:** Survivor

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 5, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Research) 4, Computer 2, Medicine 3, Occult (Sorcery, Witchcraft) 5, Science (Alchemy) 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 5, Brawl (Grappling) 5, Drive 3, Firearms 4, Stealth 4, Weaponry 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation (Stare Down) 4, Persuasion (Majesty) 5, Socialize (Schmoozing) 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge (Hidden Meanings, Hiding Emotions) 5

**Merits:** Allies (FBI) 3, Danger Sense 2, Indomitable 2, Library 3, Martial Arts 5, Multilingual 3, Resources 5, Retainers (JICHO Consultants) 4, Safe Place 5, Staff 5, Status (Government) 3,

**Disciplines:** Dominate 2, Majesty 2, Resilience 5

**Devotion:** Dead Man's Reprieve (see below)

**Health:** 9

**Willpower:** 8

**Blood Potency:** 0\*

**Humanity:** 3

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 13

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 8

**Armor:** 2/0

**Notes:** Muhongo's bracelet is a double-edged lifeline. If taken, Kitamba begins to age at an accelerated rate and will die within a month. The bracelet is impervious to harm and he keeps it covered to draw less attention. At the same time, it makes his touch an aggravated assault against any supernatural creature.

He must kill Kindred to live. He uses the consultants to damage the Kindred and allow him to deal the killing blow, thereby absorbing the potential of eternity into himself.

\*Kitamba's blood potency mirrors the last Kindred he has drained.

## *Deadman's Reprieve (Obscure •)*

Kitamba watched that medicine man from all those centuries ago. The art of what the man did was amazing and he sought out another to teach him. He needed to know how to make the elixir that was used to enter the Land of the Dead.

Once the sacred rare plant has been gathered (Kitamba has a small garden of them), they are added to the elixir. He chants the words over the boiling brew, meditating for hours, and expending one Blood point.

## **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The ritual fails utterly, destroying a fifth of the supply of sacred plants and one of the anointed is killed, as they bathe. The next ritual attempted suffers a -2 dice penalty if attempted within a week, additionally Kitamba gains the Fugue Condition (**Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition**, p. 304).

**Failure:** Kitamba's mixture is not of the proper purity for the ritual to work

**Success:** The ritual works as planned. Each success grants one bather Cloak of the Night (**Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition**, p. 138) for 4 hours.

**Exceptional Success:** The ritual exceeds expectations, granting each bather Resilience at 2 dots in addition to the Cloak of Night for six hours.

## *Sons of Phobos*

Sons of Phobos are born of war and blood, the rites of passage practiced on ancient forgotten battlefields. The Sons of Phobos can trace their lineage back to the days of Sparta's first decline into lawlessness around 770 BCE until Lycurgus rose up in 690 BCE and crushed them. Before that, their mystics perform blood magic on battlefields, sacrificing to unseen powers and reaping the rewards. The practitioners were touched but not gifted as mages. For centuries, they were assumed decimated, until 330 BCE when Alexander the Great conquered the remains of the Spartans and forced them to join his legions. The few remaining Sons pled their case to the great king.

Alexander the Great, seeing merit in their powers, granted them resources, numbers and spreading of their beliefs. With free reign and an empire behind them, the Sons of Phobos studied, recruited, and experimented. This decade of unfiltered bliss leads to the discovery of vampires and the power of their blood. The older the vampire, the more powerful the Vitae, and the immortality it brought. Not quite mages, psychics, nor human anymore, the Sons of Phobos can shape reality through blood.

The Sons discovered the true key to power: The Heart. A freshly cut-out heart with the ichor of existence coursing through it. A single consumed human heart can extend a Son of Phobos life a few years. But with all that effort for just a few years; no Son of Phobos would stop there, true power lies in the Vitae of vampires.

Their Blood magic differs from Crúac, and grants extended life with few repercussions. They developed their magic beyond simply extending their own lives, but instead to control the very source



of the blood. And rumors say some can boil blood in the veins of their victims. Elders fear them, as they know the Sons of Phobos retain the memories, skills, and powers of those they consume. Some claim that a few Sons remember meeting Alexander the Great and that the king himself is one of their numbers.

## *Rituals*

While not Crúac or Theban, the sorcery the Sons of Phobos use functions in a similar manner. Instead of spending vitae, they spend a single Willpower point and must accumulate a certain number of successes on an extended action. In all cases, the Son of Phobos must make a ritual sacrifice of a heart, either mortal or vampire.

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult

**Action:** Extended. Each roll requires fifteen minutes. Ritualists may roll as many times as the unmodified dice pool. A ritual must be completed in one attempt. Ritualists do not receive any bonus for attempting a ritual having already failed with a near miss; rituals automatically fail if interrupted; and ritualists may not use Defense while casting. Many rituals are also Contested or Resisted, as noted in their descriptions. Unless a Merit that modifies extended actions expressly says that it applies to Sorcery, Sons of Phobos ritual rolls are not affected by it.

## **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The ritual goes catastrophically wrong, the sacrifice is wasted. The ritualist gains the Wanton Condition (p. 307 **Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition**). Subsequent rolls to enact a ritual suffer a -2 penalty.

**Failure:** No progress is made toward completing the ritual.

**Success:** The ritual accumulates successes. If the target number of successes is met, the ritual's effect immediately takes place.

**Exceptional Success:** The ritualist makes great strides in achieving the ritual. The target number of successes is reduced by 3. If the target number of successes is met, the ritual's effect immediately takes place.

**Suggested Modifiers:** The target is in torpor (-2), the target is not securely bound and stationary (-4), the ritual is performed in a makeshift location that hasn't been properly prepared or sanctified (-1), the ritual is performed with grand, ceremonial appointments (+1 per dot of Resources expended on components and sacraments), the ceremony occurs during the day (+2).

## *Blood for Vengeance*

**Target number of successes:** 7

The ritualist corrupts her own blood in preparation for battle against vampires by infusing her blood with toxins. The toxins contaminate the Vitae in the ritualist's body equal to her Stamina, lasting up to 12 hours. If not used or expelled (drained), these inflict Lethal Damage to the ritualist at the end of the 12 hours. The ritualist may cut herself and spend one Vitae to fling her blood at a target as a thrown weapon with a rating of 2L, as it boils and burns whomever it touches.

## *Curse Vitae*

**Target number of successes:** 5

The ritualist lays a curse on her own blood, transforming it into a gelatinous, infectious mass up to her Stamina rating for 12 hours. These toxic Vitae can be used to cripple vampires. The ritualist cuts herself, and throws her blood at her victim as a thrown weapon. A vampire hit by the blood gains a penalty equal to his own Blood Potency to all actions for the rest of the Scene.

## *Dark Disciplines*

**Target number of successes:** 6

The Sons of Phobos sacrifice a vampire's heart, and infuses herself with the power of its Vitae. She gains any Discipline the Kindred possessed, so long as Vitae flows through her. A Discipline can only be learned while the Vitae of a Kindred who knows it is in her system. Once learned, any Kindred Vitae allows her to access the Discipline.

## *Stolen Hearts*

**Target number of successes:** 7

**Contested:** by Stamina + Blood Potency

This ritual allows the Son of Phobos to remove a heart from a living, or unliving in the case of a vampire, heart and devour it to gain its power. A ritualist may perform this on behalf of another, inducting him into the mysteries of the cult. Once a celebrant has undergone the heart-stealing rite once, he can perform it alone in the future.

The ritualist becomes a ghoul for a number of months equal to the target's Blood Potency plus one. If the target is a mortal, he still gains one month of being a ghoul. Becoming a ghoul this way allows the Son of Phobos to forgo the need for Vitae monthly, and gain a number of dots in Celerity, Resilience, or Vigor equal to half the target's Blood Potency (rounded down) to a minimum of 1. Additionally, the Son of Phobos gains a number of Vitae equal to the target's Blood Potency + 5, or a base of 5 if the target is human.

If the ritualist does not meet the target successes, the victim expires, and the heart is wasted, and cannot be used in any other ritual.

## *Stolen Lives*

**Target number of successes:** 8

**Contested:** by Stamina + Blood Potency

After a ritualist removes the heart from a victim, she may perform this ritual to inflict the Thrall Condition, instead of letting them die. The thrall follows commands without questions, and once a command is completed, she ceases moving and waits until the next command.

Human victims remain for a number of days equal to her total Health, and then die. These people are akin to zombies, and cannot heal wounds but do not need sleep. A vampire victim dies once all her Vitae is expended.





The ritualist may order a vampire thrall to use any Disciplines she possesses. The ritualist must order the thrall to spend Vitae to increase their physical abilities or to heal wounds, but this accelerates the end of her cursed state.

Vampires in this state are not truly vampires, they cannot feed or gain any substance, nor can the Vitae create or maintain ghouls.

## ZACK "TAXMAN" WILSON

*"If you need to hide a cool mil, I am your man!"*

**Story Notes:** Zack has a talent for numbers, counting them or guessing them in the lottery. As a young accountant, he feels in with Capone and even took a little off the top from the crime boss, without getting caught, but he picked up the mob bosses love of killing.

Taxman became known as the Mad Butcher of Kingsbury Run brutally killing over 12 people and was never captured. His love of blood drew the attention of the Sons of Phobos who welcomed his blood talent and skill with money into the fold.

**Clan:** N/A, Son of Phobos in 1935

**Virtue:** Devoted

**Vice:** Greedy

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Accounting) 3, Computer 3, Investigation 2, Occult (Rituals) 5

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Larceny (Breaking and Entering) 4, Stealth 3, Weaponry (Cleavers) 4

**Social Skills:** Expression 2, Persuasion (Fast Talk) 3, Streetwise (Undercover) 3, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Acute Senses, Anonymity 3, Iron Will, Mystery Cult Initiation (Sons of Phobos) 4, Resources 4, Unseen Sense (Vampire)

**Disciplines:** Vigor 3

**Rituals:** Blood for Vengeance, Cursed Vitae, Dark Discipline, Stolen Hearts

**Health:** 7

**Willpower:** 5

**Humanity:** 4

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 12

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 7



## Crossovers

The Kindred are not alone in the night, and while many supernatural denizens are kept busy by intrigues within their own ranks, others view vampires as a threat that must be eradicated, a rival for control of their area, or as prey whose power, wealth, or essence can further their own dreams of immortality. Following are hooks for antagonists from other **Chronicles of Darkness** games. It's not necessary for Storytellers or players to have access to the specific core books for these lines. In the sections below, you'll find suggestions and examples of which Disciplines characters from other games would have access to. These act as a substitute for those lines' special abilities.

### *Mage: The Awakening*

The first time I saw Dominic, he was a boy of three, chubby-cheeked and quiet, his dark eyes following my every move as I doted on his mother. I saw him often as he grew, and as he was a smart child, one day he asked me how it was that he grew older and his mother grew grayer, but I never seemed to change.

He went away to school, his world travels financed by the coin his mother earned running my household and minding my affairs during the day. I intended to name Dominic her successor, but he never returned home, instead remaining abroad to study. When next I saw him, a man in his late thirties, I spied the glow of a mage's nimbus about him, and wondered what the sudden narrowing of his eyes meant when he looked at me.

He should be well into his nineties now, but doesn't look a day over forty. I can no longer see his aura. I've heard whispers about him, how people around him tend to go missing. Or how, when they're found, they're shells of their former selves.

Dominic visited a few months ago. I discovered his mother's ledger open on her long-abandoned desk, pages torn out. They held the names of my colleagues. The name of my child. I've not heard from her in weeks.

A friend of mine in the Lancea et Sanctum looked into him, and came back to me with a single word. One that makes my cold blood go even colder: *Tremere*.

• • •

Even at their oldest, mages only live to around a hundred and thirty years. They can prolong their lifespans by slipping into other realms, or transforming into something no-longer-human. Immortality, however, requires monstrous, inhumane actions, most of which require the mage to devour the soul of another living being. And what could be more potent than the soul of a vampire who's experienced several lifetimes?

To a mage, vampires are a Mystery: a piece of the world that mundane science cannot explain, something to be studied and dissected and understood in service to their magic. Rumors abound of mages collecting vials of Vitae to power their spells, or seeking out ancients who have fallen into torpor to steal their power.

It's unclear whether any mages have achieved true immortality, but a few of the most powerful have attained something like it. A mage who can cheat death for centuries runs a good chance of crossing paths with certain elders over and over. Sometimes he might only seek information or favors, but a wise elder will be waiting for the day the mage comes to steal his soul.

Mage Orders can rival Covenants for political intrigue. An elder making plans that will take decades to come to fruition needs to be wary if she shares her territory with a long-lived mage. If the will-worker takes an interest, the vampire could find her grand scheme in disarray.

### *Mages in Game*

Mages have an amazing array of spells at their disposal, though many only have access to three or four different schools of magic at a time. Mages who have cheated death, are likely to have power over death itself, and quite a few other tricks to boot.

When creating a mage for your chronicle, you can build them similar to an elder vampire. A mage can have any vampire Discipline at any level. They have a Gnosis rating instead of Blood Potency, and spend Mana instead of Vitae, which can be gained by spending time in meditation in whatever place they have deemed their Demense (similar to Haven), or through the use of a Merit similar to Herd. Mages do not have Devotions, though Crúac, Theban, and Coils are all available.

Mages cannot spend Mana to heal damage in the same way a vampire can spend Vitae, but she can cast a spell to heal herself or others.

### *Promethean: The Created*

Vanya remembers the night they ran that horrid creature out of town. At first, she'd pitied the woman-thing, maybe even felt a bit of kinship with her, this lonely wanderer who had no place of her own. Vanya allowed the thing to linger, and it nearly cost her everything. The townspeople grew fractious, frantic, until within a week they were tearing at one another and destroying anything they could pull down. That was when she'd stepped in, pointed them at the interloper, and had her chased out.

Then, a few miles down the road, she'd met the wanderer and put her out of her misery. Vanya told herself it was a mercy-killing, that if *she* hadn't done it, some other village would tear the girl apart. She'd returned home and spent the next forty years restoring her beloved town to its former glory.

That was back in the 1800s, and locals *still* tell tales about it.

So how is it possible the girl has come back, shambling her way down the sidewalk to stand outside of Vanya's house? She's been out there an hour, staring up at the bedroom window.

Sooner or later, Vanya's going to have to go outside and see what she wants, lest it begin all over again.



• • •

Prometheans are beings created from human parts, or pieces meant to evoke a human body, and given the spark of life. Their very nature tells others around them that something is off, something is wrong, and they find themselves shunned and hated. Their bodies betray them, their nature causes their surroundings to decay, and their very presence fills those nearby with disgust. Their Disquiet can spread to people in the area, a pressing concern for elders whose herd, childer, and domain may be affected.

However, opportunities exist for Kindred and Prometheans to work together, forming not only alliances but friendships. A Promethean's life is one of alienation, of always living away from humanity. Vampires can understand the despair that springs from that perfectly well. While humans can't see a Promethean's Disfigurements, they can sense them and feel an instinctual revulsion towards them.

Vampires who befriend Prometheans are guaranteed to see the relationship wax, wane, implode, and rekindle over their long years. No matter how much the Kindred identifies with the Misbegotten, the effects of Disquiet seep in. An Elder may spend years helping the Promethean as she strives for mortality, but somewhere along the way, it falls apart. The Elder's other relationships begin to suffer. Her haven falls into disrepair. If she's a Prince, those loyal to her begin to fight amongst themselves and plot against her. The only cure is to drive the Misbegotten away, or destroy her.

And yet, years later, when their paths cross again, perhaps they remember why they enjoyed one another's company and begin the cycle anew.

### *Prometheans in Game*

Prometheans have access to powers that increase their strength, speed, and stamina in much the same way as physical Disciplines.

When creating a Promethean for your game, choose one Celerity, Resilience, or Vigor rated at 5 dots. Additionally, the Promethean can have access to Auspex, Dominate, Obfuscate, and Protean at any rating. They can have Devotions like vampires. Prometheans have Azoth instead of Blood Potency and spend Pyros instead of Vitae, which can be regained through touching an electricity source, or regains slowly over time at the rate of 1 per day.

Prometheans do not take damage from electricity, but instead heal damage at the same rate an electricity source would deal it.

### *Changeling: The Lost*

I do not know what I have tasted. He was pretty and sad, and when I kissed his neck, he sighed and nuzzled at mine. He said my cold skin reminded him of someone, but I was too busy savoring his blood to ask him to elaborate. I tell you, I've never sipped anything finer, and I've tasted the blood of queens. I can still taste it on my tongue, still see how bright, bright red it was,

even though the night was moonless and should have leached the color from everything. I drank, I held him, he stroked my cheek, and if my heart still beat I'm sure it would have broken.

I wouldn't say I feel alive again. I certainly don't. More aware, perhaps. I feel air currents slipping over my arms. I hear the chime of distant bells, and I almost know the song. I want to dance to it, like we used to, you and I. Will you dance with me?

Oh. Oh, it's fading. I should find him again. I must.

• • •

The Shadows know of them. They hoard stories of the Lost, the ones who were stolen away, whose lives were usurped by false versions of themselves. They hear tell of the ones who came back, escaped that other place, fled from it and the masters they were forced to serve. The Mekhet collect all the fairy stories, and all the Faerie stories. They compare the sweet cautionary tales of childhood to the horrors endured by the changelings themselves.

What they've learned is, the Lost want to be left alone. It's a rare occasion that a changeling would seek out one of the Kindred, let alone an elder. They're a fascination rather than a threat, and with only exceedingly rare exceptions, they tend not to be the aggressors. Defend themselves if a vampire attacks them, their motley, or their freehold, well, of course, but the Kindred have little the Lost could want.

While the Lost don't actively seek out Kindred to start trouble, a Kindred who drinks changeling blood runs the risk of becoming addicted. The effects produce a gentle euphoria, often accompanied by pleasant sensations and a state of well-being. While nowhere near as addictive as Solace or the presence of an Inamorata, elder Kindred (especially those whose Blood Potency requires them to obtain Vitae from supernatural beings) can become dependent on changeling blood.

A changeling who sees an opportunity in this situation may use it to request things from the vampire he wouldn't otherwise have access to: money, protection, rare items, etc. The vampire isn't so enthralled she'd sign over her penthouse, but she is more susceptible to extravagant requests than normal.

The longer the relationship lasts, the more sway the changeling has over the vampire. As decades become centuries, she may become the elder's Touchstone; her blood and her very presence reminding him of his long-departed humanity. Rivals who learn of this arrangement have varied reactions. Some would use it to discredit him, calling his need to feel so alive again weak, demanding he be stripped of title and power as they maneuver to replace him. Still others would want to experience the effects for themselves, aiming to steal the elder's Lost companion away or invade her freehold to find more of her kind.

### *Changelings in Game*

Changelings have magic that binds them to the fae realm.

A changeling is created much like a vampire, but instead of



gaining Disciplines as dot-ratings, they can gain any level of a Discipline as an individual power. Meaning they could purchase Auspex 5 without knowing any of the previous levels. They have access to all Disciplines as well as Devotions. Changelings have Wyrd instead of Blood Potency, and spend Glamour instead of Vitae, which can be gained by spending time with humans and experiencing extreme emotions. Changelings cannot spend Glamour to heal their wounds.

### *Beast: The Primordial*

We ran together, once. Do you remember that, little sister? We sought out the wicked. I came to them in dreams, my winged shadow always blocking out the sun. You held them when they woke, drank blood sweetened by fear, and when we moved on, it was because we'd made them better people, reminded them of what lurks in the dark. I wore a different face then, but it's still me. Horrors always come back.

Perhaps you've forgotten. You've spent some years asleep, I hear. You've woken so recently, you might as well still be rubbing the sleep from your eyes. Did you dream, in your torpor? Did something silent and massive chase you down sun-dappled streets? Did the shadows you so love to control turn against you? Did you draw breath again, filling your lungs with air before the waters closed over your head?

Don't look at me to blame if that's what happened. Those weren't my nightmares. That's not my Horror.

But, I'm not here for a social call. I'm here on business. You've been up to some terrible things since last we met, and, well.

Oh, don't bare those fangs at me.

Funny, they look a little... loose, don't they? Your fangs? Like they might just fall right out of your head? Ah. There goes one now.

• • •

Beasts are nightmares incarnate. When early humans became afraid of what lurked in the darkness, it was the Begotten they feared. Tonight, Beasts feed their Hunger by preying on those who need a reminder of what it is to be hunted, imparting wisdom about what it means to be human.

Beasts feel a kindred spirit with all other supernatural creatures, viewing them as distant cousins. Some Kindred believe the Begotten are family, of a sort. Vampires have Beasts within themselves, after all, constantly at odds with their humanity. Vampires and Beasts may forge friendship and ties as strong as family, the vampire benefiting from the Beast's insatiable hunger.

But being family doesn't protect a vampire from becoming prey for the ultimate apex predator. The longer a vampire spends at the top of his particular food chain, the more likely he is to forget that entities that are more dangerous exist. He may believe himself invincible, untouchable.

Which is when a Beast will find him.

Beasts themselves have human lifespans. However, the Horror the Beast binds with lives on long after their host's death. It may take years, but the Horror eventually returns wearing the face of a new Begotten. And Horrors don't forget. An elder who refuses to learn her lesson, or who has slipped back into old habits since last they met, may find herself experiencing a recurring nightmare.

### *Beasts in Game*

Beasts utilize nightmares, both living and imagined, to exert her will onto the world.

Beasts have access to the Auspex, Celerity, Resilience, Vigor, Nightmare, Obfuscate, and Protean Disciplines. They have a Lair instead of Blood Potency, and Satiety instead of Vitae, which can be regained by feeding on the fear of her victims. They can spend Satiety to heal, though if their Satiety is low, they enter a Frenzy-like state which causes them to feed immediately.

If a Beast has declared a vampire her family, the vampire can regain Vitae when the Beast regains Satiety, as long as he witnesses the event.

### *Geist: The Sin-Eaters*

Dusty Jack doesn't think he's been *that* bad a person. Figure, you live as long as he has, you gotta do some nasty things to keep your head attached to your shoulders. But, you probably do some good, too, right? He's never really been one for that cosmic balance shit, but plain old luck of the draw seems to bear it up. Some days you wreck a person's life, other days you drain the person who was making somebody else miserable. When morning comes, you pull the earth over you and start again at sunset.

It works out, in the long run. And, it's been a very long run.

But apparently the dead disagree, and they've found themselves a champion.

Jack knows a Daeva who knows a Mekhet who's warned him about Sin-Eaters, but for the most part, he's ignored their conversations. Too thinky, too philosophical, and usually straight into the realm of too-maudlin. Maybe other members of the All Night Society like moping about, wondering what they're missing out on by not dying and moving on, but Jack's got it pretty good. He knows better than to say "dead is dead," or at least, he knows it's not always true.

Then here comes this guy the other night, right? Not quite alive, but not dead either, and he's setting off all of Jack's weird shit alarms. He's sitting there, sliding pictures across the table, asking if Jack knows this person or that one. Some of these photos have to be a hundred years old, the way the people in them are dressed. A few of them looked a little familiar, but it's not like he keeps sketches of everyone he eats, you know?

Which was about when he decided it was time to get the hell out of there. But, he had the sense the Sin-Eater wasn't done



with him. The dead have waited this long, after all. What's a few more nights?

• • •

In general, Sin-Eaters don't want much to do with the Kindred, but it's not always their call. Creatures who see humans as food, or as collateral damage in their machinations tend to leave devastation in their wakes — even if they never stop to consider the extent of the damage they've done — and that leaves a lot of ghosts with unfinished business and scores to settle waiting for someone to take up their cause.

Sin-Eaters are people who died — or ought to have — but made a bargain while they were on that brink and came back. Now they're neither alive nor dead, the moment of their demise on indefinite hold. They have a Geist in tow, the entity that's staving off their final end, and together they work to help the actually-dead find peace and rest, or sometimes, vengeance.

Sin-Eaters have all the time in the world. Perhaps it was the elder who caused his death a century ago, and while there's not much to be done for the Sin-Eater, he's been quietly cleaning up the mess of ghosts the vampire's left behind with his last hundred years of blood drinking. All those deaths add up.

### *Sin-Eaters in Game*

Sin-Eaters utilize powers similar to ghosts or spirits, though they are capable of manifesting their powers in the mortal world.

You can create Sin-Eaters similar to elder vampires for your game. They have access to the Auspex, Dominate, Nightmare, Obfuscate, and Protean Disciplines, Devotions, and can also have ghost Numen. They have Psyche instead of Blood Potency, and Plasm instead of Vitae, which can be regained by spending time in places associated with the dead, such as graveyards, tombs, caves, sewer tunnels, or underground pools. They can spend a point of Plasm to heal any type of damage one for one.

### *Demon: The Descent*

He's got a favorite kind of face. I've seen him before, or someone an awful lot like him, hovering at the edge of the crowd. Once it was at a concert, I was attending with my child. Once it was in a crowd about to riot, where I'd parked myself to take advantage of the impending violence. There he was, square-jawed and soft-lipped, watching me rather than the history unfurling behind him. I saw him in Pamplona, where the bulls run. I saw him on the other side of fighting pits, in the stands at tourneys.

I've spotted him in airports and on gangplanks, in the middle of teeming crowds shuffling from one place to another.

The faces change, but subtly. He can't be wearing the same person (*Cover*. They call them *Covers*) generation after generation, but he tries for consistency the best he can.

At least it lets me know when he's around.

I still don't know what he wants, though sometimes he gets

close enough to whisper to me about the God-Machine, and his mission, and his Fall.

I don't know why I let him get anywhere close. Fascination, perhaps. Boredom. A dash of stupidity, if you asked my colleagues. Or, maybe it's that sometimes, I feel like there's something beyond us, pulling strings and setting things in motion in ways I can only dream of doing. I feel like he might know what it is, and needs me to know it, too.

• • •

Demons were once angels, obedient servants of the God-Machine. They were brought into the world to do its bidding, and sent back out of it when their tasks were done. Demons inhabit bodies called *Covers*, insinuating themselves into the life of the person whose identity they assumed. *Covers* age and die, forcing the Demon to find new ones every four decades or so. While most scholars agree that one of the Unchained couldn't inhabit the body of a Kindred and use it as a *Cover* that never ages or dies, others point at the Strix' ability to do something awfully similar, and mutter uneasily.

Demons play a long game, attempting to thwart the God-Machine's plans, or trying to get back into its good graces. They build up resources in the form of people and assets so they can strike when necessary. When a demon and one of the Kindred find themselves working at cross-purposes, the results can be catastrophic: not necessarily for the demon and vampire, but for the pawns they set into motion against one another. The longer the two have had to funnel money and labor into a situation, the greater the casualties.

Mortals and demons enter into Pacts constantly. In exchange for just a little piece of her soul, a human can gain wealth, power, fame, anything she desires. The demon incorporates a part of her into himself, bolstering his own *Cover*. The knowledge of how Pacts are formed would be immensely interesting to a member of the Ordo Dracul; it would make an excellent new Coil. But to get that information, the Dragon would have to get the demon into his custody so the experimentation can begin.

Elder vampires sometimes enter into Pacts thinking they'll outlive the demon they struck it with, and therefore never have to fulfill their end of the bargain. Sometimes, the demon is still around at the end of the deal, and comes looking for his payment.

### *Demons in Game*

Demons utilize their memories of being part of the God-Machine to fuel their powers.

Create a demon similar to an elder vampire. All demons have Protean rated at 5 dots, and any Protean Devotions (even if they don't have the other requisite Disciplines) which she uses to assume a demonic form. They can have access to any Discipline or Devotion. Demons have *Cover* instead of Blood Potency and spend Aether instead of Vitae, which can be regained by taking her demonic form, or spending time in a God-Machine infrastructure.



# appendix

## CONDITIONS

These Conditions represent the bonds – for better or worse – an elder builds during her long Requiem. Many revolve around mortals, ghouls, or even other Kindred.

### ANCHORED HEART (PERSISTENT)

Your character is deeply invested in a mortal. His success becomes her own and, whether directly or from the shadows, she guides him on the path to self-fulfillment (by *her* standards).

**Resolution:** When the target dies. Your character may also choose to cut the target loose, triggering a detachment roll.

**Beat:** Whenever the target of her affection gains a beat, or undergoes a breaking point (regardless of the outcome), through a situation your character set up.

### BEAST'S BARGAIN (PERSISTENT)

**Prerequisites:** –

Your character knows to take any opportunity to feed, and this promise keeps the Beast happy. You may ignore the Frenzy roll penalty for Hunger, but in return, your character must feed whenever “safe” circumstances arise, even if he’s currently full. Safe here means without risk of immediate and significant harm to himself or the Masquerade; all other consequences are irrelevant to his bargain with the Beast.

**Resolution:** Regain a dot of Humanity, lose *another* dot of Humanity, or achieve an exceptional success on a breaking point related to Beast’s Bargain.

**Beat:** When your character feeds at a time that introduces a severe penalty or personal drawback. For example, he’s stalking an enemy to his haven, and stops to feed on a homeless man alone in an alley, thus losing track of his target.

### BELOVED ENEMY (PERSISTENT)

Your character made an enemy out of someone she loves. He goes after her with everything he has, while she pulls her

punches. She can weaken his resources, undermine his status in the All Night Society, and otherwise make his Requiem difficult, but she cannot bring herself to kill him.

**Resolution:** When your enemy stops fighting your character, or when she finally kills him (the latter is always a breaking point).

**Beat:** Whenever the enemy significantly hurts your character and she doesn’t hit back.

### CHILDREN OF THE BLOOD (PERSISTENT)

Your character created a revenant. The childe has a -4 Blood Sympathy to your character, higher than other revenants, and follows him wherever he goes. No matter how far or fast he travels, she always catches up in the end.

The Storyteller controls the revenant and her goals; she might seek to destroy your character, or maybe she wants to be lifted up as a true vampire.

**Resolution:** When the revenant stops haunting your character.

**Beat:** Whenever the revenant causes your character psychological trauma (i.e. triggers a Breaking Point, but excluding the automatic one for creating a revenant), or causes other vampires to treat him as a pariah.

### CRUSHED

The weight of centuries presses down upon you and you can’t handle it. The world seems to spin on without you, and you catch the barest glimpse of the kind of inhuman monster you would have to be to persist for that long. You can’t regain Willpower at all through any method, as every fleeting thing you care about loses its meaning and sleep is barely more than the blink of an eye in comparison to eternity. Whenever you would spend a Willpower point to achieve any effect, you must spend two instead.

**Possible Sources:** The Crush of Years Devotion

**Resolution:** Face a breaking point to jar you out of your malaise, or suffer lethal or aggravated damage in any of your three rightmost health boxes as a brutal reminder of your mortality.



## CURATED (PERSISTENT)

Your character and her deceitful peers have struck a bargain to survive the nights, and own a communal ghoul to oversee this bargain. He serves as any ghoul and you may take the Retainer Merit to represent him, but he is immutable when it comes to preserving the bargain.

You work with your Storyteller to flesh out the details of the bargain, and she controls the ghoul (and the other elders involved, if they are not Player Characters).

**Resolution:** When the ghoul dies, when your peers die, or when the bargain ends.

**Beat:** When the bargain hinders your character in her private pursuits. For example, if she has made an enemy out of the Elysium Keeper, while her coterie is sworn to protect anyone carrying that title.

## FORGOTTEN (PERSISTENT)

You've drunk the wine of solitude and now you watch the world pass you by. Everyone you know and love assumes you're gone — dead, perhaps — or far away and out of touch. They remember you, but come up with reasons you're not around anymore. They rarely notice you even when you're right in front of them, and it takes great effort to get them to recognize you when they do.

You're considered to be under the effects of Face in the Crowd (*Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p. 137) at all times while this Condition persists. Whenever you act out enough to attract the attention of people who already know you, they see you as a stranger unless you spend a Willpower to jog their memories for the scene. Of course, this means the easiest way to get your own lover's attention is to hurt him.

The only characters who notice and recognize you normally are your regnant, your own thralls, and anyone upon whom you've used the Dominate or Majesty Disciplines to inflict Conditions.

**Possible Sources:** The Pass into Yesteryear Devotion

**Resolution:** Break your blood bond to your regnant; lose a dot of Humanity or Integrity while making someone see and recognize you.

**Beat:** Cause a setback for yourself or harm to someone else while trying to gain attention and recognition.

## IMMUTABLE HEART (PERSISTENT)

Your character has fully invested himself in a mortal institute or way of life. His first Touchstone, which must reflect this attachment, grants a +3 dice bonus on detachment rolls. Any

additional Touchstones increases his total detachment bonus die to +4. However, these Touchstones cannot be replaced; meaning the only recourse if they are lost is to take the Languid Condition.

**Resolution:** When your character loses the Touchstone (and you take the Languid Condition). He may also willingly abandon it (this erases the Touchstone and triggers an immediate Detachment roll, though he may then attempt to forge a new one).

**Beat:** Whenever your character risks his existence to protect the Touchstone.

## IMPRISONED ECHO

You've trapped your Ka inside a mirror, where for a time it can't wreak havoc. While it's there, you feel its furious desperation as though it were your own, gaining a dice bonus equal to its Rank to any rolls you make to escape captivity (including grapples) or flee danger. You can smash the mirror and resolve this Condition to accept the inevitable, setting it free and automatically failing a Social roll dramatically as a result; it immediately finds a way to interfere in your affairs, even if it has to show up in a shop window and scream obscenities. If you don't resolve the Condition this way, it ends on its own after a number of nights equal to your Blood Potency, and every Social roll you make for the next full chapter takes a dice penalty equal to the Ka's Rank, as it takes its rabid vengeance.

**Resolution:** Break the mirror and set the Ka free, as above.

## LEVERAGED (PERSISTENT)

Your character's ghoul keeps her safe during the day, tends her needs during the nights, and is finely attuned to her needs. He is practically perfect in every way, except one — he knows her *too* well. He senses your character's moods as if they had a thrice removed Blood Sympathy bond, and knows where she buried *all* the corpses.

**Resolution:** When the ghoul dies.

**Beat:** When your character seriously inconveniences herself to accommodate her ghoul, lest he spills her secrets. Her ghoul need not make specific threats or demands; they both know that he knows.

## LIVING LEGEND (PERSISTENT)

Your character is immortalized in a work of "fiction" about vampires, like Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, or Stoker's *Dracula*. Her fellow Kindred disapprove of this breach of the First Tradition: she takes a -1 social dice penalty on interactions with other Kindred who know what she's done, and a -2 social dice penalty on interactions with Invictus (not cumulative). However, she gains a +2 dice bonus on social interactions with mortals, as the



vampire archetype is deeply ingrained as sexy and magnetic.

**Resolution:** When you've separated yourself from the fictional character. For example, the Daeva famous as the American Dreamgirl could try to recall all her photos, or she could further manipulate the media to change the iconic American pin-up to a woman who no longer looks like her.

**Beat:** Whenever your character's book (or movie, song, etc.) threatens the Masquerade.

## LOST LINEAGE (PERSISTENT)

Your character hails from a clan or bloodline that hasn't walked the night in centuries. She never gains Clan Status; she can pass as a member of a modern clan (which is the smart thing to do), but she never truly fits in. The All Night Society doesn't like Kindred who break the mold, and your character risks losing all her Social Merits or even a Blood Hunt if they find out.

You and your Storyteller create the history of the lost lineage together. You also choose any three Disciplines as in-clan (excluding Coils, Crúac, or Theban Sorcery), and either select an existing Bane (see *Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition*, p.103) or create a new one. You can also choose a clan or bloodline not currently in play, and declare it "lost" as a shortcut.

**Resolution:** With Storyteller's permission, your character could uncover a blood sorcery ritual that allows her to be re-Embraced into a modern clan. Short of that though, this Condition has no resolution.

**Beat:** When your character suffers significant loss while protecting her secret (i.e. she was busy destroying the last copy of Ptolemy's *Life of the Marcans*, rather than tending her Feeding Grounds and now another Kindred has moved onto her turf).

## QUIET ECHO

You've calmed your Ka long enough to let it walk with you outside its usual confines, appealing to a fleeting note of nostalgia. It stays in Twilight and is only visible to you. For the Condition's duration, it's free to do whatever it pleases, and it's hard to say what innocuous act might set off its rage. This Condition ends on its own with no other effect when the sun next rises if you don't resolve it.

**Resolution:** Your Ka performs a significant favor or service for you, and you regain a Willpower point. When and how it acts are the player's choice, but the character has no innate control over it, though he can influence it with Social maneuvering and Disciplines. The Ka won't do anything that causes harm to itself.

## SYNCHRONIZED

Your character became one with her victim as she fed, and took it too far. While this Condition is in effect, it inflicts upon the vampire any damage and Conditions the victim suffers. She still takes damage as a vampire, so if a mortal victim takes lethal damage from a pistol, your character takes bashing instead. A character may only have one instance of this Condition at a time; if she feeds enough on a different victim to gain it again, the second instance replaces the first one.

**Resolution:** The victim dies, your character gains a dot of Humanity, or you replace this instance of Synchronized with a new one.

## VITAE'S RESOLUTENESS (PERSISTENT)

**Prerequisites:** Addicted (vitae), Languid

Take this Condition when you gain Languid.

Your character has nothing left. No one to love or hate. Nothing at all to interest her. Like the mortal gnats around her, she turned to drink. She keeps a score of Kindred vessels around, and drinks her own vitae if need be.

This Condition lessens the impact of Languid, allowing you to ignore the latter in any scene your character drank vitae. Once she does fall to torpor, however, the effects are calculated as if her Humanity is 2 lower.

**Resolution:** Waking from torpor.

**Beat:** n/a

## WEAK VITAE (PERSISTENT)

Your character can't create a new vampire. Even if she follows all the steps correctly (drain, feed vitae, want it *really* badly), her child won't be a full vampire. Rather, all her Embraces turn out as revenants — and they still cost the normal Humanity dot.

**Resolution:** When your character raises her Blood Potency through Diablerie.

**Beat:** When your character's revenant childe puts her in mortal danger (directly or indirectly — i.e. being sentenced to final death for creating a revenant).





We grow old, but we never grow older.  
That's the problem you see.

Timelessness is not stagnation,  
we continue to grow and change  
throughout the years.

If we don't, then the world changes  
without us and we die.

You may think that with a multitude  
of people coming, going, dying and  
running away, we'd be tired, done,  
or ready to give up.

Instead, I find myself restless,  
looking for the next thing.

There's always a next thing,  
and I for one am not yet ready to die.

– Elder Kincaid, *Daeva Crone*

This book includes:

- Detailed instructions on creating elder vampires, including how to base chronicles around them
- A look into the lives of elders, how they spend their nights, who they work with, and why including their roles in both their clans and covenants
- New Devotions, Merits, and Rituals for elder vampires
- The kinds of creatures that pose a threat to elder vampires, including Inamorata, Lamia, Sons of Phobos, a new elder conspiracy, and more

**Vampire**  
THE REQUIEM  
SECOND EDITION

