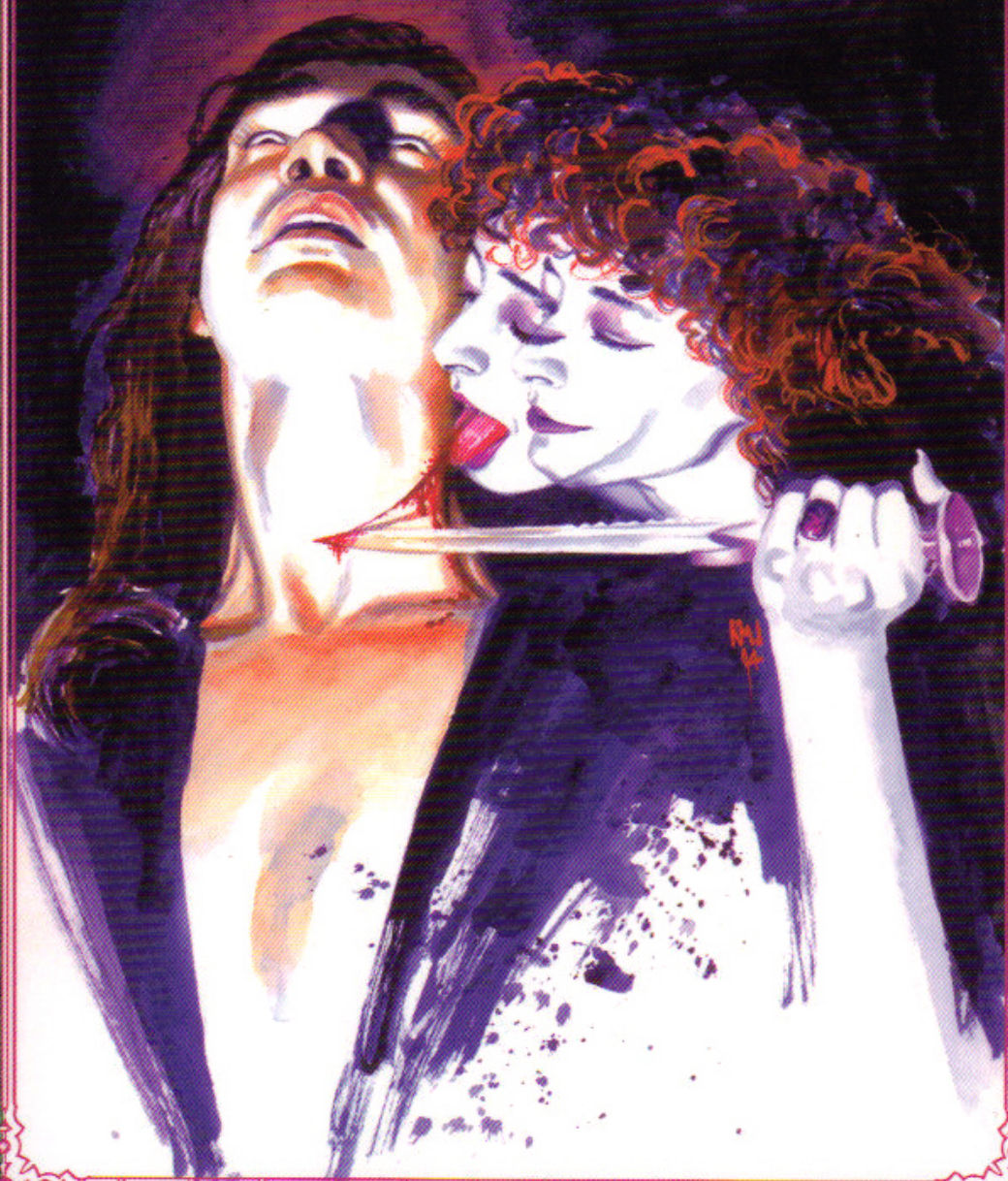


Dirty Secrets of the
BLACK HAND



A Sourcebook for **VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™**

*A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.*
— William Blake, "Auguries of Innocence"



What horror have the Methuselahs wrought? What grotesque affairs of terror and destruction have they birthed upon this planet? Their cruelty and depravity are legendary, and none can match them for atrocities — and then there is the Black Hand.

Defender of right, servant of the clan sires and instrument of justice, the Hand plays a central role in the World of Darkness. Far more than just the assassin of the Sabbat, the Hand plays its part with all the considerable skill an ancient society can muster.

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LEIF
JONES
1994



Chapter One: You Are One of Us Now!

The face was no longer bone, but animal — the face of a white wolf. "I forbid you nothing. Nothing," uttered the awful face. "You may go anywhere — you may open any door. But, little bird, remember that you must be prepared to accept whatever you find." The long jaws spread in a smile filled with teeth.

— Peter Straub, *Shadowland*

For most vampires, the Black Hand exists as an unseen bogeyman, a horrid monster used to terrify childer as they lay down in their coffins. Most vampires believe they will never encounter one of these mad shadow warriors, assuming that if they do nothing to upset the Sabbat, the Black Hand will have no interest in them.

Older vampires believe otherwise. They know the Black Hand has interests — and spies — everywhere. Any vampire could be one of these Sabbat leaders, and the Hand's existence is just one more reason to be paranoid of everything in the world.

Truly old vampires know that there is even more reason to fear. When they were but childer, their own sires looked over their shoulders and whispered legends of the Hand. They know that the Hand's secrets are deep and dark. They

know that the Hand believes itself to have a special place among vampires. Even these ancient vampires, however, can only guess at what the Hand's secrets may be.

The Black Hand does not share its secrets willingly. Should you read further, you will be tainted by what you read, and your view of the World of Darkness may never be the same. You will belong to the Black Hand. Once you uncover its corruption, it will forever mar your neonate idealism and mark your soul.

This is a book of dark secrets revealed. You will come to know the dark, dirty secrets of the Black Hand: its politics, beliefs, rituals, spiritualism, motivations, clans, bloodlines, Disciplines, Thaumaturgy, Merits & Flaws, Abilities, Backgrounds and even its vile methods.

Beware: You have been warned.



What You Need

*Foul deed will rise,
Though all the earth's o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.*
— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Aside from **Vampire: The Masquerade**, Storytellers and players will find it helpful to have **The Players Guide to the Sabbat**. Also, Storytellers may want to have **The Storytellers Handbook to the Sabbat**. **Wraith: The Oblivion**, **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, and **Mage: The Ascension** have minor tie-ins with this sourcebook. However, these titles are not necessary to use this book.

Mysterious Advent

Be not deceived with the first appearance of things, for show is not substance.

— English proverb

The Black Hand is part of the Sabbat, which is composed of the most vicious and loyal vampires in existence. The Black Hand, referred to simply as the Hand, serves as the powerful army in the Sabbat's jihad against the Camarilla, anarchs, Inconnu and its many other enemies. The Hand brands its members' right palms with a black crescent moon, to forever remind them of their responsibilities.

Created during the first hundred years of the Sabbat, the Hand has remained strong. It was the only part of the Sabbat to stay intact throughout the civil war that tore the sect in two. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, Sabbat leaders do not trust the Black Hand, and many in the sect fear its power. In fact, some believe the Hand subtly works against the Sabbat's in-house Inquisition, originally formed to ferret out those who consort with demons.

Much like its parent sect, the Hand is steeped in political rhetoric, millenarianism, and militarism. Like the Sabbat itself, it was designed for the destruction of all who would oppose it. It is rich in legend, doctrine, and tradition, and so secretive that most Sabbat know little of its ways. Of the thousands of Sabbat in the world, only around 300 are members of the Hand, and even low-level members know only what is necessary to get the job done.

Additionally, members do not devote themselves solely to Hand business. Its leaders summon units, composed of three to seven members specially trained to deal with threats, to the Sabbat. Positions within the Hand include raider, scout, covert agent, assassin, high-tech weapons and demolitions expert, Thaumaturgist and mission leader.

The top level of the Hand consists of four powerful warrior-politician-generals collectively called the seraphim. All lower leaders are referred to as dominions. These leaders keep the Hand operating in an orderly, efficient manner.

Utter Confusion

Doubt grows with knowledge.

—Johanne Wolfgang von Goethe, *Sprüche in Prosa*

This book answers many questions... but not necessarily with the right answers. In fact, readers who believe that any of the vampire supplements already published contain "the truth" are mistaken. Almost all is speculation, based upon the best evidence available.

The purpose of this book is to present the views and beliefs of the Black Hand. While the beliefs and views may contradict what many would consider facts concerning vampire legends, no one knows the truth — or at least admits to knowing it. Some clues are out there, but the mystery only deepens.

So, for those who want to know the truth, make it up yourselves. Some facts presented here may contradict other "established" facts, so you'll have to decide for yourself where the truth lies.

As a whole, the Black Hand supports the Status Quo, the political faction within the Sabbat that wants to keep the power structure of the Sabbat the same as it has always been. Slowly, some of the most influential leaders of the Hand are shifting toward supporting the Ultra-Conservatives, the faction that wants stabilization and centralization of leadership.

This is what is commonly believed about the Black Hand. It's all true, but a lie is best hidden between two truths.

Sabbat Paranoia

Do not believe hastily: what harm quick belief can do.

—Ovid

Many of the Sabbat have begun to suspect treachery within the Black Hand. There is proof that the newest seraph, Djuhah, ordered the creation of seven permanent units within the Hand. These units behave as if they are Sabbat packs, but in fact are not. Each is composed of five of the Hand's most fanatical members and serves only the Black Hand.

Because of the Black Hand's opposition of the Sabbat Inquisition, most leaders believe it has something to hide. This is only compounded by the strict code of secrecy maintained by the Hand. Even within the order, knowledge concerning the Black Hand is given on a need-to-know basis.

Many members of the Black Hand keep their membership a secret from their fellow Sabbat. No one knows how many Sabbat in positions of power actually serve the Black Hand.

Finally, the Black Hand was the only part of the Sabbat to survive the Sabbat Civil War intact. Rumor has it that the Hand itself instigated the internal conflict in hopes of demonstrating its loyalty for the benefit of those who were suspicious. Thus, Sabbat history shows that had it not been for the Black Hand, the sect would have probably crumbled in the face of its enemies. However, were it not for the Hand, the Sabbat may well have taken over North America by now.



Which Hand Are They Talking About

While mentioning the false Black Hand, this chapter focuses primarily upon the real Black Hand. Therefore, when the "Black Hand" or "Hand" is mentioned, it is a reference to the real Black Hand, unless specifically stating the "False Hand" or unless the section is specifically talking about the False Hand.

What if there is truth to the paranoia? Could the Black Hand be using the Sabbat? If so, for what sinister purpose? Just as the anarchs spread rumors about the Sabbat, so too does the Sabbat spread rumors about the Black Hand. Here are the most disturbing ones:

- The Black Hand is secretly dedicated to demon worship. The Sabbat leaders know this, but allow it to continue, fearing the Hand is capable of starting another civil war, which might destroy the sect. Conversely, some say the Black Hand has learned that the Sabbat's leaders are Infernal Diabolists, but the Hand is afraid to challenge them.

- All the dominions and seraphs are Blood Bound to the Inconnu. Little does the Sabbat know it, but it is actually working for a faction within the Inconnu, eliminating the most dangerous elders.

- The Black Hand is far larger than it appears, because many of its members are actually in the Camarilla. In addition, many Sabbat keep their membership secret.

- The Black Hand is secretly controlled by the True Brujah — those not descending from Troile.

- The Black Hand is secretly allied to a group of werewolves who have taught the vampires their own supernatural Gifts. In addition, there are many Abominations (Lupine-vampires) within the Black Hand.

- The Black Hand controls a majority of the Sabbat's *prisci* and bishops through blackmail.

- The original *Book of Nod* is guarded in a secret Black Hand stronghold. Inside the original copy is a primitive but powerful Thaumaturgical ritual that weakens vampiric vitae. Use of this ritual will transform the blood of Antediluvians to that of a 10th-generation vampire.

- Certain members of the Hand can enter the spirit world. There they control a beautiful city, populated by members of the Hand who can no longer pass back into the physical world.

- The Black Hand has many strong connections, not only to the Assamites, but also to the Followers of Set. In fact, dominions often travel to the Middle East, where they stay for decades or even centuries studying the ways of Serpentis and living by the Path of Typhon.

- The Black Hand has infiltrated the Camarilla of Europe and rules over many cities under the guise of that sect. The Black Hand is preparing for an eventual takeover of Europe, at which point it will declare itself independent of the Sabbat and attack the parent sect.



The Black Hand Revealed!

The Forces of Darkness are always among us, child. And the Light cries out ever for vengeance. There is Light and there is Darkness: and I cannot rest until the Darkness is destroyed and the Light shines into the hearts of all... I fell from grace. Now I am condemned to walk the Shadow World. Once, it was I who cast the shadow...

— The Spectre, *Books of Magic* #2

The dirtiest secret of the Black Hand is that the Black Hand is not just a part of the Sabbat. Indeed, it is a separate sect entirely. Shortly after the creation of the Sabbat, vampires secretly belonging to an ancient sect called the Tal'mahe'Ra allied with the Sabbat. Under the alias *manus nigrum*, or "Black Hand," the Tal'mahe'Ra served as an agent of murder, destruction and chaos and rained hell down upon the Sabbat's enemies.

Since that time, the Tal'mahe'Ra has adopted the translation "Black Hand" as its own name, though many elders still prefer the old term. The members of the Tal'mahe'Ra have come to call members of the Sabbat Hand the "False" Hand while they themselves remain in the "True" Hand.

The Sabbat, or False, Hand continues to serve as a front for the True Hand. Only about 60 of the vampires within the False Hand belong to the True Hand. The younger members of the False Hand do not know of the True Hand, and serve as pawns to the ancient and secret sect.

In addition to the Sabbat members of the True Hand, there are around 40 influential and powerful Kindred within the Camarilla who have sworn their allegiance to the True Hand. They use many younger members of the Camarilla as their pawns.

Another 50 Hand members make their havens in the Middle East among the Setites, Assamites and Eastern vampires.

Despite the True Hand's limited size, its members are everywhere (even among the Inconnu, some say). However, the sect is not composed solely of vampires. It also claims a Mummy, an Abomination and a small number of mages and wraiths as members. The Black Hand has less than 200 members, but its power lies not in its own raw strength, but in those it controls. Among its pawns are members of Gehenna cults, primogen and the Inconnu, as well as individual Archons, princes, archbishops, prisci and even a rare Justicar. The True Hand has four ghoul families and several mages in its service, along with countless neonates and ancillæ under its sway.

The Black Hand, despite its great power, is limited because it divides its attention between three worlds — the World of Darkness, the Underworld of the wraiths and the Deep Umbra of the mages. Additionally, while the members of the Hand appear dedicated to the same causes, even they do not deny that individual members have their own agendas, agendas which sometimes conflict with the sect's goals.



The Great Conspiracies

It is only the dead who do not return.

— Bertrand Barère de Vieuxac, *Speech*

Those few who realize that the Black Hand reaches far beyond the Sabbat rarely know what the sect is up to. Most speculation leads observers to assume that the Black Hand wants to take over the world, but the Hand does not aggressively pursue this goal.

In fact, the Black Hand believes that it serves the Antediluvians and has been chosen to lead the Army of Gehenna. Members of the Hand insist that they will be spared death at the hands of their elders, as the Antediluvians will need servants knowledgeable in the workings of the modern world. To this end, the Black Hand has manipulated the affairs of vampiric leaders, keeping them at one another's throats so they will not see that the Hand is their true enemy.

The vampires of the Black Hand are not necessarily more evil than the vampires of the Camarilla or Sabbat. They simply hold "different" views. Indeed, they feel that vampires should not prey upon mortals beyond what is necessary for survival. To use the kine merely for acquiring wealth, influence and countless pleasures is blasphemous. Hand members see themselves as the guardians of humanity.

However, the Black Hand is also responsible for bringing Vicissitude to Earth. It was brought from the Deep Umbra (a mystical dimension where reality is prone to change at a moment's notice) by a Tzimisce who was a member of the Hand. It has since spread so much among that clan that it is considered a Tzimisce Discipline. It is especially widespread within the Sabbat and across all of Europe and the Middle East.

Vicissitude has been described both as a supernatural power and as a disease. It is all this and more — it is a sentient supernatural species. Vicissitude can warp and eventually take over both the bodies and minds of those infected, be they mortal or undead. Now the Black Hand has embarked upon the Shadow Crusade, a war upon the Vicissitudinal life forms they call the Souleaters.

The Origins of the Black Hand

*This is when the night comes down,
A hammer on an anvil,
And the only absolution accepted
Is a legacy of brutality.*

A single note rings on and on and on.

— James O'Barr, *The Crow*, Book Two

Long before the Anarch Revolt rent Kindred society, a cult of mages in the Middle East devoted itself to the secrets of the grave. The cult, which called itself the Tal'mahe'Ra and would later grow into the Euthanatos Tradition, centered its beliefs, practices and magic around death, spirits and mortal fear. In its quest for knowledge, it sought out vampires to learn what the Kindred knew of the afterlife.



By aiding those willing to trade the secrets of vampirism, members of the Tal'mahe'Ra learned all they could. The mages were startled to learn that the Kindred knew even less about death than themselves, as the undead trafficked little with the Restless. The cult provided Kindred with victims, safe havens, weapons and ghouls, asking little in return. Eventually, vampires were admitted into the cult.

Over the centuries, the Tal'mahe'Ra gained extensive information about vampirism by using dissection, torture and magickal analysis. The mages used the blood of many Kindred, mixed together, to sustain themselves as ghouls without developing Blood Bonds. Rumor has it that a member of the True Hand taught young Tzimisce conspirators how to break the Blood Bond using a similar method.

The mages tried to teach their vampire allies the Euthanatos beliefs and ways of magick. The vampires learned their ideology, but were unable to benefit from their magickal teachings. There were said to be a few who did learn the magickal ways, but they were a very special lot. A very few of the mages sought out the Embrace, but they then lost their powers to work magick.

Throughout most of its earliest years, the Tal'mahe'Ra remained extremely small, rarely having more than 20 members spread around the world. At first, the majority of these were mages, who were far more interested in obtaining knowledge than power. As more vampires joined, however, this changed, and the sect's emphasis on the Antediluvians grew.

Whether the Euthanatos mages were betrayed or willingly accepted the shift in power is not known, but around 500 B.C. the Kindred gained control over the Tal'mahe'Ra. Even before this, the vampires were using the cult to secure themselves power in the mortal world. After they took control, the Tal'mahe'Ra spread to Europe. Cult members who settled in Europe lost their connections to the Euthanatos Tradition. However, the Kindred of the Middle East maintained ties to the Euthanatos Tradition.

In Europe, the Tal'mahe'Ra grew in size. It formed connections with the witches calling themselves Verbena. Sharing a relationship similar to the one the Kindred shared with the Euthanatos, the Verbena studied the secrets of vampire vitæ. The Verbena attempted to teach the Kindred their ways of magick, but the undead proved incapable of learning anything more than the philosophy.

A schism known as the War of the Betrayers occurred around A.D. 450 and split the sect into two halves, East and West. While most members of the Black Hand believe the question of the sect's role in the Underworld sparked the war, others say the Inconnu or Setites instigated the conflict. The war occurred mostly within the area of the Underworld known as the Shadowlands. While both East and West finally agreed to a truce, neither showed much interest in restoring their former ties of peace, kinship and fidelity.

During the period of separation, the East and West drifted apart in their methods, practices, beliefs and politics. The Eastern faction remained true to the original ways of the Tal'mahe'Ra, though it was heavily influenced by the

Assamites and Setites. The West began developing its own ways, though the other Kindred of Europe and the Verbena had a great deal of influence over it.

Both halves remained primarily mystical in orientation, though the Western half became more and more involved in mortal politics. Following the War of the Betrayers, the sect began to take less and less interest in the Underworld, focusing its attention on its own Citadel.

The Anarch Revolt changed this. Members of the Western Tal'mahe'Ra instigated troubles among the Tzimisce, Brujah and Lasombra because the clans had grown too great in structure and influence among the mortals. By rousing the church, the greatest mortal institution of Europe, the Tal'mahe'Ra thought it would weaken the vampires enough that the return of the Antediluvians would be easier. However, this scheme backfired.

Instead of losing their hold on mortal society, the elder Kindred began to increase it in fear for their unives. Although young vampires were being destroyed, they were weak and meant little to the Tal'mahe'Ra. It was the ancients they wanted dead. When the young ones arose as the Anarch Revolt, the Tal'mahe'Ra joined them as the *manus nigrum* and helped them destroy their elders.

The connection with the Verbena diminished during this time. More and more of the Verbena broke their connections to the Hand, fearing the Inquisition and the lengths the vampires of the sect would go to in order to destroy their own kind. More than one Verbena had become a Blood Bound scapegoat, burned at the stake to save her Kindred master.

The Tal'mahe'Ra played only a limited role in forming the Camarilla, which has led many within the Black Hand to wonder if the Inconnu or some other group was involved. Members of the Tal'mahe'Ra did join the Camarilla, planning to bring about its downfall, but they soon realized the sect was necessary to counterbalance the atrocities of the younger Kindred in the Sabbat. The Black Hand discovered it could use the Camarilla to cause continual discord, creating chaos among the Kindred as never before.

The Black Hand remained with the Sabbat after the Convention of Thorns, when the "civilized" Kindred accepted most of the anarchs back. Since that time, the True Hand has manipulated both the Camarilla and the Sabbat to suit its needs.

All during the Anarch Revolt the Eastern portion of the Black Hand, continuing to call itself the Tal'mahe'Ra, remained strong. However, it began a policy of conscious isolation from the West, further sundering its ties to the European branch.

During the Sabbat-Camarilla Wars, True Hand leaders within the Sabbat's False Hand saw the chance to develop their own collection of pawns. They formed an elite fighting force composed of the most powerful and deadly of the Sabbat. In their service to the Sabbat, but under the direct authority of the seraphim, these Kindred unknowingly serve the Black Hand.



During the time of relative peace, when the Sabbat's Paths of Enlightenment were beginning to flourish, members of the True Hand promulgated the Path of Death and the Soul. The Black Hand watched for those who learned the secrets of death and assassination well and inducted those who proved worthy. Eventually, some were inducted into the True Hand, but only after years of service in the False Hand. In addition, some of the eldest members of the True Hand never claimed membership in the False Hand, instead climbing to power within the Sabbat as regular members. While there has never been a Regent who belonged to the True Hand, there have been members among the cardinals, arch-bishops and prisci.

By the 1600s, the Tal'mahe'Ra of the East was suffering its own problems. It controlled Enoch, the Shadowland homeland of the Tal'mahe'Ra, as the Western Kindred gave up their limited control during the Anarch Revolt. Shortly afterward, the Tal'mahe'Ra began barring Western sect members from entry, thus giving themselves an edge should their conflict reignite. However, the Eastern sect had grown small and weak due to its focus on the Underworld and constant battles with first the Assamites and then the Followers of Set. Wraithlords within the Dark Umbra knew of the sect's shrinking size and ordered an attack on the holding. Enoch fell before the might of one of the more ambitious and powerful lords.

In the West, the True Hand manipulated the Sabbat down through the ages, forcing it to act against the Camarilla. All the while it kept the Sabbat disorganized enough that it could not survive turning on the Black Hand should its secret

be revealed. The Black Hand also directed the Sabbat against Camarilla leaders who stood in the way of Camarilla Hand members. Once these obstacles were removed, Camarilla Hand members would fill the leadership voids thus created.

It was not until the 1700s that the East and West combined once again. The Tal'mahe'Ra pleaded before the Black Hand to rejoin them and help retake Enoch from the wraiths. The Western members agreed, insisting that they be recognized as co-owners and leaders of Enoch.

An agreement called the Treaty of Enoch was reached, by which the eldest and most powerful and wise of all the Kindred of the sect would select the Del'Roh, the supreme leader of the Hand. This vampire would oversee the entire sect.

It took a little more than three years to take back Enoch. Afterward, relations between East and West flourished. The two traded dominions, and these leaders brought valued secrets to their fellows. During the late 1700s, both East and West engaged in rebuilding Enoch, further strengthening their ties. From this point onward, the entire sect became commonly known as the Black Hand and, among the eldest of its members, the Tal'mahe'Ra.

The Black Hand of the Sabbat claims it was not responsible for the Sabbat Civil War, and that it was barely able to hold the False Hand together. Only the efforts of the Camarilla Hand members diverted the Camarilla from its collapsing foe and enabled the Sabbat to survive. The False Hand slowly managed to stabilize the situation and save the Sabbat from ruin.



Saving the Sabbat had an adverse affect on the False Hand. For the first time, Sabbat leaders realized the power of their own subject and became paranoid. Strong new leaders emerged within the Sabbat, replacing the weak ones responsible for the sect's breakdown. These new leaders wanted the Black Hand weakened, if not disbanded outright. Using its removers, the True Hand eliminated the strongest voices against them, saving the False Hand from disbandment. Still, the damage was done, and the Black Hand would never again have the free rein it had enjoyed.

In addition to the dangers imposed by the Sabbat, there came a threat from within the false Black Hand. A dominion named Julian, who was not a member of the True Hand, suspected a conspiracy within the Black Hand, possibly even the entire Sabbat. Julian re-formed the Sabbat's own internal-policing Inquisition, believing the conspirators were Infernal diabolists. The new Inquisition took up the hunt for conspirators.

The True Hand knew Julian's personal suspicions would lead him back to the Black Hand. The seraphim secretly ordered Julian removed by elite members of the Hand. After they succeeded, the seraphim destroyed them in turn. The knowledge of the conspiracy was believed to have died with Julian, but recently some leaders of the Hand found evidence that he wrote down all he knew in a journal, now in the hands of a closely guarded few within the Sabbat Inquisition. After Julian's demise, some claimed he was assassinated by Infernal diabolists, but others recognized the work of the Black Hand and are now even more suspicious.

The Black Hand of Mythic Europe

Wake, awake, for night is flying:

The watchmen on the heights are crying.

— Philip Nicolai, Hymn

During the Middle Ages the *manus nigrum* (as the Black Hand was called at the time) of Europe integrated itself into both the church and the nobility, as did many other Kindred who survived the collapse of Rome. The resulting dichotomy ended only with the onset of the Early Modern Age, caused by the Reformation... and the Anarch Revolt.

The *manus nigrum* Kindred who hid themselves among the nobility were responsible for many hardships imposed upon the freemen and villeins, but the other Kindred were even worse. Kindred provided some of the stability amidst the chaos of the collapse of Roman civilization in the West, but most cared solely for their own needs.

Most "noble" Kindred became highly independent. They enjoyed full authority over their own domains. Many openly supported the Order of Hermes, seeing the mages as useful in protecting their great territories from outside threats. They Blood Bound many of their best (and often most cruel) vassals, giving them manors in exchange for protection. Those who lacked Humanity gave rise to the many horrific legends of the vampire.

The Kindred who lurked within the church had little trouble doing so, as True Faith was still very hard to find. Many found that the church placed exceptional limits upon their freedoms, but the church also held the writings of the great thinkers. In fact, many Kindred actually provided the church with books and letters.

While politics among the vampire church officials were still treacherous, many learned to settle conflicts peacefully — the *manus nigrum*, Cappodocians, Lasombra, Brujah, Toreador, Malkavians and even Tzimisce shared their knowledge. While the world around developed at a much slower pace, their own knowledge of their origins grew as they pieced together their letters and tablet fragments.

There was much supernatural activity during this time but few grave threats. Since there was no Camarilla or Sabbat, the *manus nigrum* seldom gathered except when Baali, Setites or other dangerous creatures tried to slink their way into Europe. Even then, the vampiric feudal lords within the particular areas handled most of the problems.

Most clans claim to have influenced Charlemagne, but the Black Hand believes it was a powerful Brujah behind the throne. Scholars say the Merovingians who preceded Charlemagne were under the dominance of the Ventrue, but that the Carolingians overthrew the weak dynasty without supernatural aid. This astounding proposal means that a family of mortals could unite Europe as the Holy Roman Empire under its own rule, and that the Kindred are certainly not responsible for every historical event of importance.

Some Carolingian kings were said to have True Faith, including Pippin the Short, Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. Perhaps the legends of the kings' and emperors' "thaumaturgical powers" arose from this. Certainly Charlemagne's piety was not questioned when he executed 4,500 pagan Saxon after one uprising.

The *manus nigrum* may have had some influence with Alcuin, the great scholar and churchman who taught Charlemagne. Certain marids of the sect did have contact with the mortal. True Brujah may have aided both him and Charlemagne in the Carolingian Renaissance, especially in the re-emphasis of learning. The True Brujah grew weary of the world in its ignorant, superstitious state and longed for the days when many freemen could read and think for themselves.

During this period, however, the Ventrue became more influential. The Brujah, Toreador and Lasombra also continued to hold great power. This tenuous balance of power certainly added to the gloom and violence that so characterized the times. Many mortals were caught up in these struggles and the *manus nigrum* did what it could to prevent sparks in one region from carrying over into others — with limited success.

Despite continued efforts on the part of True Brujah and other learned Kindred, widespread education did not take place until the 18th century. Even during the spread of Humanism and the Italian and Northern Renaissances, learning was the province of a particular class of mortals.

The Black Death proved to be the greatest equalizer, afflicting both mortals and Kindred. With close to a third of the population killed by the terrible plagues and entire towns and villages wiped out, Kindred found the world crumbling around them. Some actually became infected with the dreaded disease, and since Kindred knew nothing of the causes, they were as in the dark as the mortals. While they realized the pee-sniffers and flagellates were insane, they could not derive any better ways of avoiding the contagion. Not even the Methuselah of the *manus nigrum* or the Inconnu could help the people despite all their incredible power. The illustrious Order of Hermes was also humbled by the Black Death, and it too suffered.

From the depths of a true "Dark Age" the mortals sought out God, and deep piety developed. During this time, many Kindred within the church found themselves facing, as they did in various periods throughout the Middle Ages, church officials with True Faith. The Inquisition was only the most famous manifestation of this. For short times, other mystical sects formed which also drew in those with True Faith. The Kindred tried their best to do away with these sects. As a result, they only further oppressed the mortals, enforced the will of the church and made the situation more hopeless.

The Black Hand Today

Ex ungue leonem.

(From his claw one can tell a lion.)

— Latin saying

The "Silent Agenda" is the name given to the preparations the Black Hand makes for the awakening of the Antediluvians. It is never openly discussed except in Enoch. Hand leaders from both the Camarilla and Sabbat occasionally meet in secret to discuss future manipulations. Together they keep the animosity between the Sabbat and the Camarilla at a maximum, preventing both sects from looking toward their real enemy. The Eastern half of the sect does the same, keeping the conflicts between the Setites, Assamites and other Kindred of the region at a maximum.

The Camarilla's Hand has recently begun taking a more active role in the sect's affairs, believing it is time for the clan sires to return. Almost a dozen princes are also members of the True Hand, as well as at least 40 primogen and a Justicar. The Hand is very tight-knit, and each member helps her fellow conspirators attain power.

Some claim that certain rogue members of the True Hand are teaching anarchs many of the secrets of the Black Hand. This allegation is only speculation at this point and, if it is true, the betrayers' intentions remain a mystery. Certainly the guilty sect members risk a fate worse than Final Death.



Within the Sabbat, the Black Hand continues in its role as protector of the Sabbat. The Hand protects Sabbat Elysiums, maintains order, provides combat support, performs assassinations, commits terrorism, corrects Sabbat mistakes and removes dangerous power-seekers who might harm the sect. The Hand still serves in its combat role during city takeovers, but since the Sabbat Civil War it has almost never been called upon.

The entire Black Hand is also involved in a fight called the "Shadow Crusade." Hand members use every weapon at their disposal, including the False Hand, the Sabbat, the Camarilla and various other groups, in the fight against their terrible opponents known as the Souleaters.

The Shadow Crusade is a secret fight against those who have been corrupted by Vicissitude to the point where they are no longer who they once were. Instead, they represent an entire new race of beings. Worse yet, these Souleaters have allied themselves with demon worshippers, both vampiric and mortal; mages both of the Technocracy and the Traditions; and wraiths, making the Black Hand's fight that much more difficult.

In addition to these threats, some speak of hidden factions within the Black Hand which have goals opposed to the sect's. Each faction is attempting to manipulate the sect for its own personal interests.

The Black Hand has charged itself with protecting and guiding humanity toward a better, brighter future. The sect sees mortals as the most valuable resource on the planet, as well as a source of sustenance. Despite this, some Hand members continue to place little value on individual human lives.

Spies Within

I love treason but hate a traitor.

— Julius Caesar, *Plutarch's Parallel Lives*

Who spies on the Black Hand? Factions and groupings of every sort within the Sabbat attempt to spy on the False Hand. However, even spying on the False Hand has proven difficult because of its secrecy, internal loyalty and security. The False Hand uses code words and even has its own system of gestures, understood only by true members. Meetings are always held in the most secluded and well-guarded locations. Still, certain groups and individuals have learned some things about the False Hand, and a few have even discovered a little about the True Hand.

The Nosferatu and Lasombra believe there is a conspiracy within the Hand, but know nothing about it except that Black Hand leaders have connections to Kindred all over the world. The Lasombra gain most of their information from the Nosferatu, who sell them a great many lies.

Certain Loyalists in New York are thought to know too much, simply because they recently relayed a message concerning a Black Hand plot to their bishop. The bishop and certain members of the Loyalists turned up dead. The other Loyalists have not been heard from again.

Within the True Hand there is a rumor that a Camarilla prince in Italy has blackmailed members of the Camarilla's Hand after uncovering their secrets. Whether or not this is true remains to be seen. Certainly if members of the True Hand were discovered, they would gladly pay the blackmail, as the alternative is far more unpleasant.

The Inconnu know the most about the Black Hand, as they knew the Tal'mahe'Ra long before the creation of the Sabbat and Camarilla. It is inconceivable that the Inconnu have not infiltrated the Black Hand. Even if they have not managed this, the Inconnu are perhaps the greatest foes of the Hand, as no one knows how many Inconnu there are, their true purpose, or whom they serve. Open conflict rarely occurs with the Inconnu, as the real battle is fought with treachery and deceit.

Internal Structure

A cock has great influence on its own dung hill.

— Publilius Syrus, *Maxim* 357

The hierarchy of leadership as it appears for the Black Hand within **The Players Guide to the Sabbat** is merely the False Hand's. The True Black Hand is similar, though it has many differences.

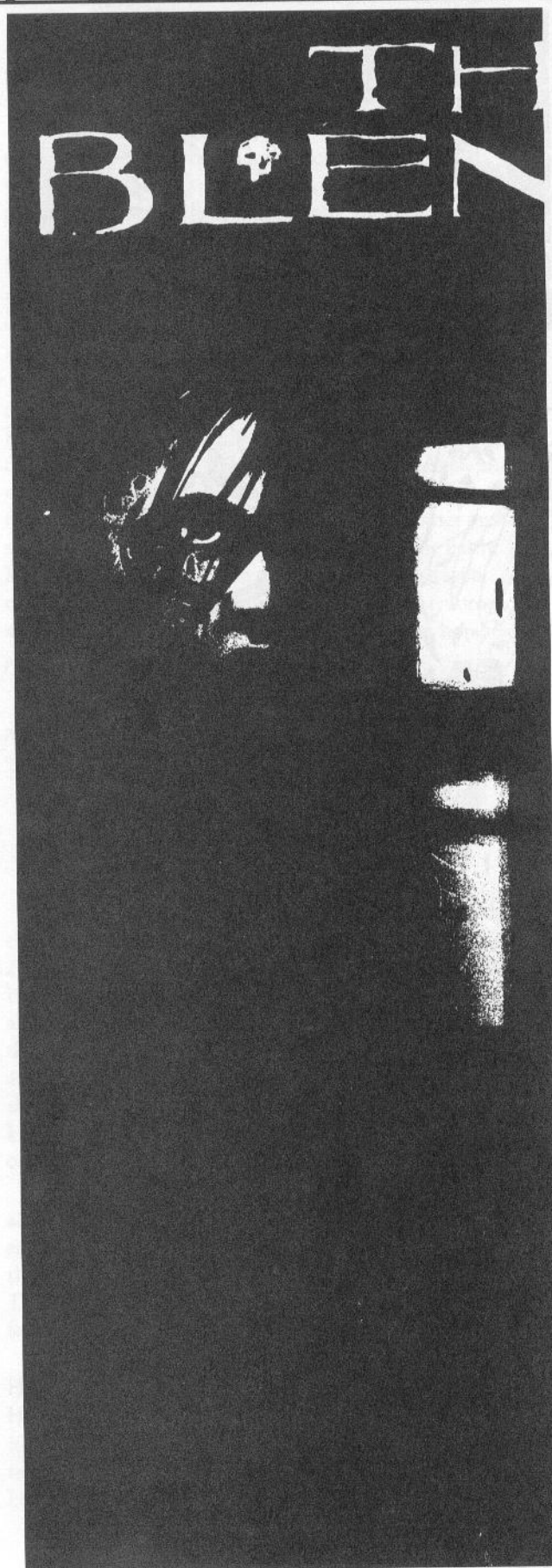
Within the Black Hand, leadership is based upon age and wisdom as much as it is upon power and influence. This is not to say that Hand leaders are old and feeble. Indeed, most are very powerful and extremely capable. Leaders cannot be directly challenged, but they can be removed from power by other means, including assassination, blackmail and false accusations backed up with bribed witnesses and false evidence.

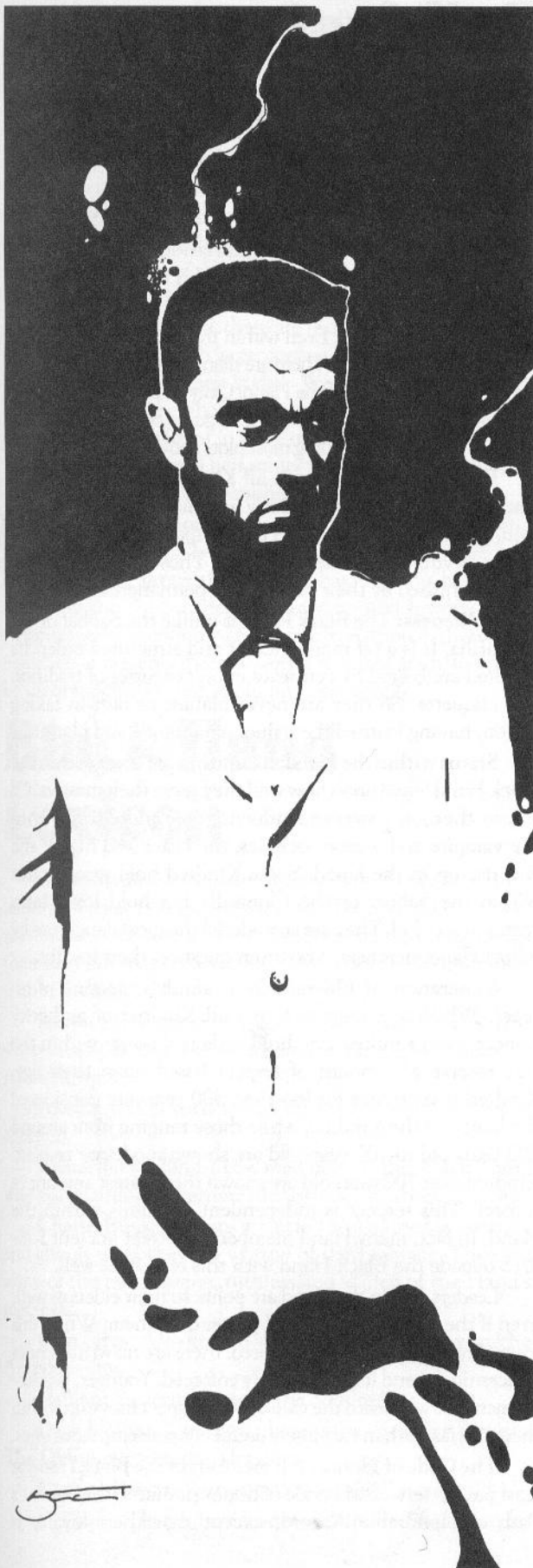
The Black Hand is controlled by the Del'Roh, a mysterious figure of great power. The current Del'Roh has ruled Enoch for over 250 years—ever since the reclamation of the holding. She is extremely powerful, brilliant, crafty, and charismatic—making her a perfect leader for the sect. Rumors about her abound, especially regarding what kind of blood she can drink.

Ten seraphim serve as lieutenants, receiving their orders directly from the Del'Roh. The seraphim include three from the Sabbat, two from the Camarilla and five from the Eastern sect. The seraphim get along well, at least openly, and keep the sect running smoothly.

The seraphim spend a great deal of time on Earth directing the sect's mundane affairs. This gives them just enough autonomy to manipulate things to their own advantage. They are very secretive, and as the Del'Roh almost never visits the Living World, they do so with relative ease.

The Del'Roh is served by three powerful Kindred, called the liches, who used to be Euthanatos mages. They serve as judges and representatives of the Del'Roh. They are cruel, powerful and zealous, making them the greatest threat to the secret factions within the Black Hand. The liches have little to do with the earthly affairs of the sect, preferring to oversee the sect's Underworld activities.





Together the seraphim and the liches form the Del'Roh's council of thirteen, also known as the wazirs. The council meets on special occasions to determine the sect's direction and to develop long-term goals which will benefit the Antediluvians. The seraphim hide their own goals from others on the council and help develop plans that may benefit the Antediluvians. However, when implementing the strategies, they always manage to work their own schemes into the mix.

Below the council of thirteen are the various dominions. Almost all belong to at least one of the hidden factions within the Hand. They too act as they are told, while always keeping the interests of their faction alive in their efforts. Some dominions are actually Blood Bound to the leaders of their factions, be they seraphim or other dominions.

In addition to the dominions, there are three other select groups. Each has less than a dozen members. One is the Cult of the Erinyes, also called the Overseers. This all-female cult is very mysterious, maintaining its own secret rites and rituals. It is charged with training the chatterlings and overseeing the protection of Enoch. Another group is the Qadi, the equivalent of the Camarilla's Justicars. The final group is the Rawis, the Keepers of the Lore. The members of this group act as librarians and sentinels, protecting the *Guarded Rubrics*, a collection of secret writings sacred to the Hand.

Below the dominions are the underling sect members. While some are actually dominions within the False Hand, they hold no authority within the True Hand. Many of these Hand members have great personal power and influence. Some even operate with almost complete freedom.

Many Hand members belong to coteries composed of Hand members, called kamuts. These coteries are always created by leaders within the sect. The kamuts are usually dedicated toward one specific goal, such as gaining great influence within a particular city, assassinating certain individuals, destroying something important, creating something important, or fighting a particular enemy. Some claim the kamuts were based on a concept learned from the *Dhabi*, werewolves called Silent Striders whom some ancient Hand members once knew.

Recently, Seraph Djuhah of the Sabbat ordered the creation of three permanent packs within the False Hand. These units serve as easily accessible weapons for the members of the True Hand to wield, even against the Sabbat. These units maintain the image of nomadic Sabbat packs. However, their members are not put through the Sabbat creation rites, and instead are Embraced normally, allowing them to be Blood Bound to their sires. All traces of their Humanity are eradicated and they are taught the Paths of Enlightenment. Each new recruit is allowed to choose his own Path and receives a mentor from the real Black Hand. Once an individual has been thoroughly tested and proven worthy, she is inducted into the True Hand.



Political Maneuvering

It is the common vice of all, in old age, to be too intent upon our interests.

— Terence, Adelphoe

The Black Hand is a conspiratorial sect, so its politics are both intricate and mysterious. It is hard to decide who one can trust and what members' roles are.

Layers of Intrigue: Even within the Black Hand there is a tendency toward secrecy. There are many plots and plans known only to select members of the Hand. Only those at the top of the Tal'mahe'Ra know and control what is going on, and many claim to have no real clue regarding most plots and schemes.

Personal Gain: As with all Kindred, the Black Hand features a great deal of duplicity and manipulation for self-gain, but all members of the Hand respect one another and aid in serving each other's masters. Those who do not are either punished by their superiors or permanently removed.

Politeness: The Black Hand is unlike the Sabbat or the Camarilla. It is a far more ancient and structured order. Its Kindred are bound by centuries upon centuries of tradition and etiquette. So they are never blatant or rash in taking action, having learned the values of patience and planning.

Status within the Hand: Cainites gain power within the Black Hand based upon how well they serve their masters. Of course, the more power and influence the Kindred has within the vampire and mortal societies, the faster and higher she will rise up in the Hand. Some Kindred hold great Status within the Sabbat or the Camarilla but hold low Status within the Hand. They are considered the most dangerous by fellow Hand members, who often question their loyalty.

Veneration of Elders: Age is another measure of respect. While sect members give all Kindred of authority respect, even Kindred who hold little real power within the sect receive an amount of respect based upon their age. Kindred in existence for less than 300 years are considered the lowest of the Kindred, while those ranging from around 300 years old to 700 years old are shown moderate respect. Kindred over 700 years old are shown the greatest amount of respect. This respect is independent of Status within the Hand. In fact, many Hand members also treat ancient Kindred outside the Black Hand with this respect as well.

Leaders within the Hand are polite to their elders as well, even if the leaders hold no real power over them. While this form of respect is generally required, there are no written rules concerning it, and it is not directly enforced. Younger, lackluster members who learn the value of this respect move up within the ranks faster than extremely useful but contemptuous ones.

The Code of Honor: All members of the Black Hand at least pay lip service to a code of honor similar to the Sabbat's Path of Honorable Accord, except that their loyalty is

directed toward the Hand. In fact, the Black Hand gave that Path of Enlightenment to the Sabbat. Most Hand members do not actually follow the Path of Honorable Accord, for they believe it interferes with their true loyalties and beliefs.

Secrecy and Punishment: Revealing the secrets of the Hand to anyone outside the sect is definitely an improper thing to do. Even revealing secret information to underlings can lead to punishment. The Tal'mahe'Ra punishes those who would betray the secret in such draconian manner that the punishments and torturing of the Sabbat and Archons seem mild in comparison. The Hand has ways of prolonging torture for hundreds of years. Indeed, there are those who have remained undead for centuries with large, constantly-heated, metal poles running in and out of their bodies. Worse yet, Vicissitude has been used to warp their bodies beyond humanoid shape. These poor wretches are placed in front of mirrors to spend eternity looking at themselves. Their sanity is restored weekly so they can fully appreciate their punishment.

Sabbat Corruption: Some claim certain members of the Black Hand are actually working against the sect by secretly supporting and protecting the Sabbat. Having been corrupted by the Sabbat ideals of freedom and loyalty, these vampires serve as counter-conspirators. Although there is no evidence at present, three powerful Kindred are believed to be involved in this ruse, including one seraph.

Black Hand Lexicon

Abominations: Vampire-werewolves. There are only a handful of these beings, and they are all outcasts from Lupine society. Most choose solitary existence, though some worm their way into Kindred society. There is one Abomination within the Black Hand.

Aralu: The name referring to the four beings believed to sleep in torpor in great tombs below Enoch, who may be Antediluvians.

Azazel: Often used in reference to Caine by Eastern Kindred.

Camarilla's Hand: The members of the Black Hand who also maintain Alternate Identities within the Camarilla.

Chatterlings: Humans abducted and trained as servants and ghouls until they are worthy of the Embrace. They are some of the most insane, ruthless and skilled of the Hand's members.

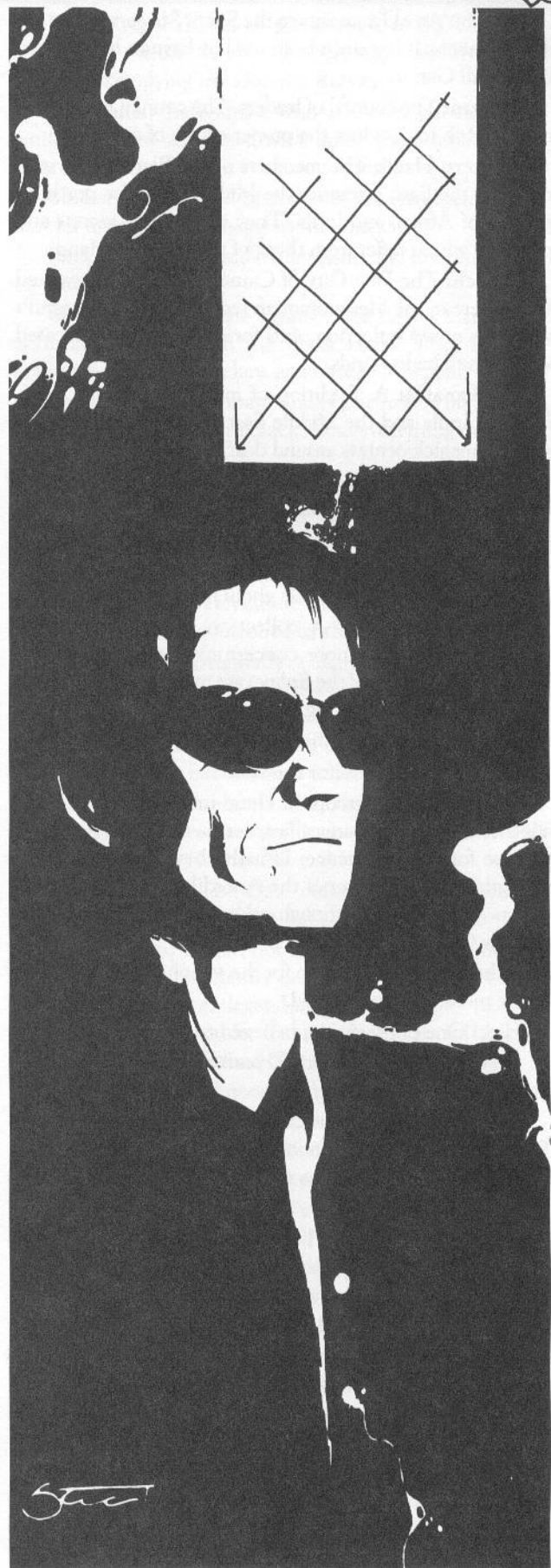
Clan Sires: Also known as the clan fathers, they are the Antediluvians.

Dalhan: Eastern name for the Kindred.

Dark Umbra: The spirit plane of the dead. See **Wraith: The Oblivion** for further details.

Daru el-Bawar: Eastern name for the Underworld.

Del'Roh: The highest leader within the Black Hand.



Dhabi: An old name given the Silent Striders by Eastern sect members. It has since been used by Eastern members to refer to all Garou.

Diwan: The council of leaders. The council meets with the Del'Roh in deciding the proper course of action.

Eastern Hand: The members of the Black Hand who reside in the East, primarily the Middle East, the northern portion of Africa, and India. They share many secrets and practices which differ from those of the Western Hand.

Enoch: The First City of Caine. It supposedly existed somewhere in the Mesopotamian region. The Black Hand's version is now a reflection of its former self, for it is located within the Shadowlands.

Euthanatos: A Tradition of mortal mages that originated in India and the Middle East. Their philosophy and study of magick centers around death and entropy.

False Hand: The Sabbat's Black Hand. Only a small number of its members belong to the Real Black Hand.

Ghoul Families: Families of revenants who act as servants to Kindred. The Sabbat, Tremere and Black Hand are the only groups known to use ghoul families.

Guarded Rubrics: A collection of ancient writings which reveals much more concerning the origins of the Kindred. Many parts of the *Rubrics* are missing, but the Hand controls all known existing pieces.

Hatif: The wraith allies of the Black Hand.

Ins: Another word for the kine.

Kamuts: Small groups of Hand members loyal to one another. Much like Camarilla coteries, except they have a purpose for their existence. Usually they are dedicated to strengthening the power of the Antediluvians (or one particular Antediluvian), though others exist for fighting the Shadow Crusade.

Kherebu: Ancient term for the seraphim. It is still used by the more ancient Kindred.

Loz: One of the Aralu; believed to be Toreador.

Marid: A Kindred over 700 years in age. Marid is used as a term of respect.

Nagaraja: A bloodline created by the early mages of the Tal'mahe'Ra and their Kindred allies.

Nasnas: Ancient name for the chatterlings.

Nephandi: Evil mages who serve demon-like beings beyond everyday reality. The Nephandi sell their own souls and those of others in exchange for temporal power and influence.

Nergal: One of the Aralu; believed to be Ventruue.

Nictuku: The progeny of Nosferatu, except for one who was not Blood Bound to him. According to legend, they now hunt those of Clan Nosferatu, in service to Nosferatu himself, as all Nosferatu are believed to have descended from one childe of the Antediluvian who was not Blood Bound.

Ninmug: One of the Aralu; believed to be Nosferatu.

Qadi: The Black Hand's equivalent to Justicars. These Kindred protect the Hand from anarchy and internal strife.





Rawis: Also known as the Keepers of the Lore, this select group within the Hand has the responsibility of protecting and studying the *Guarded Rubrics*.

Revenants: Individuals who are born ghouls. Their families inbreed and breed with other ghoul families and eventually their children are born revenants.

Shakar: The "hunt." Members of the Hand refer to the hunt for any powerful enemy as the shakar.

Shakari: The professional assassins and hunters within the Black Hand.

Sheikh: "Elder of the Tribe." This title is claimed by each clan leader within the Black Hand. They serve as representatives of their clans and choose the Qadi.

Shiqq: A human servant and oracle from a family that has long served the Eastern Black Hand in divining the future and giving advice.

Silent Striders: A tribe of Lupines that originated in ancient Egypt. They are known to be messengers for the Lupines and to bear a jackal-like appearance.

Souleaters: A broad term used to describe all the creatures infected with Vicissitude to the point where they become alien beings controlled by the Vicissitude itself.

Tal'mahe'Ra: Originally a death cult composed of Euthanatos and Verbena mages. The cult was dedicated to the study of death and undeath. They studied the Kindred, especially their blood and their subsistence on the blood of mortals. The cult later became the *manus nigrum* and then the "Black Hand."

The Tempest: A place in the Underworld on the edge of nothingness where time and space do not exist, and all reality is composed of what one makes of it.

The Tribunal: The Qadi collectively. Together the tribunal oversees many of the sect's rituals and trials.

True Brujah: Brujah not descending from Troile, but from the Cainite commonly called Brujah, sire of Troile. Their existence is merely legend among most Kindred, though many elder Brujah wonder if the True Brujah still harbor revenge for their diablerized clan father.

True Hand: Also known as the Real Hand. The actual Black Hand, not the false subject within the Sabbat.

True Magick: Also known simply as magick, it is the methods by which reality can be controlled and altered. The vampiric Disciplines are considered pale comparisons to the powers of True Magick. Magick is known to the mages.

Underworld: The spirit world of the dead.

Verbena: A tradition of mortal mages who study their own nature-oriented philosophy and magick. Blood holds great power in their magick.

Wazirs: The council of thirteen, composed of the seraphim and the liches. They serve as the advisors to the Del'Roh and sometimes meet with the tribunal.

Western Hand: The members of the Black Hand located in Europe, North America, and South America. They share many secrets and practices which differ from those of the Eastern Hand.



Conflicting Themes

Be careful what you show — and what you don't show.

— Marlene Dietrich

The Black Hand is a source of ancient, pervasive and nearly imperceptible evil. The Black Hand has grown into what the Camarilla would be if it had nearly two millennia to improve upon itself. Indeed, the Black Hand's Masquerade reaches far deeper than that of the Camarilla, for it hides itself even from the eyes of other Kindred. It manipulates the manipulators, controls the controllers, teaches the teachers, and betrays the betrayers. Yet, underneath it all, when the Black Hand is revealed for what it is, even within the answers there are more secrets yet to be uncovered. Yes, even the manipulators of manipulators are manipulated themselves and the betrayers of betrayers are betrayed when all is said and done. These are the evil ways, the ancient and eternal ways of the undead.

The Black Hand is a source of ancient good. It protects humanity from the overpopulated, power-hungry, evil vampires of the Camarilla and Sabbat. By maintaining control over mortal institutions and pro-

tecting humanity through the manipulations of other Kindred, it allows mortals to pursue a world of their own creation. Without the aid of the Black Hand, the World of Darkness would be far darker. The Black Hand not only protects humanity from its own kind, it stands against other threats as well, such as the Souleaters and demons.

Secondary Theme

Even the empires of the undead must fall. Indeed, the Black Hand is steadily declining in power as the Camarilla and Sabbat grow. Older Kindred who have long manipulated the two sects are being cast out of power by younger, more ambitious vampires. Only the return of the Antediluvians can save the Black Hand from its ultimate destruction.

Moods

Antiquity

Few Kindred within the Black Hand are under 300 years old, and many are over 500. This timelessness, ancientness and anachronism should be felt by both players and their characters in every aspect of the Black Hand. Without recognizing and feeling this ancient air, the Black Hand will seem a poor comparison to the

Camarilla and the Sabbat. Storytellers should remember that the Black Hand existed when mortals were building their first cities. The Black Hand witnessed the evolution of civilization and oversaw all its creations. There are Hand members who can tell of personal conversations with Hammurabi, Julius Caesar, Sun Tzu, Napoleon Bonaparte, Stalin, and Elvis Presley. There are Hand members who can tell of the invention of chariots, wagons, planes and spacecraft. There is nothing they have not witnessed. They have watched forever in our limited human conception of time.

Gloom

In addition to the ancientness of the Hand, players should feel the gloom, hopelessness and burdensome mystery of the sect. While these should not be constant moods, various groups within the Hand should express them clearly and painfully.

The Macabre

A feeling of the macabre must come through all aspects of the Black Hand. The sect should seem somewhat alien, yet remember that it is a prehistoric parent of the Camarilla and Sabbat. This should have an unnerving effect. There are those within the Black Hand who remember the Second City. Hidden in their secret lairs, they explore the occult mysteries given to them by the ancients. They are dark, brooding and inhumanly sinister.

Motif

On a secondary level, the ancientness of the Black Hand should bear some signs of the passage of time, as in decay, insanity and depression. Some elder Hand members are anachronisms themselves, speaking and dressing as people from bygone eras. Within their ancient, crumbling, once-beautiful havens are ancient artifacts and priceless artwork, hidden away from the world, collecting dust in the darkness. Enoch, the spiritual homeland of the Black Hand, bears little sign of intrusion by the modern age.





LEIF JONES 1994

Chapter Two: Unlife Within the Black Hand

I am better than my reputation.

— Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, *Maria Stuart*

Great wealth, personal power and tremendous influence come easily to the Kindred of the Black Hand. Yet they must maintain their duplicitous games by playing traitor under an alternate identity. Every night is a test of loyalty, honor and conviction, for how can a member of the Black Hand know right from wrong? Should vampires destroy their own kind in order to save humanity from Kindred domination?

Ideology

There is

One great society alone on Earth:

The noble Living and the noble Dead.

— William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*

In the World of Darkness, it is nearly impossible to tell the good guys from the bad. The Black Hand destroys its own kind, and considers itself the Army of Gehenna and the weapon of the Antediluvians. Despite this, it is the protector of humanity, forever keeping the Kindred's power struggles from directly harming the majority of the kine.

The Hand believes that what other Kindred now do to the "Children of Seth" is far worse than what Caine did to Abel. While its members believe it is natural for the Kindred to feed off mortals, they feel vampires have lost their sense of balance and no longer wish to exist as mere parasites. They have chosen to become the rulers of humanity. Unsatisfied with their bleak, immortal existence, they seek power over the lives of mortals, treating them as toys to maneuver as they see fit. Kindred of the Hand find this repulsive. They believe Kindred were meant to serve another role: the guardians and protectors of humanity. Together Kindred and kine should live in peace and harmony. All the power struggles among the undead have only brought war and chaos to the mortals. They live in a world of darkness because of the Kindred.

The Black Hand has worked hard to keep vampires fighting amongst themselves, thus limiting the impact they have on mortals. Unfortunately, this tactic has only inspired the Kindred to use even more mortals as expendable pawns.

The terrible mistreatment of mortals has only worsened since the Black Hand has become more involved in Underworld affairs and in its own Shadow Crusade. The Black Hand has become powerless to stop many atrocities, but it does what it can.

Hand members use the methods of the other Kindred against them. Mortals are considered expendable when the need is great enough, but for the most part they are carefully protected and seldom risked. While the Black Hand uses mortals as pawns and weapons, it looks to the night when the Kindred can be eliminated, removing the yoke of oppression from humanity.

Additionally, the Black Hand believes itself to be in contact with Antediluvians and that the night of Gehenna will soon be at hand. Gehenna means different things to different vampires. For the Black Hand, Gehenna will be a night of reckoning when thousands upon thousands of Kindred will be imprisoned, waiting until they can serve as meals for their progenitors. The World of Darkness will become much brighter as the Black Hand frees humanity from the choke hold of the Camarilla, Sabbat and all other Kindred oppressors. The Antediluvians will look into the withered hearts of those to be judged, and those who are found worthy of unlife will be spared — all others will die. Indeed, the Black Hand expects many of its own members to meet destruction in the ensuing slaughter.

Out of this time of darkness will emerge a new golden age. The Kindred population will be reduced to the point where humanity will have the power to choose its own future without having to fight the wars of the Damned and without bearing the mark of their corruption, hatred and fear.

The Hidden Agenda

*And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.*

— Edgar Allan Poe, *The Conqueror Worm*

There are more monsters in the night than most Kindred are willing to imagine. Perhaps the most foul and hideous are the Souleaters, a parasitic race without true form. Actually more like a sentient disease than a species, Souleaters take over the bodies of host beings: living, dead and undead. The Souleaters meld with them — mind, body and soul — and consume them. They eat away from the inside, replacing each piece of their victim with themselves. Worse yet, Souleaters spread like a contagion from one thing to another. Most vampires know the Souleaters better as Vicissitude, a vampiric Discipline commonly associated with the Tzimisce.

The Tzimisce were the first to become infected with this creature they called "Vicissitude." They brought it back from the Deep Umbra, a far plane of chaos and madness, where the Souleaters originally resided. All those responsible for bringing forth the creature are believed destroyed or consumed by the monsters. Still, the thing passed itself through the blood of generation after generation of the Tzimisce without most ever knowing the truth about their own "clan Discipline."

Hand members consider Vicissitude a deadly infection. Some infected with it never become corrupted and manage to use the powers as their own without losing their minds, but most are not so lucky.

The Black Hand bears responsibility for Vicissitude. For centuries the sect ignored the problem, and now it has grown out of control. The Souleaters have spread their alien tendrils across the globe, consuming and manipulating any creature they can get a hold on. Kindred can never be sure that the people they trust and depend on the most are really who they say they are — they may be Souleaters looking for the opportunity to infest unsuspecting Kindred.

The Souleaters now threaten the existence of all things living and undead. No one knows if they have plans beyond infecting anyone, but the Hand fears the worst. The destruction of the Souleaters has become the Black Hand's hidden agenda. Using its pawns among the Camarilla, Sabbat and free Kindred, the Black Hand is hunting down and destroying the Souleaters in all guises.

How It All Began

*I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.*

*I was angry with my foe;
I told it not, my wrath did grow.*

— William Blake, "A Poison Tree"

Shortly after forming an alliance with the Euthanatos, several Black Hand Kindred accompanied the mages on their explorations of the Deep Umbra. Among them was a fourth-generation Tzimisce known as Andeleon. Quite adept at his work, Andeleon proved especially skilled at dealing with the denizens of this bizarre plane. His contributions to the knowledge of the Deep Umbra were invaluable.

On one of his last trips, he was attacked by a being even stranger than most. It constantly flowed and mutated, changing forms from moment to moment. Frustrated in his attempts to drive it off, Andeleon frenzied and bit the creature. It was then that Vicissitude first passed into the blood of a vampire, for Andeleon swallowed some of the spirit's vile ichor.

Signs of Vicissitude did not surface immediately in Andeleon. Indeed, other vampires who drank from him began exhibiting symptoms of the disease before he did. It took several years before the powers surfaced in him.

When other members of the Hand learned about Vicissitude, they immediately realized something was wrong, for no Kindred had ever demonstrated such powers before. They thought that it might just be the natural effects of entering the Deep Umbra, but eventually Vicissitude began showing up in those who had never entered that plane. Worse yet, it even began showing up in mortal servants of Kindred, who also demonstrated the powers.

After a careful study, the Thaumaturgists claimed Vicissitude was a disease, and they traced it back to Andeleon. However, Andeleon fled, taking with him his most loyal servants. The cost in lives and unlives was high, but Andeleon was tracked down and burned to death. Then the Hand forbade its members to travel in the Deep Umbra, destroyed all records of the ritual that allowed Kindred to travel there and assassinated those few Kindred who had actually been there.



Still, the damage was done. Andeleon had spread the disease among the Tzimisce, leading some to claim that even their torporous Antediluvian was not safe from infection. Only a select group of elders managed to hide away in their castles, safe from their fellow clan members.

After this, the Hand made little effort to track down those with Vicissitude. The Tzimisce were hard to root out, and it appeared that the sect had effectively quarantined those who could transmit the disease.

With the start of the Inquisition, which some claim the Black Hand is at least partially responsible for, the disease became an epidemic. Former members of the Black Hand who had become inhabited by Souleaters spread the secrets of the Vaulderie to the younger Kindred. They told of how they could drink the blood of many in order to escape the Regnant. However, they did not say that by drinking the blood of those with Vicissitude, the contagion would spread like a plague through the vampiric community. Only the fact that Vicissitude is hard to transmit saved the majority of Kindred from infection. However, the result was the infection of the entire Tzimisce clan, much of the Sabbat, and even some independent and Camarilla Kindred.

With the formation of the Sabbat, the Black Hand knew it had to infiltrate and control the sect. This led to the creation of the false Black Hand, which served primarily as an instigator of trouble between the Camarilla and Sabbat. However, it also watched over the Tzimisce and others who had Vicissitude. Hand members were careful not to drink directly from Tzimisce or others who had the disease. Unless there was lots of Vicissitude-infested blood in the Vinculum, it proved difficult to gain the infection.

However, Hand members who joined the Sabbat still occasionally became ill, which led to the creation of various Thaumaturgical means of purifying their vitae. The resulting methods nullified the effects of Vicissitude in the Vinculum, destroying all powers gained and all chances of producing a Souleater.

The Black Hand considered these efforts enough, and until the 1980s made little further effort to destroy the scourge. Recently, however, members of the Black Hand learned that far more Souleaters exist than they originally believed.

A kamut of Eastern Hand members discovered a stronghold of Souleaters in Libya in 1984. A massive assault was launched and more than 100 Souleaters were destroyed or captured, at a cost of almost two dozen Kindred. Various linguistic, occult and Thaumaturgical experts studied the strange devices and unintelligible language of the Souleaters, but learned little. The Souleaters had strange organic technology of their own and were somehow in contact with beings from another plane of existence. Evidence also suggested that there were other Souleater strongholds and activities all over the world. The captured Souleaters proved impossible to interrogate, so they were put to Final Death.

Shortly afterward, the Del'Roh called for the extermination of all Souleaters and the purification of all who deserved to be saved from Vicissitude. Calling this secret war the Shadow Crusade, the Black Hand continues to use its various vampiric and mortal pawns in its mission of destruction.

The Shadow Crusade

Those who aim at great deeds must also suffer greatly.

— Marcus Licinius Crassus, *Plutarch's Parallel Lives*

By directing its Camarilla and Sabbat pawns against the Souleaters, the Black Hand has eliminated many of the creatures lurking in the two sects, but there are others that they must deal with themselves. Every new turn uncovers even more of these vile creatures. It seems like a battle they will never win. Indeed, they may not.

The Souleaters threaten everything about vampire society. Who knows just how many elders, ancillæ and neonates are actually these foul things from the Deep Umbra? The large number of Tzimisce within the Sabbat all seem very secretive. No doubt some of them are Souleaters, and they may be manipulating the entire clan to further their own horror. It is highly likely that there are primogen, princes, archbishops, cardinals and prisci who are actually Souleaters.

The Souleaters are so convincing that they can pose for decades as vampires whom they have consumed. Having eaten their minds and memories, they know everything their hosts knew — certainly a frightening thought, since some might know weaknesses of other Kindred... or even the

location of Methuselahs. Any Methuselah consumed by these alien life forms would be a tremendous threat, as all the Methuselah's powers, influence and secrets would belong to the Souleater.

The Black Hand has a number of kamuts dedicated to the Shadow Crusade. Composed of young but powerful Kindred, they spend much of their effort hunting down Souleaters who have gained power and influence within the World of Darkness. They have encountered and destroyed all manner of Souleaters, including Camarilla princes, werewolves, entire mortal cults, countless Tzimisce, mages and wraiths.

The Shadow Crusaders (as some within the sect refer to them) have learned much about their foes. They claim the Souleaters even have their own strange technology and magick, along with connections to more powerful beings. Some crusaders infect themselves with Vicissitude in order to understand their foes. This has caused other Hand members to distrust them, believing these crusaders are Souleaters themselves.

If the Souleaters have taken over the Shadow Crusaders, then nothing in the world is safe. Maybe most leaders within the Black Hand have already been infected. Maybe that's why the sect dragged its feet for so long. Maybe the liches are behind it all. Maybe the seraphim are involved in the cover-up. The Rawis should have known of the creatures long ago, but they did not. Maybe they, too, are Souleaters. Perhaps even the Del'Roh is infected.



Eclipse of the Soul

We can endure neither our evils nor their cures.

— Horace, *Satire*

Vicissitude can infect anyone and anything, living, dead, or undead. It can even infect plants and insects, but seldom does so, as it can only gain sentience if the host is sentient. There are no cures available. It is impossible to remove the infection, as doing so would kill the host.

The infection grows over time and can prevail in as little as a day or as long as a millennium, but eventually all succumb, and the thing inside attains awareness. The Souleater slowly and subtly weaves itself into the mind and anatomy of the host, wrapping its tendrils around the veins and heart of the victim, extending its mouth and eyestalks up into the skull of the host and attaching them to the backs of the Kindred's eyes. The Souleater gnaws away the rotting flesh inside the Kindred and excretes its own anatomy to fill the body, allowing the Kindred to reshape his bones and flesh at will.

Small, needle-like hooks infiltrate the mind and form parasitic synapses within the brain which allow the host to use Vicissitude, but they also consume memories and thought patterns. The host never realizes he is being taken over. The host and Souleater become integrated, and the Souleater takes full control. The Souleater maintains access to the host's personality, memories, powers and abilities. The Souleaters can continue to pretend they are the host, but often little signs of their alienness give them away, such as eating their own flesh and then regrowing it.

Most Souleaters continue using the appearance of the host, though some simply turn into big globs of flesh and ooze about. There are even cases where several Souleaters have joined the fleshy-stuff of their bodies together to form horrifying things best left to the imaginations of the insane.

The host's soul also serves as nourishment and helps the creature grow. The Souleater eventually craves more spirit energy and will begin slaying children and animals just to eat their spirits. The Souleater consumes the spirit by causing a tube-like projection with a small, gaping maw ringed with needle-like teeth to emerge from its eye or mouth. The tube-like structure can penetrate flesh as if it were a knife, and it is usually inserted into the eye, ear, mouth or throat of the victim.

It takes only a couple of minutes for the Souleater to consume the spirits. Victims always die from the experience, and even those who are saved before a Souleater can finish its meal are never the same again. Souleaters seldom feed, but when they do, they go on eating binges — killing five or more people in the process.

A Souleater has the same basic qualities of its host. So the Souleater of a tree is composed of the same materials in a tree and requires sunlight, carbon dioxide and water to exist. A Souleater of a living mortal requires food, water, oxygen and has all the weaknesses of humans. A Souleater of a Lupine is alive, has Lupine powers and can be harmed by silver. In addition, these Souleaters have life spans similar to those of their hosts. A Souleater of a vampire remains undead, has Disciplines, and must feed upon blood. It can be harmed by sunlight and fire. Some crusaders believe there are even Souleaters of wraiths. These Souleaters do not exist in the physical world except when the host materializes.

The Euthanatos believe the Souleaters may be tied to beings known as the "Nephandi." These alien beings of destruction supposedly live in the Deep Umbra. The Lupines are believed to refer to many who are infected with Souleaters as "creatures of the Wyrn" — or Fomori.

For more information on Vicissitude as a disease, please refer to the **Storytellers Handbook to the Sabbat**.

Certainly if the Black Hand is not safe, no Kindred is safe. The Camarilla and Sabbat may be filled with countless Souleaters, while the Shadow Crusaders find only the stray few.

In the last few years, the problems have only worsened, leading some sect members to informally form their own kamuts to fight in the Shadow Crusade. The Del'Roh could call for the creation of new kamuts or at least replenish the lost members of the existing kamuts, but she has yet to do so and seems to be playing down the importance of the Shadow Crusade. Perhaps she sees a more immediate threat.

Joining the Black Hand

Sois mon frère ou je te tue.

(Be my brother, or I will kill you.)

— Sébastien Roch Nicolas Chamfort, *from Carlyle, French Revolution*

No one chooses to join the Black Hand; one can only be chosen. Only the most powerful or influential Kindred are accepted into the sect and once a vampire is a member, she can never leave. No one turns down an offer of membership and remains undead.



Induction and Initiation

*My days among the dead are past;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old.*

— Robert Southey, "My Days Among the Dead Are Past"

The selection process for the Black Hand is very strict. Hand members look for Kindred who treat mortals with respect, who understand the place of the vampire within mortal society and who have power, wisdom and high morals.

They prefer those who are extremely adept at both politics and warfare, though emphasis is placed more upon political acumen than combat readiness. Most range anywhere from 6th to 11th generation, with from 50 to 400 years as a vampire. They can be of any sect and have ratings in Humanity or in a Path of Enlightenment, but they must hold to it well. The Black Hand singles out those few actively thwarting the plans of other Kindred for the greater good. The more heroic a vampire seems, the better her chance of selection.

Typically, the Hand watches a candidate for at least 25 to 30 years before making an offer, though the watch period can last 100 years or more. As soon as a candidate proves unworthy, either through stupidity, lack of good judgment, lack of leadership ability, weakness or some other reason, the character has failed and will never be offered membership.

The Hand tests a Kindred's abilities and convictions both by orchestrating events that affect her. In addition to these tests, Hand members watch for indiscretions which might be used as blackmail in the future. The invitation itself does not come until the watcher — the Hand member responsible for choosing and watching over the candidate — and a seraph believe the candidate is ready.

Once chosen, three Hand members approach the candidate while she is alone and offer her membership. Should she accept, she is taken away and drinks the blood of the Del'Roh, at least one seraph and a few others, thus forming a Vinculum, or mild Blood Bond, to them. She returns to her former unlife and receives regular visits by Hand members, who teach her the ways of the sect.

Once a character joins the Black Hand, she receives a mentor responsible for her tutelage in the methods and beliefs of the sect. The mentor is usually the Kindred's watcher. In fact, the mentor remains a watcher, observing the character's behavior for signs of betrayal. The entire time of apprenticeship is an informal one. The mentor has no formal title and merely behaves as a friend and teacher. As soon as the vampire learns the ways of the sect and proves capable of serving on her own, the mentor leaves her, but secretly continues to watch over her.

Serving the Black Hand

The deed is everything, the glory nothing.

—Johanne Wolfgang von Goethe, *A High Mountain Range*

Many conflicts plague the Black Hand. The most problematic of these is the Shadow Crusade, though most would consider the spread of dissension the most important.

Kamuts

Sons of the dark and bloody ground.

—Theodore O'Hare, *The Bivouac of the Dead*

Younger members of the Black Hand commonly work together in groups known as kamuts. There are two basic types of kamuts: loosely-knit groups created by sect members, and tightly-knit groups created under the order of a seraph, wazir or the Del'Roh.

Kamuts are charged with various duties that require the efforts of more than one vampire. Missions vary greatly, but include assassinations, investigations of events or individuals, open combat and terrorism.

Kamuts have found heavy use in the Shadow Crusade. Five kamuts track down and destroy anyone and anything possessed by Souleaters. Their victims include vampires, mortals, werewolves, mages and many other strange creatures whose species, races and identities may no longer be recognizable.

The self-created kamuts are very similar to other vampire coteries, except they usually choose some special duties or responsibilities based upon the members' interests and expertise. The kamut is then called upon when an appropriate mission comes about. These kamuts come and go with the interest of their members, but many last until their members are destroyed. Century-long friendships are forged among members of these kamuts. These kamuts focus on efforts such as limiting Camarilla influence among mortal politicians, fighting in the Shadow Crusade, hunting down Lupines for study, gathering information on elders and collecting magickal devices for the sect.

Sanctioned kamuts are groups composed of specially selected Hand members. These kamuts may be given long-term assignments, but most last only for the length of a particular mission. Few friends are made during these dangerous missions, and there is always at least one in the group who will report all of what goes on back to his superiors. Sanctioned kamuts are assigned missions such as destroying a Lupine caern, freeing a Blood Cult from the grip of an insane vampire, assassinating an elder, hunting down a vampire judged to be a criminal by the Del'Roh, or capturing and destroying all within a certain area who have been infested by the Souleaters.



In addition to the kamuts, the Black Hand also acts as mentor and manipulator to many Camarilla coteries and Sabbat packs. Some of these small groups are watched by Hand members who are considering offering membership in the Black Hand to the entire group. Besides small groups of Kindred, the Hand is also known to use Lupine packs composed of Uktena, Silent Striders, and Shadow Lords as pawns, as well as mage cabals of the Euthanatos, Order of Hermes and Verbena Traditions.

The Life of a Chatterling

We live, not as we wish to, but as we can.

— Menander, *Lady of Andros*

The ghoulish revenants of the Enrathi family capture children between the ages of 3 and 7 who have no hope of a good future. They transfer these children to Black Hand leaders, who take them to the Shadowlands.

The children are brought before the Del'Roh and distributed to the various taskmasters of the Cult of the Erinyes. The children, known as the chatterlings, are then cleaned, fed and allowed to stay in Enoch indefinitely. The taskmasters take them to Enoch's arena, where they begin their training.

They must exercise and train for hours and hours on end. Training includes martial arts, melee weapon use, marksmanship and all manner of athletics. Their minds are also honed through hours and hours of intensive study. By the time they are 10 years old, they know far more than the average high school graduate. Their training ends around the age of 23, when most are finally Embraced. By this time they are at the peak of physical and mental development.

They are allowed to choose the clan of their Embrace and their sires. They are considered full-fledged members of the sect at this point. Some continue to reside in the Shadowlands, acting as servants to the Hand's leaders, but many return to the Living World.

Chatterlings are taught to respect humanity, but they themselves are anything but human. Any vestiges of Humanity are stamped out at an early age and replaced by the inhuman code of vampire ethics. They have zero Humanity and high Path of Enlightenment ratings. They must choose and begin following a Path of Enlightenment while they are still human, to help them cope with the Embrace and the Beast which will grow in them.

Embraced chatterlings are among the most cruel and efficient of vampires. Unlike other Kindred, they never had lives as humans, and the effects of vampiric indoctrination during their formative years breed ingenious cunning and diabolical fanaticism.

Underworld Journeys

There is another and a better world.

— August Friedrich Ferdinand von Kotzebue, *The Stranger*

One of the rarest powers of the Hand, and the one which sets them apart from other sects, is the ability to pass into the sect's Shadowland holding of Enoch. Enoch is considered a "safe" location, since no Kindred except Hand members are believed capable of passing into the Shadowlands. While



Euthanatos mages may be capable of doing so, they have shown no interest in intruding into Enoch. The only other earthly beings said to have the ability to travel astrally into the Shadowlands are the Benandanti, but they can only do so at night. Besides, they are mere mortals.

The only real danger lies with the wraiths. Hand members must be careful to guard against attacks by strange creatures known as Doomshades, which live in the Tempest, a storm surrounding Enoch. Wraiths known as Renegades and Heretics have in the past attacked the city.

Very few Kindred spend much time in Enoch, but all have been there at least once. The journey involves a Thaumaturgical ritual known by a few of the most powerful Hand members. No young members of the Hand know the ritual, and it takes centuries of diligent service before the Hand deems someone worthy of learning it.

Skullduggery

The world wants to be deceived.

— Sebastian Brant, *The Ship of Fools*

Most of the Black Hand's activities are covert, taking place within the Camarilla and the Sabbat. The Black Hand remains invisible, using pawns and Alternate Identities of great power, Status and Influence. Hand members carry out various duties, some of which make use of their Alternate Identities, others which do not. Usually younger, less-influential Hand members are chosen for the more combat-oriented missions, but all members must serve the sect.

Information gathering is a constant duty for all Hand members. They seek out all they can concerning the plans of the other Kindred, along with any information concerning Caine, the other Antediluvians, ancient Kindred lore and the Souleaters. The Black Hand feeds the Sabbat and Camarilla lies wrapped in truths, keeping the sects at odds with one another. This misinformation helps ensure that few Kindred in either sect actually know what is going on.

In gathering pawns, some Hand members capture and Dominate individuals into serving them. Others use more subtle methods of acquiring their service. Prestation is the greatest weapon in acquiring pawns, since most Hand members wield great influence. When a Kindred needs assistance, there is a good chance he will unknowingly go to a member of the Hand for help. Blackmail is also used, but works best when combined with prestation to enforce a debtor's loyalty.

Once the minions are in place, Hand members simply oversee their efforts. Pawns are used as couriers, saboteurs, assassins, informants and guards. The link between the Hand member and her minions is always well-concealed in case a minion is caught in the act. The Hand now has a large network of pawns, all of whom are totally expendable.

Hand members carry out all activities requiring their expertise or that pawns have failed to successfully complete. Kamuts are dispatched for missions that may require fighting, while individual members handle missions requiring stealth.

The Aralu of Enoch

Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should choose to have a visiting acquaintance with.

— Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Rivals*

One of the deepest mysteries surrounding Enoch is the persistent rumor that it houses ancient sleepers, residents far older than the oldest members of the Hand. Sect leaders never mention such inhabitants, but younger members hear their elders whisper about the Aralu, four mighty beings, perhaps even Antediluvians, who lie in torpor in the most secret chambers of the city.

Their true names remain a mystery to all, except perhaps the Del'Roh and a handful of others. Their chambers are said to have many names inscribed on the walls and seals, but three are commonly known as Nergal, Ninmug and Loz. Some elders believe them to be the Toreador, Ventrue and Nosferatu Antediluvians. The identity of the fourth remains unknown — or at least so the gossip goes.

There are those who believe the Aralu are on the verge of awakening. Some have even hinted that at least one of them has already awakened and merely awaits the others. Some Hand members claim they have seen the Aralu in daydreams, but cannot consciously remember what they looked like or said.

The Nosferatu of the Black Hand fear that Ninmug of the Aralu is Nosferatu. They believe that if he is, he will surely desire their destruction in penance to Caine. A couple say that perhaps he will reward the Nosferatu for watching over him, but most doubt it. For this reason, the Nosferatu of the sect have begun having second thoughts concerning their service to the Black Hand and may try to stop Ninmug's awakening before it is too late.

It is the fourth Aralu that worries many of the Kindred, for his identity remains a mystery. There have been suggestions that it could be Malkav, but others say his consciousness is awake and active on the Astral Plane, while his body lies somewhere near the North Pole. Could it be that the fourth Aralu is Zillah, Jrad or Enoch, who are said to be the Second Generation? Might it even be Caine himself?

Gaining Power Within the Sect

Nolesse oblige.

(Rank has its obligations.)

— Gaston Pierre Marc, *Maxims and Reflections*

Vampires are never satisfied with the power they already enjoy—they always want more. The Black Hand suffers from many of the same power struggles that affect all the other Kindred. Gaining power within the Black Hand can take centuries, but the most power-hungry never survive that long. Only the most cunning and patient Hand members acquire real power in the sect.

Guiding and Protecting Mortals

Iron hand in a velvet glove.

— Charles V, attributed by Thomas Carlyle

Make no mistakes—mortals *are* used and abused as tools and pets, much as they are treated by most other Kindred. Still, the Black Hand believes in the overall protection of humanity. Most Hand members believe that in order to guide and protect the living, they must control some of their religious, political, social and financial institutions.

Controlling mortal institutions provides a substantial power base for Hand members who also hold power in the Camarilla and Sabbat. In addition, the Black Hand can better protect institutions under its control from outside influence by Kindred. Many Ventrue, Toreador, Lasombra and Giovanni control mortal institutions outside Black Hand influence, but they may owe great boons to Kindred secretly belonging to the Black Hand.

While the amount of influence a member possesses is not directly related to his Status in any sect, it does play a role. Some of the most powerful Hand members choose younger members of the sect to assist them in overseeing their interests. The more generous elders fully delegate control over various interests to responsible underlings, and a few even grant full control and “ownership” for faithful service or in payment of debts.

The Rite of Prestation

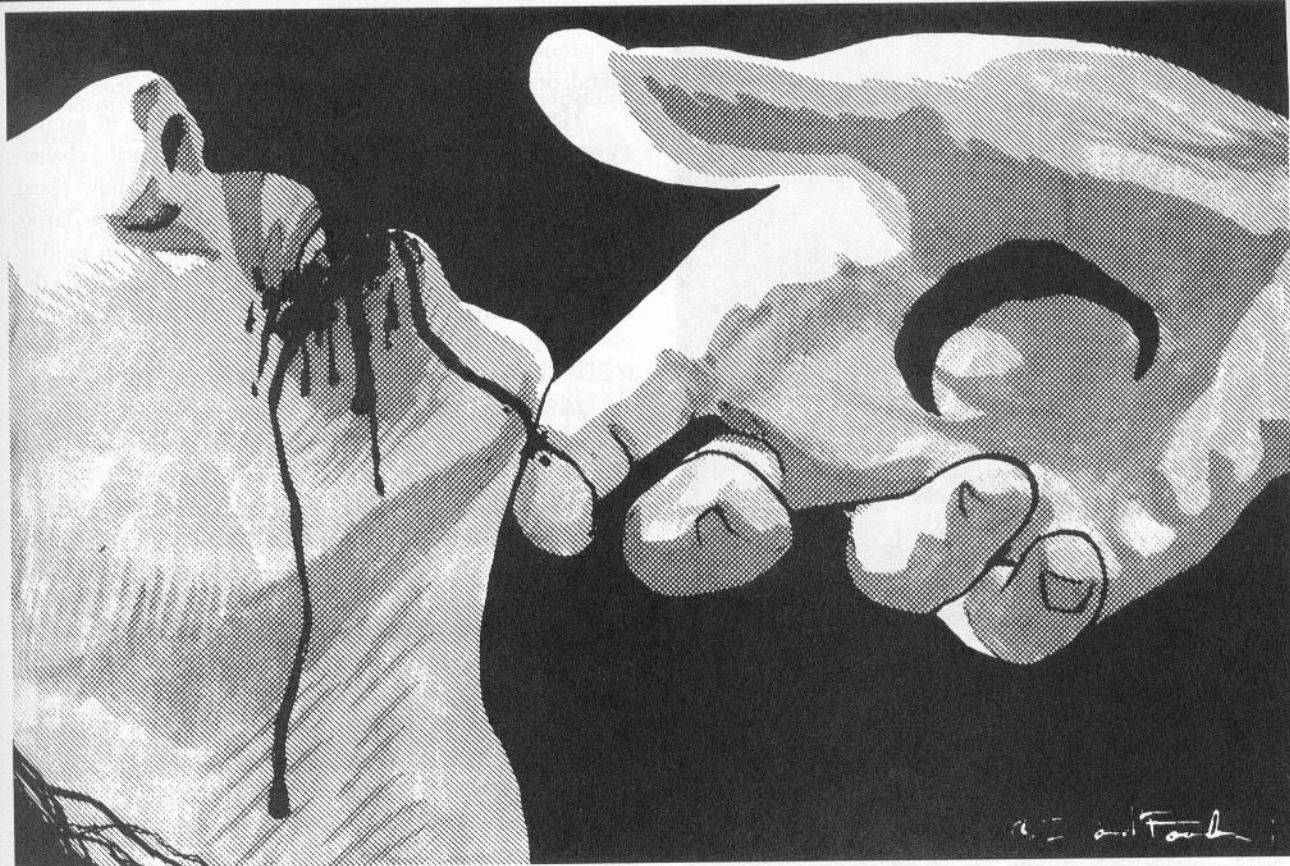
Who goeth a-borrowing

Goeth a-sorrowing.

— Thomas Tusser, *August's Abstract*

Honor plays a most important role among these stolid old Kindred. The rite of prestation best epitomizes their personal code. Prestation is the practice of giving and receiving favors. While it is used within both the Camarilla and the Sabbat, it finds its origins in the Black Hand. Those who do not meet the responsibilities imposed by prestation are always dishonored and occasionally even punished.





The most ancient and powerful of the Black Hand's Kindred are the most harsh and demanding in their favors, as they have nothing to gain from doing otherwise. Younger Kindred are more generous than Kindred outside the Black Hand. Generosity to elders is a symbol of respect, which is almost always rewarded in kind. Those who recognize this unspoken difference in prestation from that of the Camarilla and Sabbat rise quickly in the ranks.

All members of the Black Hand, even those who are not vampires, practice the rite of prestation. In fact, much of the Black Hand's power comes from the great many debts powerful and important figures in the World of Darkness owe it.

Rivalries

*And the Devil did grin, for his darling sin
Is pride that apes humility.*

— Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Devil's Thoughts*

Competition and rivalry occur within the Black Hand much as they do among the Ventrue, Lasombra and Toreador clans. Hand members often compete over who can contribute the most to the mortal world, who can gain the most influence, and how much power over mortal institutions they can siphon away from other supernatural beings.

Rivalries seldom lead to direct conflicts, but they do lead to dirty dealings and betrayal. They also lead to putting personal interests over those of the Black Hand. Most use pawns in order to preserve their own personal honor. Some believe these rivalries have led to dirty dealings with Pentex, the Syndicate, the Giovanni, Gaki and worse.

Many of these rivalries go on for decades or even centuries. Some become bitter, and in the end one of the rivals may fall in total disgrace or suffer Final Death. Some of the greatest rivalries in the past have even threatened the very existence of the sect.

Additionally, Hand members who prove incapable of handling the responsibilities of power are always weeded out. While physical prowess is important for survival, in the Black Hand, the mastermind will always win out over the warlord, because the sect rewards cunning over force.

Power Among the Enemy

No man chooses evil because it is evil; he only mistakes it for happiness, the good he seeks.

— Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*

Acquiring power and Status within the Black Hand almost always requires attaining power and Status within one or both of the pawn sects — the Camarilla and the Sabbat. There are very few Autarkis within the Hand, for all Hand members are master politicians who spend much of their time working to increase their own personal influence. However, they must divide their focus between personal interests, the interests of their false sect, and that of the Black Hand. They must have personal power in order to be useful. They must



have Status and influence within their false sect. Finally, they must always use their power for the benefit of the Black Hand, or else the Black Hand will remove them from power.

Hand members always assist one another in gaining power, usually through prestation. However, until a character attains a position of importance, most fellow Hand members ask little in return. Once in power, however, favors become a little more costly. Still, by assisting one another there is less need to ask for favors from Kindred outside the Black Hand. In addition, Kindred who gain power with little obvious assistance are often seen as strong and wise, finding it easier to worm their way into the Kindred political scene.

Most Hand Kindred in the Camarilla prefer to leave the limelight to others, acting as primogen rather than princes. However, they still need the respect of their fellow Kindred. They often gain respect through prestation. They provide favors and require only a very modest return payment. Most harpies are amazed by this constant generosity, thus granting the Hand member respect that is not merely the result of prestation. This is not always the case, however, as other harpies view this generosity with wariness, and some even see it as a sign of weakness.

The more inhuman members of the Black Hand prefer Status within the Sabbat, which provides them more opportunities to revel in their own rapacious evil. Unlike Status in the Camarilla, Status in the Sabbat is attained by increasing personal power and that of the sect, often without caring what other Sabbat think. Since most Hand members are extremely tough and deadly, they silence those who speak against them through the Sabbat's Rule of Monomacy and with their own bare hands. Understanding the importance of personal image, they seldom use paladins to fight their battles for them. Many Kindred of the Black hand are prisci, archbishops and bishops. The False Hand's seraphim and many of their dominions are members of the real Black Hand.

A few of the most powerful and influential Hand members hold Status in both the Camarilla and the Sabbat. They usually maintain a separate, Alternate Identity for each false sect and they always keep their two domains far apart. A few of these Kindred use Obfuscate to further differentiate between their two false identities. None of these Kindred are "notable" figures in either false sect, preferring less-direct leadership roles such as primogen and prisci.

Secret Practices

O nights and feasts of the gods!

— Horace, *Satires*

The secret practices of the Black Hand all seem alien, macabre and ancient, based as they are on those of the early Kindred, proto-Euthanatos and Mummies. Originating with the dawn of civilization, these practices have changed little with the passage of time. Some within the Black Hand find many of these customs vulgar and useless, but they continue these practices as a reminder of the monsters they are and their crimes against humanity.

Rituals

The Black Hand carries out many of its rituals in Enoch, safe from prying eyes. These rituals only take place on special occasions and are always treated with the utmost reverence.

The Sabbat is in many ways a direct progeny of the Black Hand, and many of its rituals are slightly altered versions of the Black Hand's. The Camarilla's Blood Hunt and even a few clan customs also seem taken from rituals of the Black Hand.

Here are the Black Hand's rituals. There may be others, and some of these may be only rarely observed.

- **Anel of Purification:** Hand members who are about to undergo an extreme trial are sometimes given a small vial of the Del'Roh's vitæ. They anoint themselves with the blood, hoping it will give them the strength they need to succeed. The Del'Roh often awards a vial of her blood to those who have atoned for past dishonors, as a symbol of forgiveness and respect.

- **Blood Hunt:** The Camarilla's Blood Hunt, and even the Sabbat's Wild Hunt, originated with the Black Hand's Blood Hunt. The Black Hand calls a Blood Hunt on those rare sect members who are proven guilty of treason and on others who know too much about the sect. A Qadi or wazir usually calls the hunt. Often Sabbat and Camarilla pawns call hunts of their own to assist in the destruction. The Black Hand has only called two Blood Hunts in the last 400 years.

- **Danse Macabre:** Similar to the Danse Macabre of the Sabbat, this Hand ritual requires sect members to dress as the dead and perform a ritualistic dance. They often wear death heads (see **Practices**, below) during this ritual. Terrible music and chanting always accompany the dance.

- **Sacrificial Offerings:** The members of the Black Hand often sacrifice living beings as a symbol of their respect for Caine and the Antediluvians. Lesser sacrifices consist of one young vampire or ghoul, while greater sacrifices consist of several younger Kindred and/or ghouls. Many sect members attend these rituals. There is always great ceremony involved, including chanting, music, a special service and even costuming. Usually a Qadi performs the sacrifice, though other sect members occasionally do so.

- **Vision Seeking:** Hand members sometimes ingest blood filled with mind-altering substances such as mescaline or LSD. They use this method to seek answers to questions of the soul.

Practices

Aside from actual rituals, the Black Hand observes several other practices. These too remain much as they were during the early nights of the Tal'mahe'Ra.

- **Amaranth:** The Black Hand denounces diablerie. It is an evil practice, and those who commit it will be punished by Caine upon his return. There are members of the Black Hand who cannot sustain themselves on human blood. They feed off other Kindred but avoid intentionally killing members of their Herd.



- **Death's Head:** Most members of the Black Hand collect the heads of those they assassinate as a symbol of their power. They slice the face and the front part of the skull off the head and make masks from them for Danse Macabre. The death's heads are often painted or decorated in some way.

- **Oath of Loyalty:** Hand leaders often insist that members reaffirm their oaths of loyalty to the sect when they are given important assignments.

- **Spiritual Propaedeutics:** Many of the Kindred of the Black Hand have no Humanity, despite their (somewhat) humane practices. The Hand teaches members who lose faith in their own Humanity whatever Path of Enlightenment they choose.

- **Tests of Verification:** The Black Hand does not have a secret handshake, code word or any other pseudo-mystical trappings. Instead they use a far-less-noticeable method involving a combination of body, mouth and eye movements, along with particular wording of sentences. This test is virtually invisible, but sect members can almost always recognize fellow members during simple conversation.

Law & Order

Fiat justitia ruat coelum.

(Let justice be done though the heavens should fall.)

— Latin saying

The Del'Roh is the ultimate authority within the Black Hand, and all obey her. The seraphim are the supreme leaders on Earth, though they must answer to the Del'Roh in Enoch for all their actions. Elders of the Hand, called the Qadi, settle disputes and determine guilt and innocence in cases involving sect members. Together the Qadi are called the tribunal. Lesser members of the sect occasionally assist them in their duties, but because the Hand is far smaller than the Camarilla, they seldom need assistance. The Qadi also act as leaders during many of the sect's rituals, as they are almost always former Rawis — keepers of the *Guarded Rubrics*.

The Black Hand is harsh and unforgiving in its punishments. No efforts are made to reform the behavior of the offender, for he is expected to know better than to commit crimes against the sect.

The Sacred Mysteries

I shall be as secret as the grave.

— Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*

Lilith's Brood

Nothing is more damaging to a new truth than an old error.

— Johanne Wolfgang von Goethe, *Spüche in Prosa*

According to the *Guarded Rubrics*, when Caine came unto Lilith bearing a curse like her own, she opened his eyes to the glories of the darkness that accompanied the "Anathema of the One." He learned from her the powers known as the Disciplines and many other secrets of the blood. He turned away from Lilith, who found comfort in the darkness, and sought to make children in the Light. However, Caine's get became monsters in their own right.

There are those within the Black Hand who claim Lilith is the actual creator of the Kindred. As the first wife of Adam, she was cast out of the Garden and into the darkness bearing the curse of vampirism. She became the Queen of Darkness, commanding and spawning demons to serve her. While many suggest she is a mage, the *Guarded Rubrics* hold much information to the contrary.

The Black Hand keeps the *Guarded Rubrics* in a special chamber deep within the walls of the Dread Palace Ghemal. Only the Del'Roh, the wazir, tribunal and Rawis have seen this collection of ancient writings. Most Hand members believe there are many other secrets included in the *Guarded Rubrics*. Supposedly included within the writings is a complete version of the *Cycle of Lilith*, which provides insight into the legends of Lilith.

Found guilty of:	Punishment:
Stealing from another Hand member	Loss of a finger on first offense, loss of hand on second and third offense, loss of unlife on fourth
Striking a fellow Hand member	Sound beating by several other Kindred
Murdering a fellow Hand member	Death by diablerie
Dishonoring the Black Hand	Personal dishonor for slight offense, mutilation or severe burning in addition to imprisonment in Enoch for great offense
Ghoul disrespectful of any vampire	Warning on first offense, death on second offense
Deceiving sect leaders	Severe torture on first offense, Final Death on second offense
Failure to respond when called by leader	Imprisonment in Enoch, length of sentence based upon guilty Kindred's reason for failure
Divulging a secret of the Hand to anyone	Final Death by fire to Kindred and all slave ghouls
Treason	Torture, impalement upon a tall stake in Enoch for a year, followed by slow dismemberment with heated instruments
Associating with Setites or Baali	Torture and possible Final Death by decapitation
Practicing Infernal Diablerie	Final Death by slow burning

An Optional System for Diablerie

Sensations sweet,

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart.

— William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

Diablerie is considered one of the vilest sins among the undead. However, it is still practiced by the power-hungry, for the closer a Kindred is to Caine, the greater her potential. There are several ways of making diablerie both more rewarding and more dangerous.

Diablerie should be perceived as more than just drinking all of another Kindred's vitæ. Drinking the "Heart's Blood" means drinking the very soul of the victim. The black veins in the aura of a diabolist are more than just signs of the sin — they are the actual fragments of the victims' souls. The more a vampire has committed diablerie, the greater the number of black veins.

The Rewards

Diabolists may permanently advance one generation per victim. They do not automatically increase to the generation of their victim because the actual blood wears thin and is burned away as the assailant drinks it. It is the soul of the victim — the Heart's Blood — which actually reduces the diabolist's generation.

The character may gain the memories and Knowledges of her victim as well. The diabolist character makes an Intelligence + Empathy roll (difficulty 8). One success indicates only fragmented memories are gained, while five or more successes indicates total life memories. This knowledge disappears over the course of the next few nights (one per success on the roll).

The Punishments

A diabolist gains all the weaknesses of her victim. If her victim is a member of her own clan, then her own weakness grows in intensity. This lasts for as long as the extra knowledge does.

The victim of diablerie makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) when the evil deed is completed. If he has at least one success, part of his soul survives the diablerie and attaches to the diabolist. The number of successes determines the surviving Willpower of the victim, called the "soul fragment." The greater the number of successes, the greater the number of black veins in the diabolist's aura. If no successes are achieved, the victim's soul becomes so fragmented that there is simply no consciousness or will left, and only a few black veins will appear. A botch indicates no black veins appear in the diabolist's aura and none of the victim's consciousness survives.

The surviving soul fragments can make a diabolist's unlife an unliving hell. Whenever the Storyteller feels it is time, the soul fragment's Willpower is rolled against a difficulty equal to the diabolist's current Willpower. If at least one success is achieved, the soul fragment can direct the diabolist's next actions. The greater the number of successes, the stronger the diabolist feels the urge to obey. Not even a strong urge to commit suicide can be resisted. Because the soul fragment has become attached to the soul of the diabolist, the diabolist will recognize the urge as her own.

Soul fragments will also haunt the diabolist in nightmares while she sleeps through the day. Worse yet, the soul fragments of several victims can work together, pooling their Willpower dice into one roll, giving the victims even greater power over their destroyer. Few soul fragments actually attempt to outright destroy a diabolist. Most prefer to destroy everything in their unives first, prolonging the agony of the punishment. After such ruination, the soul fragments make the final death of their destroyer a most painful one.



LEIF JONES
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Chapter Three: The Blood of Our Own

Let them hate, so long as they fear.

— Lucius Accius, *Fragment*

The Black Hand is a small sect, but it has many allies and a vast number of pawns. This chapter describes the bloodlines of the Black Hand in addition to the non-Kindred of the sect. It presents the various differences among the four parts of the Hand and their inter-relationships. It also describes their relations with allies, pawns and other Kindred.

Childer of the Pure Blood

*For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.*

— William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 147"

Kindred of the Black Hand believe they are the only ones who have abided by the ancient laws of Caine. They believe that they serve the Antediluvians, who in turn loyally serve Caine. Some sect members consider other Kindred unworthy of continued existence. They long for the night when they can spare the worthy and slay those who have broken the ancient laws.

For this reason, the Black Hand is careful in choosing new members. Certain bloodlines are wholly excluded, for their blood is considered defiled, possibly even cursed. According to the Black Hand, these excluded bloodlines should be fully destroyed.

The sect has accepted the following bloodlines:

- **Assamite *antitribu*:** A group of rogue Assamites acting without the consent of the Old Man of the Mountain (their clan leader) joined the Black Hand centuries ago. They fought in the Anarch Revolt and were watched carefully by the sect. Eventually, the most worthy were singled out for membership in the real Black Hand. They proved loyal even to the point of refusing to answer to the call of the Old Man, who demanded that all Assamites submit to the Treaty of Tyre. The only thing that protected the Assamite *antitribu* from destruction by the Assamites was their membership in the Black Hand. Now they are among the most loyal Hand members.

- **True Brujah:** There are two separate bloodlines among the Brujah: the Consanguineous of Troile and the True Brujah, who are the Consanguineous of Brujah. Troile committed Amaranth upon Brujah, and all those descended

from her are condemned for Troile's wickedness. Some may be saved from destruction, but none may join the Hand. The True Brujah differ from other Brujah, for they are a more scholarly clan known to manipulate time.

- **Gangrel** (and *antitribu*, excluding City Gangrel): The Gangrel are viewed as a very respectable clan, for they have always existed by the ancient laws. Only the City Gangrel are considered dirty, for they have abandoned the ways of their ancestors and embraced the corruption of other Kindred.

- **Malkavians** (and *antitribu*): Some would claim there is no real difference between the Malkavians and their anti-clan. They are as they have always been and they are counted among the worthy.

- **Nagaraja**: This strange bloodline was created nearly a millennia ago through the combination of proto-Euthanatos magick and vampirism. Those of this bloodline tend to strictly follow the early teachings of the Euthanatos. Their powers include Necromancy and an odd ability to manipulate the energies of the Underworld.

- **Nosferatu** (and *antitribu*): The Nosferatu do not recognize a difference between their clan and anti-clan. However, unlike their fellow clan members of the other sects, they do place loyalty to their sect over loyalty to their bloodline.

- **Toreador** (and *antitribu*): The Toreador have long been the leaders within the Black Hand, especially in the area of guiding mortals. It is the second-most-powerful clan in the sect. The Toreador and Toreador *antitribu* recognize each other as separate bloodlines, and they accept one another with only limited contempt.

- **Old Clan Tzimisce**: The Tzimisce uninfected by Vicissitude serve the Black Hand faithfully. Despite the lack of this Discipline, Old Clan Tzimisce is still one of the oddest of all bloodlines and has very few members.

- **Ventrue** (and *antitribu*): The Ventrue hold great power within the Black Hand and especially within the Black Hand of the Camarilla. They serve in many ways as the protectors of humanity. They control a great number of mortal institutions, using their Influence to protect them from other Kindred and various supernatural threats. Those of the *antitribu* hold far less power, but they are still accorded the same amount of respect given to other Ventrue. Some have questioned the clan's allegiance to the sect, believing the Ventrue use the Black Hand to seek out their own enemies.

The Many Faces of the Tal'mahe'Ra

All for one, one for all, that is our device.

— Alexandre Dumas the Elder, *The Three Musketeers*

There are four basic divisions within the Black Hand, but each is merely part of the whole. While their differences have led to mistrust, isolationism and conspiracy, the Black Hand is making every effort to come together as a unified force. Outside threats have forced the leaders of the four divisions to look to one another for support.



The Sabbat Hand

The real Black Hand within the Sabbat is far more active than the Camarilla Black Hand. It is also less conservative. Still, it is very secretive, as it has rituals not shared with Camarilla and Eastern members. It is strict in hierarchy, spartan in outlook, and interested in balancing conflict with the Camarilla with the safety of the Sabbat.

The grim, war-hungry seraphim of the Sabbat's Black Hand are looking forward to Gehenna, for they now build an army in preparation for that night. They already control the greatest organized force of pawns — the False Hand. Currently, the only real threats to the Black Hand come from within the Sabbat. The Sabbat Inquisition and the Loyalist movement may discover too much about the Black Hand's real purpose unless the seraphim and their minions are very careful.

The Camarilla Hand

Sect members within the Camarilla move very carefully. Almost all Hand members within the Camarilla are very old. While there are a few younger ones, the Camarilla's Hand members are extremely selective in their recruitment, choosing only the most powerful and discreet. In addition, they tend to choose new members they can buy off, blackmail or threaten.

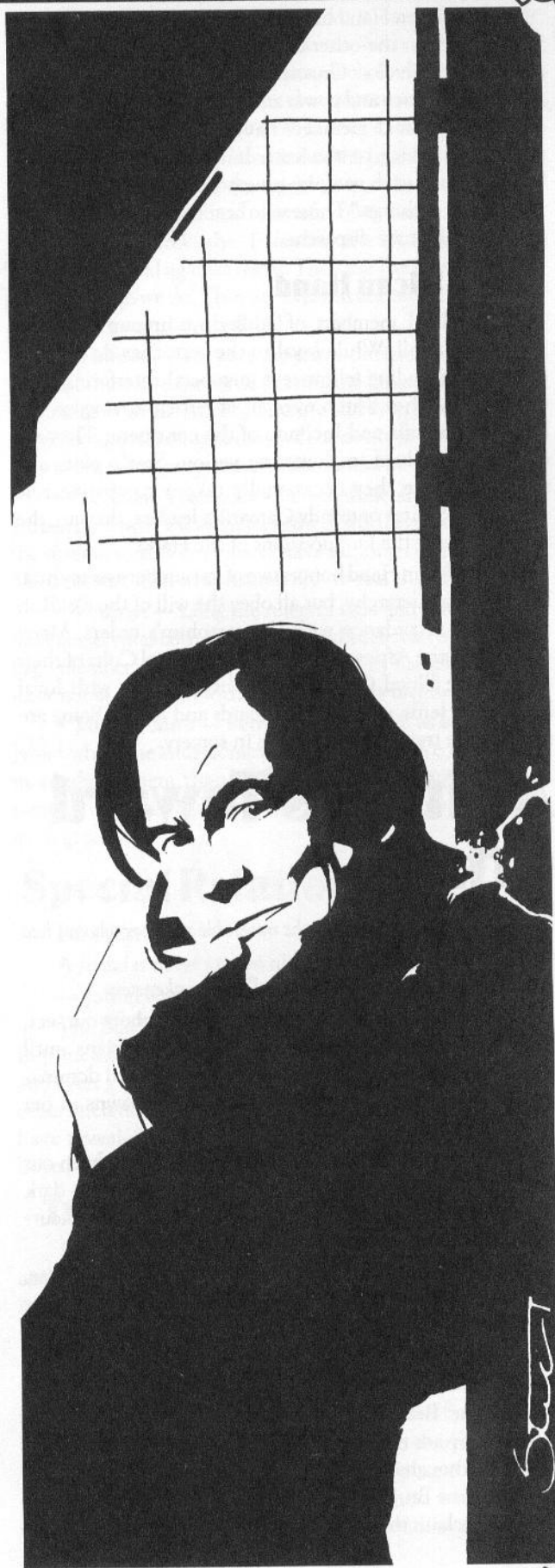
The Camarilla Hand is not without its own enemies. At least two Justicars suspect there is some kind of grand conspiracy, but neither they nor their Archons have had any luck uncovering anything that could actually incriminate Hand members. A few princes and primogen have also begun their own investigations into curious events that suggest a link between the Sabbat and the Camarilla Hand members.

Camarilla Hand members tend to be very noble, proper, powerful and influential. Most were masters of the Camarilla's power games long before they joined the sect. One of the major problems faced by the Camarilla's Hand is the mistrust between fellow Hand members. This has led to much plotting and secrecy within the sect. Camarilla Hand members tend to work alone or in small groups. This is as much to secure their own power as it is to protect other Camarilla Hand members, should they be discovered.

The Eastern Hand

The Black Hand of the East is even more radical and active than the Sabbat's Black Hand. Due to past and present conflicts with the Baali and Setites, they are prepared for nearly anything. The leaders of the Black Hand receive advice on their course of action from members of a long line of oracles. These oracles, known as the Shiqq, are supposedly in contact with the Djinn from the Realm of Smokeless Fire.

The sect is deeply tied to mortal affairs, overseeing much of daily life. The Eastern part of the sect is composed of two identifiable groups — the scholars and the warriors. They are active in Middle Eastern conflicts, making them a little more identifiable as a sect.



The Eastern Hand has its own rituals and secrets which it protects from the other divisions. In addition, it is more active in the Shadow Crusade, and places less emphasis on personal influence and power and more on honor and fanaticism. Many Hand members have voluntarily given their unives in service to the sect. It maintains a semi-strict hierarchy, and each vampire is supposed to "know her place in the order of things." Those who become too power-hungry or independent are dispatched.

The African Hand

The Hand members of Africa are among the most isolationist of all. While loyal to the sect, they do not like outsiders (including fellow sect members) interfering with their affairs. They watch over all of Africa, spying on the Setites, Camarilla and Inconnu of the continent. They are especially involved in thwarting various Setite plots and schemes. While they occasionally take a combative role against the Setites or unruly Camarilla leaders, they are the most passive of the four divisions of the Hand.

The African Hand honors two of its number as seraphim. It has no real hierarchy, but all obey the will of the Del'Roh and act in accordance with the seraphim's orders. Many members of the African Hand maintain Blood Cults of their own. These Blood Cults provide their masters with loyal Retainers, Herds, spies, agents, guards and lovers. Some are said to have trained their cultists in sorcery.

Attitudes Toward Others

I beheld the wretched — the miserable monster whom I had created.

— Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein*

• **Assamites** — They know far too much about our sect, but we will not betray them to the Antediluvians until Gehenna is upon us. While they prevent our total domination over the Middle East, they are valuable pawns in our conflicts against the Setites and Baali.

• **Baali** — Since the earliest times, they have been our enemies. They look to demons and spirits as their own dark saviors and our destroyers. Their blood is tainted with incurable evil.

• **False Brujah** — The time of their destruction is near. This clan of betrayers and bastard caitiff who claimed the false name of Brujah is disorganized and weak. Though they are anarchists, bruisers, and braggarts, they will still be mere sheep for the slaughter before our clan sires.

• **True Brujah** — As rare and true descendants of Brujah, they are noble, honorable and worthy of surviving Gehenna, though some may be members of the Inconnu. For now, the True Brujah of our sect merely await the day when they can reclaim their own name from the betrayers.

• **Caitiffs** — Useless rabble. The repulsive overpopulation has reached such a level that now Kindred create childer and do not even claim them. The fact that so many of our kind simply abandon their young without teaching them our ways is a sign that Gehenna is near.

• **Eastern Kindred** — These mysterious and peculiar vampires represent a grave threat. We have no idea where they fit into the scheme of things — will they stand with or against us when the time comes? We learn what we can of them whenever given the opportunity, but for now we prefer to avoid direct contact with them, as we have no power in their lands.

• **Followers of Set** — They are among the greatest of villains. Much like the Baali, they are evil incarnate. They threaten not only the Kindred, but the kine we protect as well. When the Army of Gehenna takes up arms, the snakes of Set will run to their hidey-holes, only to find it is too late, for we will be there waiting for them.

• **Gangrel** — Once they ruled the wild lands, cousins of the Lupines they once were, free and pure. Now their forest and jungle homes are shrinking rapidly, forcing them to exist within the cities of the other Kindred. How pitiful this noble clan has become.

• **Giovanni** — Certainly they are interested in more than wealth. We know not what goes on within the Mausoleum, their Venetian sanctum. They are a close-knit clan and they must be linked to some greater power, else they would have been destroyed by now.

• **Lasombra** — This clan of betrayers must be destroyed. They destroyed their own clan sire and are now marked as the darkest and most corrupt of our kind. None will be saved in the hour of judgment, as all of their blood must flow in the streets before their sins can be washed away.

• **Lasombra Antitribu** — Most of them are worthy of saving, for they stood against the betrayers within their own clan in an attempt to save their founder.

• **Malkavians** — The Malkavians are unknowable. There is power in their madness, and they can be terrible foes or useful allies. We must simply ignore the ravings of those who serve our interests and destroy those who do not.

• **Nosferatu** — There are those among them, not of our sect, who know of us. Those who know of us represent a grave danger — hunt them down and destroy them. Still, many are worthy of saving, for they have not become foul monsters like the Kindred of other clans. Their knowledge of secrets is very useful, for there are those who know of the Inconnu and their mysteries.

• **Ravnos** — Though they are tricksters on the surface, there is much more to this clan. They conceal many terrible secrets and dark schemes beneath their illusions and veil of simple games. Nothing is as it would seem with a Ravnos. Even those few in our sect are carefully watched, for they may be up to some game of their own.



- **Toreador** — A noble clan, for it has led humanity toward a better and brighter future. Without its efforts, civilization would have grown at a much slower pace. However, there are many deviants and corrupters among this clan who must be weeded out when the time of judgment arrives.

- **Tremere** — They have stolen the blood of Saulot and bred a new menace into the world. It must be obvious to all that they are engaged in some nefarious scheme. They will destroy the Ventrue, the Toreador, the Nosferatu and all others who stand against them. They use the Camarilla as a pawn, much as we do. They are evil and unnatural, and in the end either we or they shall fall.

- **Tzimisce** — They are the prime carriers of Vicissitude. Some of them live centuries bearing the disease, spreading it to hundreds, while others go insane and disappear after only a few decades. One night they will be destroyed, but for now, only those who are serious threats should be hunted down.

- **Old Clan Tzimisce** — Few of these ancient Kindred are infected with Vicissitude, as those who originally brought the disease to this dimension have all long been destroyed. Those of this clan who remain are no real threat.

- **Ventrue** — Long the rulers of kine and Kindred alike, this clan serves as both an oppressor and a defender of humanity. Each member of this clan must be judged by his or her actions, for it is a worthy clan with many unworthy members.

- **The Inconnu** — Perhaps they will aid us in our Great Jihad when the time comes... perhaps not. We know little more about them than the Nosferatu do. Certainly their number is at least equal to our own, and their power may be even greater.

Special Relations

But in deed,

A friend is never known till a man have need.

— John Heywood, *Be Merry Friends*

The Black Hand is not just a sect of vampires. Membership includes mages, an Abomination (vampire-werewolf) and even a Mummy. In addition, the Black Hand has many other ancient allies. They have been tested, and the betrayers have revealed their true colors. Those who remain are believed to truly support the Black Hand.

The Assamite Alliance

In A.D. 438, a war erupted between the Tal'mahe'Ra and the Assamites, shaking the very foundations of Kindred society. The Assamites would have been doomed had they not received assistance from the Setites, who planned to destroy the Assamites after defeating the Tal'mahe'Ra. The sand-snakes provided the Assamites with a vast number of new recruits (a tactic later passed along to the Sabbat).

In A.D. 516, an Assamite spy learned that the Setites were secretly responsible for the war, hoping it would let them control the entire region once their enemies had eliminated each other. Despite the atrocities committed



against one another, the Assamites and the Tal'mahe'Ra formed an alliance in A.D. 517. Together they ran the Setites out of their lands, destroying many of them. The Setites claimed that they were innocent and would seek vengeance.

Since that time, the alliance has remained tenuous but intact. The Assamites and the Eastern Hand allow free passage to one another without fear of retribution. In the last 200 years, the conflicts in the Middle East have led to deteriorating relations, but neither side openly attacks the other.

In addition, the Assamites who refused to surrender to the Camarilla eventually joined the Black Hand, though this has caused more conflict between the groups.

Mages of the Hand

The mages who would develop into the Euthanatos Tradition were the founders of the Tal'mahe'Ra. They taught the Kindred who later joined the sect how to pass into the Dark Umbra, other dark secrets of death and their own philosophy of True Magick. The mages even discovered the Antediluvians known as the Aralu in the Shadowlands and led the Kindred to them.

Whether or not the mages were forced to step down as leaders of the Tal'mahe'Ra remains a mystery. Older Rawis suggest they gave leadership to the Kindred of their own accord, fearing an eventual coup d'etat. Most of the mages traveled to India and other far lands where they would feel safe from their former sect. Some stayed with the Tal'mahe'Ra in exchange for power, wealth and knowledge.

A few Euthanatos mages remain with the sect. Their beliefs and practice of magick vary slightly from other Euthanatos, as they no longer share any connection to the actual Tradition. The mages practice their magick in service to the sect and are allowed to remain human, take on mortal apprentices and receive all rights given to other sect members. At least one Qadi and two marids believe that the mages have ties with the Euthanatos and are actually spies for the Tradition, keeping watch over the Black Hand. However, other Kindred who have heard this consider it mere paranoia.

The Verbena and Caine

During the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, a number of Blood Bound Verbena mages became victims in order to save their vampiric masters in the Black Hand. Others broke their connections to the sect, fearing that the same would happen to them.

Not all Verbena escaped or died before the Inquisition, and a few of the survivors continued to serve the Black Hand. Their apprentices and apprentices' apprentices now serve the sect, and a number of other Verbena covens are allies of the sect. Some say sect leaders still have Blood Bound Verbena Retainers, but there is no proof to support this.

The Verbena know the Black Hand almost as well as the Euthanatos do, and some claim they assist the sect so they can keep an eye on it. Still, they seem intensely loyal and have always served well.

The wazir and tribunal claim the Verbena who serve the Black Hand are the descendants of a powerful Verbena who once knew Caine. A couple of near-blasphemous Rawis suggest it was a Verbena who transformed Caine into the First Vampire by giving him the "Power of the Blood" as both a curse and a blessing.

The Ghouls of the Hand

Long ago, before the Tzimisce established their own foul ghouls families, the Black Hand had founded their own: the Enrathi of Eastern Europe, the Rafastio of Western Europe and the Marijava of India. These three families were chosen only after long and faithful service to the Black Hand.

Rather than drawing ghouls from many different sources, the sect decided it would call upon these entire families to serve the Black Hand. They would know many secrets of the sect, would share many great responsibilities with their masters and would receive great rewards, including immortality as ghouls.

After a few centuries, the ghouls of these families began limiting their marriages to one another, preventing those who were unworthy from becoming ghouls. This inbreeding of ghouls led to the creation of revenants (those who are born ghouls). Unlike normal ghouls, revenants are long-lived, but not immortal. They must have vampire blood to sustain them agelessly. They have far more power than other ghouls and do not even have to drink Kindred blood to sustain these powers.

Some say that once there were five ghouls families of the Black Hand, but that two were destroyed after being found guilty of betraying the Black Hand. All members of these two families were hunted down by shakari and murdered. Even the very names of the families have been erased from all records and are no longer spoken of openly. Some shakar secretly admit that there still may be a few surviving members of these families and, if so, they may have taken all their secrets to other Kindred. Whatever the case, they would certainly harbor a deep hatred of the Black Hand.

Dangerous Jyhads

The gods

Visit the sins of the fathers upon the children.

— Euripides, *Phrixus*

The Black Hand makes every effort to avoid direct conflict with its enemies. Still, many situations arise that require not-so-subtle force, and the sect is always ready for action. Its shakari and Removers are quite deadly, the sect's influence can crush like a steel vice, and its pawns outnumber nearly any single foe. Still, its foes are many, and the Hand often feels beset from all sides.



Sabbat In-fighting

*When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions.*

— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

The Sabbat Inquisition and the Loyalist movement have severely hurt the False Hand. The Sabbat Inquisition picks away at the facade of the False Hand, peering deeper into what lurks behind it, while the Loyalist movement breeds chaos, dissension and upheaval to both the Sabbat and the False Hand.

To counter these problems, the seraphim created permanent False Hand units as a means of restoring peace. While leaders fear using these units on the Sabbat or even directly against the sect's opponents, the Black Hand does plan on using them if another internal conflict emerges.

Assassinating and blackmailing Loyalists remain the Black Hand's preferred methods for maintaining peace and stability. Unfortunately for the Hand, the Loyalist movement is growing at an increasingly rapid pace, making it harder to keep the peace.

The Sabbat Inquisition remains immune from the Black Hand, since attacking any of its members would lead other Inquisitors or Sabbat prisci and cardinals to the True Hand. Those in power seldom investigate the assassinations of Loyalist leaders, as they are often responsible for the deaths.

Facing the Inconnu

We can learn even from our enemies.

— Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

The Inconnu has been around for a very long time, and it has learned much about the Black Hand. The Inconnu has never directly taken action for or against the Black Hand, leaving Hand leaders concerned about the Inconnu's purpose and loyalties.

The Black Hand instigated the practice of War Parties within the Sabbat. The Hand's original intention was to find Inconnu lairs, torture the inhabitants for information, and then commit diablerie upon them. However, the Sabbat has corrupted it into entirely a hunt-and-kill sport for prize vitæ.

The Inconnu is not as self-isolating and disorganized as it would seem. They have Monitors who watch over cities and report their findings, but the sect takes little or no direct action. Some Hand members continue to believe the Inconnu are the otherworldly ascetics others claim them to be. A few Rawis postulate that the Inconnu protects a place called Shalkamense, guarding Caine's great secrets and possibly even Caine himself.

The Setite War

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.

— William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

The Setites have long been the enemies of the Black Hand. The Setites are among the few who know of the existence of the True Hand and its ancient origins. They could reveal what they know of the Black Hand, toppling much of the sect's power

structure, yet they have not, for they fear the retribution it would bring. Still, the threat is real and the Setites, while not directly blackmailing the Black Hand, selectively reveal information to certain Camarilla and Sabbat leaders. This forces the Hand to busy itself plugging up the information leaks.

Since the Assamite Alliance of 517, the Setites have only become a more invisible enemy. Open conflict occasionally emerges in Haiti, the Middle East or some Third World nation, but battles are almost entirely fought by human pawns.

While the Setite conflict has never really ended, some claim the Setites long ago attempted to reach a truce with the Del'Roh, but were rebuked. It is said that the Hand leader's hatred of the clan is so strong that conflict will not end until all Setites and Set himself are destroyed. Others claim the Setites do not actively work against the entire Black Hand. It is said that Setites control a particular conspiratorial group within the Eastern Hand and that they are slowly corrupting the ancient Kindred.

Strangeness in the Far East

Appearances often are deceiving.

— Aesop, *The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*

Some vampires of the Far East call themselves the Children of Susanoo no Mikoto and claim no blood ties to the Western Kindred or Caine. It would seem these Kindred share many of the same powers of the Western Kindred, but they are vastly different in many ways. Some Eastern vampires can even move about during the day.

Many within the Black Hand find Eastern Kindred totally offensive because of their beliefs, but the unknown still requires fear and respect. Despite all the Black Hand's efforts in moving eastward into China and Japan, their hard-fought machinations have yielded little success. There have even been comments made by a seraph concerning an alliance between the Hand and some group known as the Heike.

Russia

Wretched and abundant,

Oppressed and powerful,

Weak and mighty,

Mother Russia!

— Nikolai Nekrasov, *Who Is Happy in Russia?*

The Brujah council that once ruled the Soviet Union was a perpetual thorn in the side of the Hand. Its leaders were powerful enough to deflect Hand attacks, the lack of Brujah in the Hand made it hard to infiltrate, and the Hand could never spare enough resources to effectively deal with it. Thus the sect hailed the council's destruction in the late '80s.

Now the sect has even more reason to worry. Attempts to send their own agents into Russia have been completely rebuffed, and mystical attempts to spy on the area have been equally unsuccessful. In fact, those who have tried have been destroyed. Even the Nosferatu claimed to be unable to uncover the truth.



Now rumors have begun to leak out. Stories of Baba Yaga, an ancient and extremely powerful Cainite, receive more and more weight with every passing night. If she has returned, then the sect has reason to fear, for some members of the sect remember past battles with the hideous creature — and past losses.

Many within the Black Hand view Baba Yaga's return as a sign of impending Gehenna, seeing her as a powerful pawn of some other great and powerful force — most likely one or more Antediluvians. Some of the wazir fear she may serve a similar interest without knowing it. Others merely fear her. There are also those who claim she serves Antediluvians, but Antediluvians with different interests than those of the Black Hand's Antediluvians. Her plans, and those of her masters (should she have any), remain a mystery for now.

Mortal Relations

Salus populi suprema lex.

(The people's safety is the highest law.)

— Latin legal and political maxim

Society of Leopold

Elders within the Black Hand remember the very founding of the Christian religion. They watched the strange offshoot of Hebrew religion grow from an esoteric underground cult in Rome into a major world religion. The sect watched the development and spread of Catholicism and its eventual fall

from ultimate authority in Europe. The Kindred understand Christianity, for it has been with them a very long time.

The various Inquisitions and Crusades were horrible sights to behold. Many remember when the night sky was lit by the pyres of hundreds tried and convicted of witchcraft and heresy by the church. The Society of Leopold, while small and relatively unimportant to the Hand, reminds them of this dark past.

Many vampires have tried to destroy it, but found it was in many ways invincible. Despite all efforts to kill its agents and destroy its hideaways, it always returned bearing crosses and stakes to take vengeance upon the Kindred. Because of this, the Black Hand avoids the Society of Leopold, instead concentrating on its many other problems.

Benandanti

Some older Hand members speak of mortals known as the Benandanti. They are humans capable of leaving their bodies and traveling into the Underworld. It is said that once, long ago, some of them walked the streets of Enoch in disguise and secretly studied in the libraries of the Tal'mahe'Ra.

Most Kindred have never heard of them, and most of those who have do not believe in their existence. They claim no living soul can enter the Underworld. Still, some fear valuable secrets were stolen by the Benandanti, which might be traded to others in the Underworld, leading to an attack on Enoch, or at least ending its peace.



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Chapter Four: Building Better Bastards

Death is afraid of him because he has the heart of a lion.
— Arab proverb

Character Creation

I have seen no more evident monstrosity and miracle in the world than myself.

— Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, *Essays, To the Reader*

Because the Black Hand is an ancient sect of powerful Kindred, this section provides information on creating more powerful characters. However, Storytellers may want to have characters work their way up to the point where the Black Hand would recruit them, start them as chatterlings, or even have them begin play as neonates whom the Hand recruits for an emergency.

If the Storyteller opts to have the players create new characters, they should follow the basic system provided in *Vampire*. In addition, because the Black Hand can be played in several different ways, the Storyteller must decide on the rough power level of the characters, be they new members, established elders or sect leaders. Storytellers may limit the purchase of the Age and Generation Backgrounds to enforce the desired style of play. If the Storyteller wants players to have older characters, she may find **Elysium: The Elder Wars** helpful.

New Members

These characters are experienced ancillæ with limited influence. They usually range from 7th to 10th generation and were Embraced somewhere between 50 and 200 years ago. They perform a wide variety of missions, from espionage to assassination to fighting in the Shadow Crusade. They are rewarded for faithful service with boons from fellow members, with little required in return.

These Kindred usually maintain an Alternate Identity within the Sabbat as dominions or within the Camarilla as influential ancillæ, or in other positions of similar responsibility. In any case, these Kindred control a few pawns and oversee small missions, often performing missions themselves.

Established Elders

These characters have passed beyond the status of Black Hand neonate by acquiring power either before or after joining the sect. They tend to range between 6th and 8th generation and were Embraced somewhere between 100 and 400 years ago. They are influential elders who seldom directly perform missions, except in situations where they are the only ones capable of doing so. All boons, even from fellow sect members, must be repaid normally, though many younger Kindred of the Black Hand are generous in their boons toward elders.

Bloodlines of the Black Hand

The Black Hand usually only accepts vampires of the following clans and bloodlines, believing the others to be inherently flawed. Note that some of the bloodlines are described in *Vampire, The Vampire Players Guide*, *The Players Guide to the Sabbat*, *The Storytellers Handbook to the Sabbat* or later in this chapter.

- Assamite *antitribu*
- True Brujah
- Daughters of Cacophony
- Gangrel and Country Gangrel *antitribu*
- Malkavian and Malkavian *antitribu*
- Nagaraja
- Nosferatu and Nosferatu *antitribu*
- Ravnos *antitribu*
- Toreador and Toreador *antitribu*
- Old Clan Tzimisce
- Ventrue and Ventrue *antitribu*

Note: The Ahrimanes, Assamites, Brujah, Brujah *antitribu*, City Gangrel *antitribu*, Giovanni, Kiasyd, Lasombra, Ravnos, Samedi, Tremere, Tremere *antitribu* and Tzimisce are all expressly excluded from membership.

Established elders tend to maintain Alternate Identities within the Sabbat as bishops, prisci or powerful dominions, or within the Camarilla as primogen or other important elders. They control a great number of pawns and oversee many missions for the Black Hand. In addition, they immerse themselves in the politics of their false sect.

Sect Leaders

These characters are among the more powerful members of Kindred society, and most Storytellers will not want to let players begin the chronicle with such power. These vampires tend to be between 5th and 7th generation and all were Embraced over 400 years ago. They almost never directly participate in their own schemes or those of either their false sect or the Black Hand, considering themselves too valuable. They are usually among the most powerful Cainites of a city, or even an entire region.

Most are either seraphs, prisci, archbishops or powerful bishops in the Sabbat, and/or primogen, princes or Archons of the Camarilla. They control a network of pawns and serve the Black Hand while still maintaining the illusion of serving their false sect.

Step One: Character Concept

The first thing a player must do is ask her Storyteller what power level will be appropriate for the characters. The player then develops a suitable concept even before writing anything down. Developing a character concept includes



JAMES DALY 1994

Elder Traits

Starting Generation: 10th

Attributes: 10/7/5

Abilities: 20/12/8

Disciplines: 10

Background: 15

Virtues: 7

Freebie Points: 20

Note: If a character has a starting Attribute, Ability or Advantage of 6 or higher after spending all freebie points, she must take a Derangement for each such Trait.

choosing a clan for the character, as well as a Nature and Demeanor. The player can also begin thinking in terms of the character's interests and backgrounds.

Step Two: Choosing Attributes

Choosing Attributes is the same as in normal character creation, except that if the Storyteller wants the players to have elder characters, they receive more points to allocate. An elder receives 10/7/5. The categories of Attributes must be ranked in order of primary, secondary and tertiary.

Step Three: Choosing Abilities

Abilities are handled the same as they are in normal character creation, except players receive more points to allocate. The number of points to divide amongst the Abilities is 20/12/8.

Step Four: Choosing Advantages

Black Hand characters receive the following points before play begins — Disciplines 10, Backgrounds 15, Virtues 7.

Disciplines

Discipline choices are not limited to those of the character's clan. Note, however, that no non-clan Discipline can be raised higher than the character's clan Disciplines through this distribution of points. However, non-clan Disciplines can be raised higher than clan Disciplines through the use of freebie points.

Freebie Point Cost

Attributes: 5 per dot

Abilities: 2 per dot

Disciplines: 7 per dot

Backgrounds: 1 per dot

Elder Backgrounds: 4 per dot

Virtues: 4 per dot

Humanity, Willpower, Path: 5 per dot

Backgrounds

Almost all members of the Black Hand have an Alternate Identity. In addition, the character's rating in Alternate Identity must be at least 2 for new members, 3 for established elders, and 5 for sect leaders.

Black Hand Virtues

A Hand member will have either the Virtues of normal Kindred (Conscience, Self-Control and Courage) or those of the Sabbat (Callousness, Instincts and Morale). The character will have the Virtues of the sect that Embraced him. However, characters Embraced by the Camarilla who went over to the Sabbat may have either set of Virtues.

Step Five: Last Touches

The player must determine the character's Willpower rating and choose the character's Path of Enlightenment. The character's Willpower is equal to her Courage or Morale rating, while her Path of Enlightenment rating is equal to either her Conscience + Self-Control or her Callousness + Instincts. A character cannot have a rating in Humanity if he has the Sabbat Virtues.

Freebie Points

All characters receive 20 freebie points.

Maturation

The length of time a character has been around, not counting any time spent in torpor, affects the number of freebie points she receives. It also determines the experience cost she must pay for Traits.

Freebie Points

Years	Points
10-100	15
101-250	25
251-500	40
501-750	60
751-1000+	80

Experience Chart

Trait	Experience Cost				
	•	••	•••	••••	•••••
New Ability	3	4	5	6	7
New Thaumaturgy Path	7	8	9	10	11
New Discipline	10	11	12	13	14
Humanity	CRx2	CRx3	CRx3	CRx4	CRx4
Virtue	CRx2	CRx2	CRx3	CRx3	CRx4
Ability	CRx2	CRx2	CRx2	CRx3	CRx3
Attribute	CRx4	CRx4	CRx4	CRx5	CRx5
Thaumaturgy Path	CRx4	CRx4	CRx4	CRx4	CRx5
Clan Discipline	CRx5	CRx5	CRx6	CRx6	CRx7
Other Discipline	CRx7	CRx8	CRx8	CRx9	CRx10

* CR = Current Rating

Black Hand Preludes

It was a long time ago. Sometimes I almost forget my first life. It was nothing. My death was meaningless.

— Saker, *Elementals: The Natural Order*

The first part of a character's prelude should follow the basic method provided in *Vampire, The Storytellers Handbook to the Sabbat*, or *Elysium: The Elder Wars*. Beyond this, the prelude should continue onward, covering the entire unlfe of the character up until the point where the chronicle begins. Thus, the length of the prelude is based upon the age of the character. A prelude for a new member might only take a few minutes longer than a normal prelude, while a prelude for a sect leader might take several sessions.

In addition to the questions usually answered in preludes, Storytellers and players might want to consider the following issues:

Who are your pawns and masters?

Who does the character hold Regnant over? Who holds Regnant over the character? Who owes the character boons? To whom does the character owe boons? Who are the character's ghouls? Who are the character's superiors? Who are the character's other pawns, and what power does the character have over them? What other powers do the character's masters hold over her? How have certain pawns served the character in the past? How has the character served her masters in the past? What are the pawns' attitudes toward the character? What are the character's masters' attitudes toward the character?

Who can you trust?

Who does the character think she can turn to in times of need? Who does the character think would betray her or use her? Who does the character have bad feelings about? Who has the character caught in a lie? Who does the character believe is scheming against her?

What do you believe in?

Aside from the implications of a Path of Enlightenment score, what does the character believe in? Does the character

believe in everything the Black Hand is doing and everything it stands for? What does the character disagree with? Has the character voiced any disagreement? If so, how? What are the character's beliefs concerning Gehenna? What role does the character see herself fulfilling during Gehenna?

What are your current interests?

What does the character scheme over? What does the character always think about? How does the character spend her time? How does the character pursue these interests? How passionate is the character? What are the character's plans in terms of these interests?

How has unlfe changed you over the course of the years?

Has the character changed over the course of time? Has she become more or less cruel, power-hungry and cunning? Has the character become callous, or has she maintained a sense of compassion? Has the character been successful or unsuccessful? Has the character become more or less violent? Have the character's interests changed over the course of time?

What great challenges have you faced during your unlfe?

Has anyone ever tried to destroy the character? How did the character survive? Has the character ever taken any lives (or unlives)? If so, whose and under what circumstances? Has the character ever faced a test of the soul to overcome the Beast? What was the experience like?

What has been your contact with other supernatural creatures?

Has the character ever met any mages or werewolves? What was the contact like? What were the circumstances? How did the character feel about these other beings? What insight has the character gained into the existence of these other creatures?

Using Pre-existing Characters

Some players may wish to continue playing characters they have already developed through hours, possibly even years, of play. Perhaps the Storyteller can provide new challenges for these characters by inducting them into the Black Hand. While the Storyteller should keep in mind that some bloodlines are excluded from the Black Hand, all players should be afforded an

equal opportunity. Thus, if one player can have his character initiated into the Black Hand, all the players should be able to do so. The Storyteller can always concoct a plausible excuse for why the character is inducted into the Black Hand.

New Bloodlines

*I feel power running through my veins and out my eyes
And into empty Godforsaken minds without reality
I feel power. I feel a sacrifice.
I am dead to right or wrong.*

— Swans, "Power and Sacrifice"

This section covers three new bloodlines. All the other bloodlines mentioned in this book are described in *Vampire, The Players Guide to the Sabbat*, *The Vampire Players Guide* or *The Storytellers Handbook to the Sabbat*.

The Paths of Enlightenment

*What do good and evil mean to an ordinary mortal?
To the vampire, whose life is anything but ordinary, they
mean everything.*

— Michael Romkey, *I, Vampire*

Kindred of the Black Hand tend to follow the same Paths as those practiced by the Sabbat. In fact, three of the seven most common Paths of Enlightenment may have been founded by Hand members. Many of the Kindred openly revel in the fact that they are no longer human and need not act as if they are. None openly espouse the Path of Evil Revelations, and it is doubtful that more than two or three members actually do follow this blasphemous philosophy. About half of the Black Hand's vampires have clung to their Humanity throughout the centuries, though most are far less human than they once were.

Players may choose any of the Paths of Enlightenment provided in *The Players Guide to the Sabbat*, or opt to have their characters maintain their Humanity. In addition, there are three important Paths of Enlightenment which the Hand has not passed on to the Sabbat: the Path of Lilith, for this path teaches a different origin of the Kindred and is vehemently opposed by the Noddists who follow the Path of Caine; the Path of the Scorched Heart, which teaches a policy of self-isolation and states that vampires can only overcome the Beast by disconnecting emotionally from the world; and the Path of Self-Focus, which places the vampire at the true source of everything and in the midst of a struggle between good and evil.



JAMES DALY '94

TRUE BRUJAH

The True Brujah claim to descend from Brujah himself and not from Troile, who supposedly committed diablerie upon her Antediluvian sire. The True Brujah resent the claiming of their sire's name by Troile and her bastard lineage. They long for the night when they will reclaim their heritage from the false Brujah. Until that night, they must falsely claim lineage to other clans or simply call themselves Brujah.

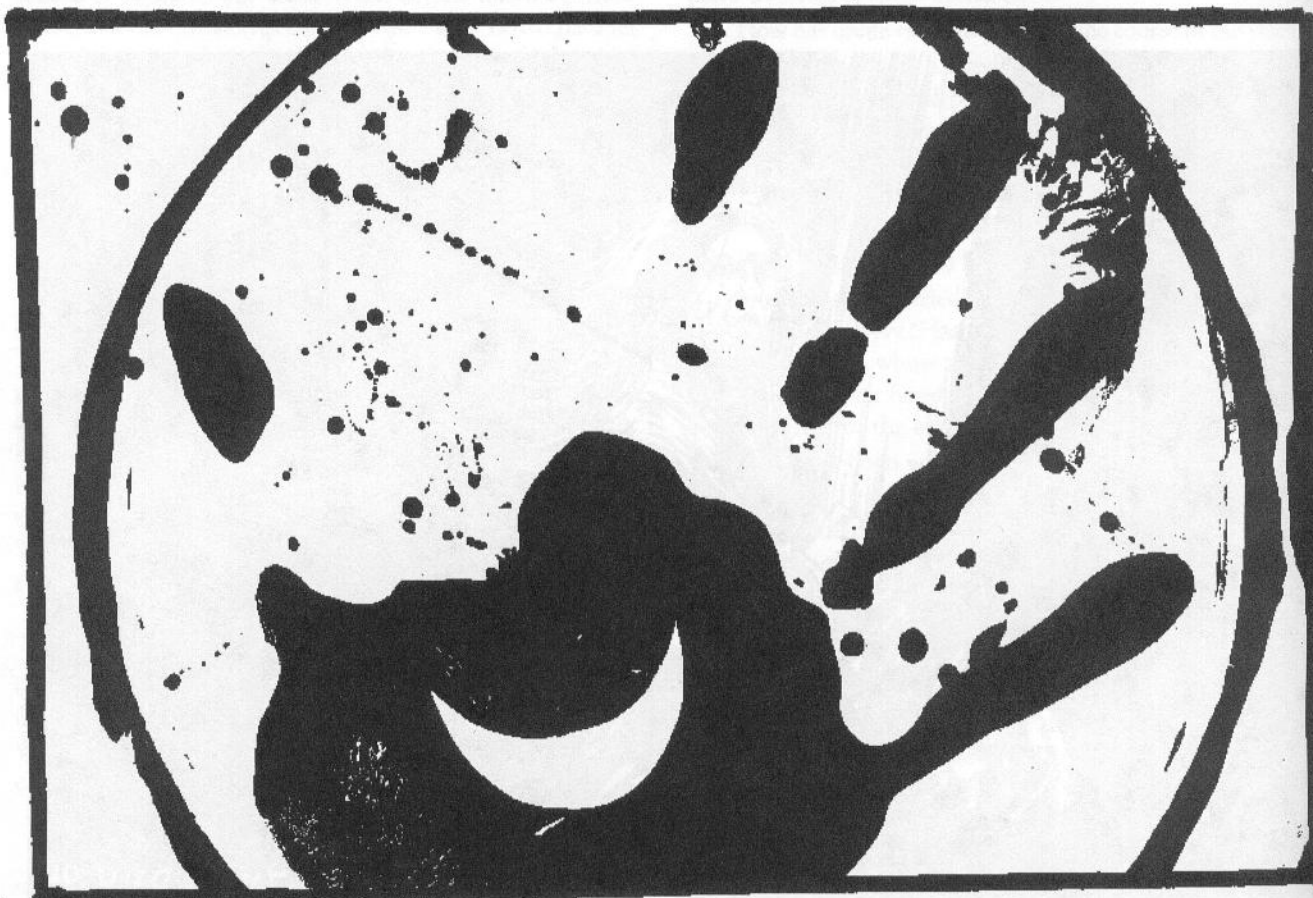
Consequently, they rarely interact with each other or other vampires; instead, they spend much of their time gathering information and developing their powers. They continue to prepare for war against the false Brujah but, since they have been preparing this way for at least 5,000 years (and probably more), such a feat is unlikely.

Nickname: Elois

Appearance: Even those who exist and work among the Brujah clan dress conservatively. The younger ones occasionally dress in black leather, spikes and chains, but this is not condoned within the Black Hand unless doing otherwise would jeopardize their missions or Alternate Identities. Most prefer expensive, custom-fitted suits, usually in black.

Haven: They like large estates, mansions, and other big, comfortable, isolated places where they can be alone. Their havens for their Alternate Identities are smaller city dwellings, often subterranean and well-guarded.

Background: True Brujah only select the brightest, bravest original thinkers. They prefer those seasoned with both education and experience, but they often Embrace the young who are mature for their years and quiet in their passions.



Character Creation: Most are dilettantes, outsiders or professionals (mostly scholars) though they can have any concept. They can have any Nature and Demeanor except Conformist. The choices should reflect their strong and unique personal outlook on (un)life. Mental Attributes are usually primary, as are Knowledge Abilities. They often have higher than average ratings in Alternate Identity, Contacts and Resources.

Clan Disciplines: Potence, Presence, Temporis

Weaknesses: True Brujah are passionless beings — cold, detached and morose. They seldom show any emotion, and even when they do, they are still far less passionate than most. They understand good and evil from a philosophical viewpoint, but not from one of conscience. Regaining Humanity is always twice as difficult for them once it is lost — double the experience points necessary to regain lost Humanity or Path of Enlightenment ratings.

Preferred Paths: Most prefer the Path of the Scorched Heart or the Path of Self-Focus, but some follow the Path of Power and the Inner Voice or the Path of Lilith.

Organization: They view themselves as scholars and share professional respect for one another, though they often disagree on various issues. Small groups of True Brujah gather to discuss politics, philosophy, religion, art, music and all other avenues of mortal and immortal interest.

Unlike the Childer of Troile, all the True Brujah manage to meet twice a century at some mutually agreed upon location. The True Brujah not of the Black Hand hear of this meeting also, and most attend. Together they tell stories of their past, talk of the atrocities of the false Brujah, rant about their own efforts against them and debate other topics of interest.

In times of trouble, members call upon one another without worrying about the Rite of Prestation. They strongly believe in solidarity, claiming it is the only thing that has allowed them to survive against the divided False Brujah.

Gaining Clan Prestige: They also gain respect by thwarting efforts of the false Brujah, by winning debates against one another and by increasing knowledge through their research, thoughts, and writings. Those who collect information that might lead to tracking down Troile are also awarded with prestige.

Quote: *We bear a great atrocity. In addition to stealing the blood of our clan father, they have stolen his name. We are the True Brujah, and one night the streets will flow with the blood of Troile's bastards.*



nagaraja

Long, long ago the mages of the Euthanatos Tradition experimented with the blood of the Kindred. Some of the most foolish actually managed to turn themselves into vampires without being directly Embraced. Their own manipulations of the blood, combined with their innate magickal natures, produced the Nagaraja, a bloodline of cannibals, Necromancers and feared servants of the Black Hand.

The Nagaraja are unlike other Kindred in that they must consume flesh, making them among the most reviled and “unnatural” of the bloodlines. To add to this disgust, they are masters of Oblivion, the nothingness of the Underworld. The Nagaraja are also masters of Necromancy — an art learned from the Euthanatos and Inauhaten the Mummy.

The Nagaraja engage in many strange and terrible Thaumaturgical and Necromantic experiments. They are even believed responsible for the creation of the Samedi, though they refuse to take credit for their awful kind.



Nickname: Flesh Eaters

Appearance: Nagaraja prefer black, white and blood-red clothing. They commonly dress in suits, though some favor leather. They wear hooded cloaks and carry about the components needed to work their Necromancy even while in the Living World. In the Underworld, they usually dress in the ceremonial garb of the Euthanatos. They carry sacrificial daggers, in addition to scalpels and other medical (culinary) accouterments needed for removing the human flesh they must consume.

Haven: On Earth, the Nagaraja often "live" in places believed haunted, which are said to provide easier passage in and out of the Underworld. They usually keep their coffins and their laboratories (along with their food supply of cadavers) in the basement, while using the rest of the house to entertain guests and as living quarters for servants.

Background: Most of the mortals who are chosen already have an intense interest in the study of death, but not in causing death for themselves or others. Indeed, they often choose doctors, priests, cultists, philosophers and parapsychologists. The chosen are often middle-aged, though some prefer Embracing even older mortals.

Character Creation: Most are dilettantes or professionals, though some criminals and outsiders are occasionally chosen. They can have any Nature or Demeanor, though a Deviant Nature and Loner Demeanor are the most common. Mental Attributes are generally primary, as are Knowledge Abilities. Their preferred Backgrounds include Allies, Contacts, and Retainers.

Bloodline Disciplines: Auspex, Necromancy, Nihilistics

Weaknesses: They must eat raw human flesh as well as drinking blood. The corpses must be fresh, and the Nagaraja often know rituals that preserve corpses for weeks or longer. For each night they do not partake of fresh human flesh (be it from a living or dead source), they lose one die from rolls involving their Physical Attributes. Consuming one Blood Point worth of flesh restores one die to the pool. An average human body has 10 Blood Points worth of flesh, and each point taken from a living victim inflicts one wound level.

Preferred Paths: The Path of Death and the Soul and the Path of Self-Focus are the two most popular paths among this bloodline, though some follow the Path of Lilith or the Path of the Scorched Heart.

Organization: They almost never gather together, as each member is extremely secretive. Most have invented their own secret rituals, and they are only willing to share such knowledge with others as costly boons.

Gaining Bloodline Prestige: They commonly gain prestige through discovering new understandings of art, death and magic. They also gain it through their exploration of the Underworld.

Quote: *The greatest fear is the fear of the unknown — fear of death. You know not from whence you came, but I, my friend, know where you will be going, for I have been there. I could take you there, but you would not like what you would find. Your fate is inevitable, but serve my interests, and I will protect you from it for as long as I can.*



Old Clan Tzimisce

They are so ancient that even the oldest legends speak only of their childer. They are the Old Clan, the True Tzimisce, and all the Tzimisce of the Sabbat (and even the few within the Inconnu and the Camarilla) are their betrayers. Their childer abandoned the lineage of the Tzimisce and embraced the power of Vicissitude; their ways of anarchy brought ruin and death to both the innocent and the guilty of their clan.

There are very few Old Clan Tzimisce, and each has sired only a few progeny. They all cling to the old ways of the clan and long for the day their clan sire will return. They continue to hope that one night they will be around to exact revenge upon the traitors of their blood and upon all possessed by Vicissitude.

Many of the younger clan members are leaders in the war against Vicissitude. In the vain hope of regaining clan honor by eliminating the disease their clan brought to Earth, they were the first to call for the Shadow Crusade and have remained its strongest supporters.

Despite their dislike of the "Tzimisce," the Old Clan Tzimisce are much like their childer. They are among the most macabre and evil beings in the world. They place little value on the lives (and unlives) of others. Yet despite this, they are vigilant in their vows to save the world from the threats of Vicissitude and other Kindred. They also have a great love of knowledge, surpassed in the Black Hand only by the True Brujah. They have a good understanding of both Thaumaturgy and science. They are also known for the high value they place upon privacy.

Nickname: Fiends

Appearance: They dress much like other Tzimisce, though often in even older clothing. Even the younger members of the clan dress in clothing popular 100 years ago. Solid black, accented with white, is most popular, giving them the look of the traditional vampires of legend.

Haven: The older members of the clan live on the same lands they knew and loved in life, mostly gigantic domains in Eastern Europe. They usually make their homes in dark and dreary ancestral castles haunted by the spirits of their former captives and family members. The younger members of the clan often make their havens in luxurious mansions, as do most of the "Tzimisce."

All Old Clan Tzimisce are very particular about their havens. To be invited in is a great honor bestowed upon only the closest of comrades. If anyone enters a Tzimisce's haven uninvited, he will incur the full wrath of the vampire. If the Tzimisce invites an individual into her haven, she assumes the responsibilities of providing for and protecting the individual. Those who would cross the Tzimisce's domain without announcing their presence (by courier, letter, phone or whatever) are treated as hostile enemies, even if they are fellow sect members. Those who announce their presence and receive permission to enter are never harmed by the Tzimisce.

Background: They almost always choose progeny between the ages of 30 and 40 who are both intelligent and well-educated. They spend a lot of time studying their potential childer in order to determine whether or not they will make worthy companions over the following centuries.

2) David Fisher 1994



Character Creation: All the eldest clan members are of nobility. Their progeny are commonly dilettantes, professionals or soldiers. Their Natures and Demeanors are usually similar, but never identical. Regardless of their Natures and Demeanors, they are almost always self-serving, honorable, evil and trustworthy. Mental Attributes are often primary, while Physical Attributes are secondary. Skills or Knowledges are primary. Their preferred Backgrounds include Influence, Resources and Retainers.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Dominate

Weaknesses: Like all other Tzimisce, something deep inside of them craves stability and permanence. They share a special connection to the land they claimed as their own in life. They must surround themselves with at least two handfuls of dirt from a land important to them in life. If they fail to do this, they cannot rest in peace and lose half their dice pools from all actions every 24 hours until down to one die; this weakened state continues until they rest amid their special soil once again. While many believe this weakness is tied to Vicissitude, Kindred who are infected with Vicissitude and belong to other clans do not suffer from this weakness. Indeed, this weakness is as ancient as the clan.

Preferred Paths: Most prefer the Path of Death and the Soul or the Path of Caine. Some are known to follow the Path of the Scorched Heart or the Path of Lilith.

Organization: The Old Clan Tzimisce never meet except in dire emergencies. Most members of the Old Clan are independent, calling for aid only if they have no other choice, relying upon themselves and their servants whenever possible.

Gaining Clan Prestige: The Tzimisce respect one another's power and independence. They gain prestige through their own successes and accumulation of power, by crushing their enemies, by aiding the clan or the Black Hand and by never allowing anything more than their evil presence to be felt by those who are their victims. Any Tzimisce who invades another's privacy loses respect in the eyes of his fellow clan members.

Quote: *Thousands of human lives have been taken by my hands. I am a protector of humanity, but my vigilance comes with a price.*

The Path of Lilith

Of the darkness we are all born. The demons and wraiths are your siblings and the Lupines your cousins. All which is supernatural was born of the Queen of the Night: Lilith, our dark mother. One night she will return, as she has before in legend, to murder her children and reclaim the power she has lent us for our short, macabre unlifetimes. We must prepare for her; we must discover ourselves in her teachings, for all our dilemmas, and the solutions to them, reside in her.

—Crenshaw Ghast, Lilinist and Camarilla Primogen of Dallas

Nickname: Lilins

Basic Beliefs: The followers of this path call themselves Lilins after a class of demons associated in rabbinical lore with the Demon Queen. Many consider them the demons of their namesake, as they are among the least human of Kindred. They believe in living separately from mortals and in acting as monsters. They dislike interfering with mortal affairs and do not espouse the vampiric ruling of kine.

They place no faith in honor, trust, truth or fairness. However, they realize there is strength in numbers and serve the Black Hand well. They are scholars, much like the Noddists who follow the Path of Caine, except they study the legends and cultures of mages, werewolves and other creatures as well. Lilins believe all supernatural beings were born of Lilith.

The Lilins believe Lilith is the first vampire, not Caine. According to them, Lilith was Adam's first wife. God cast her out of the Garden because she refused to lay beneath Adam and committed the sin of considering herself his equal. Lilins consider her the mother of demons and the killer of children... including her own.

Her name is the only word from the ancient Sumerian language to survive in English, and for good reason — she still survives herself. She remains a great threat, and many would serve her. In the end, she will return to complete her task: She will kill her children — the Kindred, the Garou, the mages and all others born of her blood.

Lilins believe personal strength comes from knowing one's limitations. They explore their vampiric natures, discovering their own weaknesses so they can overcome them and finding their strengths so they can improve upon them.

The Lilins have their own secret libraries, said to contain ancient artifacts from vampiric history which not only link Lilith to the Kindred, but also support their claim of her being the first vampire. Some say they have original writings from the time of the real First City which speak of Caine as Lilith's lover and king of the Kindred by her decree.

Followers of this path often practice Thaumaturgy. True masters of the Discipline are said to know a ritual for creating an amulet which will guard against Lilith, demons, mages, werewolves and all other supernatural threats. Lilins often gather to conduct strange rituals of their own, far away from the prying eyes of the sect. Some believe they join with mortal cults and mages in these rituals.

Ethics

- Fear Lilith, for the Demon Queen kills her own children. Gehenna will be the final test and you must be ready to face her challenges.

- Explore the worlds of other supernatural creatures and study their legends and myths, for Lilith is their creator, and each holds a piece of the puzzle.

- You are not meant to rule the mortal world, for it is the world of Seth's children, not Lilith's. You may hold enough power to protect yourself and rule your own kind, but your role is that of monster, not master.

- You are a master of the night. Rule it well. You must be the monster of legend, and all mortals should fear you.

- You must perfect your vampiric nature through the exploration of what unlife really means. Explore its pleasures, pains, joys, strengths, and weaknesses. You must know your own limitations... and those of your enemies.

- Search out and confront your fears, overcome them and find the strength you need to survive.

- You are disgusted over the vampiric obsession with materialism and wealth. True power is internal and eternal. While wealth, influence and other weapons are useful, you have no chance unless you are truly strong. Build your Disciplines and your Willpower.

- Always feed from mortals, for they were meant to be your prey. Use mortals as Retainers when necessary, but remain apart from them. Do not befriend them or love them, for they are not of your kind. They can never understand or accept who and what you are.

- Nothing is fair in the world. Maintain a facade of honor, honesty and fairness, but never truly follow these principles, as they set unnecessary limitations and spawn weakness.

- Love, trust and obey only those you must. Find strength in independence, but wisdom will teach you that you cannot always stand alone.

- Know that in the end you will succumb to your weakness or to someone stronger than yourself. No one is truly immortal. No one is truly strong. You can only lengthen your unlifetime by making few enemies and by destroying those you do make.

History

The Path of Lilith developed more than 1,200 years ago in Africa. It was supposedly started by Hukros, a fourth-generation Gangrel who explored ruins and collected artifacts from vampiric lore.

He encountered a cult of mortals who knew the secrets of the Kindred and guarded a collection of ancient writings now known as the Cycle of Lilith. Hukros and his minions attempted to steal the manuscripts but met with defeat at the hands of the cultists' demons. Hukros managed to escape and told others of his experiences.

Soon curious Kindred joined him and sought these writings in other places. Most vampires thought them fools, and they accepted (as they do now) Caine as the First Vampire.

Eventually, debate grew heated and the Path of Caine arose. Now followers of the two paths vehemently disagree. They so dislike one another that they do not even trade information in a scholarly fashion, but instead hoard their findings and allow only their own members to view them.

Description of Followers

Most Lilins were once scholars and other curious Kindred who merely wanted to know the truth. However, over time the beliefs of the path became as popular as its purpose. Now most Lilins merely appreciate the value of the path's tenets concerning power and dealings with mortals. Most look and dress as any other Kindred of their bloodline, generation and time. However, they all seem to share an interest in the occult, and some sport amulets said to bear the 15 names of Lilith on the inside.

Common Abilities: All Lilins know at least some of the following: Archeology, History (especially ancient history), Investigation, Kindred Lore, Linguistics (ancient languages in particular), Lore (any types), Occult, Research and Theology.

Preferred Disciplines: Dominate, Fortitude, Potence, Presence, and Thaumaturgy are considered very important, though Lilins believe in developing all Disciplines to their fullest extent.

Views on the Other Paths

Path of Caine — "They are wrong — completely and utterly — and it will be their undoing. When Gehenna comes, they will be in for a surprise. Perhaps their leaders know the truth already and are merely afraid to admit it."

Path of Cathari — "At first glance they appear much like us, but they are weak and foolish. They are hedonists who ignore their own weaknesses, hiding in their pleasures from the truth which shall destroy them."

Path of Death and the Soul — "The answers to existence are not found in the truths of death. Their quest for knowledge is useless. We will all know the secrets of death soon enough. Our current existence is what is important."

Path of Evil Revelations — "They are the weakest of all our kind. Damn them to the hell where they belong. They look to the servants of Lilith for power without thinking of the price they pay. They must be destroyed before they destroy us."

Path of Harmony — "Tranquillity is good for the here and now, but it cannot last. By imposing a shadow of Humanity upon their actions, these fools display their weakness for all to see. They do not have the strength to remain human or to face what they have truly become."

Path of Honorable Accord — "Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! There can be no honor or accord among our kind. The idealists who play such games will find their way to the grave soon enough."

Path of Power and the Inner Voice — "They are the most like us. They are strong and they know their limitations. However, they are weak in their desire to rule humanity, for it shows they do not realize their true purpose."

Path of Lilith Hierarchy of Sins

- 10 Failing to pursue new experiences which can bring enlightenment.
- 9 Failure to pursue an exchange of information with other types of supernatural beings.
- 8 Failure to test your own courage and weaknesses when given the opportunity.
- 7 Failure to pursue information that would further the claim of Lilith as first vampire if there is only moderate risk.
- 6 Helping others when it is not to your advantage.
- 5 Acting honorably when there is no need; failing to pursue evidence of Lilith when there is only minor danger involved.
- 4 Not killing a mortal when there is need to do so.
- 3 Feeling remorse about anything you did while frenzying.
- 2 Restraining yourself without good reason; relying upon human allies and friends; failing to pursue evidence of Lilith when there is no danger.
- 1 Drinking the blood of an animal when humans are available.

The Path of the Scorched Heart

You called me a cold-hearted monster. Well, that is what I am. That is what I was created to be. Do not get attached to anyone or anything in this world... you will undoubtedly corrupt everything you care for. The Beast taints all emotions, so you must not feel; burn away your emotions, you must only think.

— Nostoket, Gangrel shakar

Nickname: The Unforgiving

The Path of the Scorched Heart is known for its ability to turn Kindred into inhuman creatures, completely devoid of emotions. Vampires without emotions do not hate, fear, envy, lust, love or enjoy... they only "experience." They are cold and cunning, and their logic is geared toward survival among the duplicitous and treacherous.

The path is followed by a number of True Brujah, since it is an adoption of their beliefs. The whole purpose of the path is to teach that the Beast is strong and that it affects all emotions — even subconsciously. Thus all emotions are Beast-driven and so will eventually lead to corruption and despair. The only way to overcome the Beast is to cut free of all emotions and think logically about everything. While a part of the vampire dies in this process, the Beast becomes far weaker because its greatest tool is gone.

Followers of this path recognize the distinction between good and evil and consider anything that positively benefits human society to be good — especially peace. While they are willing to commit lesser evils for the greater good, they must be careful lest they commit so many lesser evils, they outweigh the good accomplished.

They do not feed from "good people," but only take from mortals who have killed or who have performed great evils themselves. Otherwise they feed only upon animals. The Unforgiving are pacifists most of the time but will kill anyone they perceive as a threat to themselves or the greater good. They murder without remorse and show no mercy to anyone they believe must be destroyed.

They consider the majority of Kindred evil and continuously look for weaknesses in others. They always use those weaknesses against their enemies and never let an enemy live one night longer than she must. The Unforgiving are extremely secretive, for they know others will use their weaknesses against them. While they have a code of honor, they will lie, cheat, steal and do whatever else is necessary for the greater good. However, they will never take the lives of innocents and will prevent others from doing so as well.

Ethics

- Love only yourself. Do not feel other emotions. Shut them away, repress them or overcome them. More importantly, never show any emotions (mercy, love, hate, etc.), for they reveal your weaknesses. Conceal your pleasures and interests, or others will turn them against you.
- Do not feel fear. Face down all your fears, for they are tools the Beast will use against you.
- Destroy evil where you find it. Do not suffer evil any longer than you must.
- Do not have friends among the Kindred — only associates. Choose allies carefully. No vampire can be trusted. Destroy those who are evil or who stand in your way.

- Resist the Beast when it wants to be free. Fight the frenzy and build your inner strength.
- Always think logically. Do not let emotions cloud your judgment. Plan carefully whenever undertaking any important action.
- Always use others to your own benefit.
- Do not commit violence without just cause. Then, and only then, act without mercy, restraint or emotion. Never leave an enemy alive or undead.
- Among the Kindred you must be devious. Lie, cheat, steal, murder and do whatever else is necessary for your own good and the overall good.
- Do not waste all your time with debauchery and pleasures. Take what you need, but no more, and never harm innocents in so doing.
- Do good wherever you can. Be generous, not greedy. Feed only from animals and evil mortals.

History

The Path of the Scorched Heart is the product of the True Brujah. During the 1300s, Rathmonicus, a True Brujah later destroyed during the Anarch Revolt, codified the beliefs and practices of the True Brujah into a collection of letters known as the *Book of the Empty Heart*. The letters were passed among the True Brujah and a few Giovanni, Lasombra (who are now Lasombra *antitribu*), and Toreador within the Church.

The Path of Rathmonicus eventually became known as the Path of the Scorched Heart because of the terrible cold-heartedness of its followers. Some who followed the path became ruthless killers and completely shut themselves away from love and passion.

The Path of the Scorched Heart was never passed to the Sabbat because it did not suit their ways — their passion was their strength... and their weakness. Today the path is followed by the True Brujah of both the Black Hand and the Inconnu, and a rare few Toreador, Nagaraja, Giovanni and Lasombra *antitribu*.

Description of Followers

The Unforgiving remind some Kindred of the Vulcans on *Star Trek*™; however, the Unforgiving are far more cunning and self-serving. They are pacifistic murderers and humble power-seekers. Most Kindred would do well to fear those on this Path because they can never trust them. The Unforgiving do not form bonds of attachment and are willing to destroy even long-time associates, should it prove necessary.

The Unforgiving are always privately testing themselves. They are extremely secretive and never hold formal meetings. Most are scholars, but many are adept at violence. A couple hold copies of the *Book of the Empty Heart*, but otherwise they have no traditions or rituals.

Common Abilities: Most have higher than average ratings in Abilities such as Intimidation, Subterfuge, Etiquette, Linguistics, Politics, Intrigue, City Secrets, Clan (True Brujah) Lore and Psychology.

Preferred Disciplines: Many prefer Dominate and Obfuscate since these provide them with effective survival tools.

Views on the Other Paths

Path of Caine — “They are fools and weaklings looking for a god to call their own. They grasp at shadows and pretend they are the image of some Biblical villain. They know nothing.”

Path of Cathari — “They are the weakest of our kind, less than humans or monsters. Their capriciousness costs them credibility and strength.”

Path of Death and the Soul — “They have stolen much from our ways, but their obsession with death is unhealthy, unnatural and utterly pointless.”

Path of Evil Revelations — “They must be rooted from their dark dens and put to the stake. Whether or not they actually serve real demons does not matter; they will lead us to ruin if we do not destroy them first.”

Path of Harmony — “Why must they pretend we are part of nature when our very existence is unnatural? They should accept that fact. Then they could find some real harmony.”

Path of Honorable Accord — “Anyone foolish enough to follow orders without question deserves to be a pawn like these fools.”

Path of Lilith — “They are worthy scholars, but their devotion to their useless cause clouds their perceptions and makes them almost as bad as the Noddists.”

Path of Power and the Inner Voice — “Their power games are destructive and the path they have chosen will eventually corrupt them. While they have lofty goals, they seldom hold true to them. They do not find self-attainment or thus real power because they lose themselves in the trappings of power.”

Path of Self-Focus — “They are dangerous, but if you understand their weaknesses, they make suitable pawns. Use them against themselves whenever possible.”

Path of the Scorched Heart Hierarchy of Sins

- 10 Revealing any secrets.
- 9 Failure to kill those closest to you when necessary.
- 8 Failure to use another Kindred's weaknesses against her.
- 7 Being completely honest about anything when dealing with Kindred.
- 6 Failure to overcome own fears and weaknesses.
- 5 Failure to destroy evil; harming innocents for any reason.
- 4 Feeling any emotion; feeding on good people.
- 3 Expressing any emotion; showing any weakness.
- 2 Feeling strong emotions; failure to kill for the greater good or for survival.
- 1 Expressing strong emotions.



The Path of Self-Focus

Forget everything outside yourself. Everything in the world is mutable by your own will, by your own chosen perceptions. Never forget that you control your own destiny, your own fate, your own future, your own unlfe. Master yourself before trying to master others.

— Juleidah, dominion of the Eastern Hand

Nickname: Internalists

The Path of Self-Focus is an ancient path of Enlightenment brought from the East. It has elements of Taoism's concept of *wu wei*, or non-conscious action, and the Buddhist concept of Ch'an, or Zen. However, the path was adopted by Kindred of the Middle East and has been modified from its original path to suit the Kindred who follow it.

Those who follow the path are called Internalists because they look inside themselves for the answers to all their moral and spiritual questions. Many claim the Path of Self-Focus is the easiest route to Golconda. Still, most Internalists warn those who would follow the path that it is not meant as a road to becoming, but as a means of Being.

Ethics

- Forget everything — simply Be. Focus only upon what you are doing at that moment. Use chanting, t'ai chi and other methods to practice your focus. There is only Now. You cannot understand pain, temptation, and all other feelings except through feeling them.

- Action is focus. Thought of action is impure and inferior.

- Know yourself. Know when and when not to fight the Beast. The Beast is part of you, and sometimes it must be unleashed. Be the Beast, but do not Become the Beast. Only by understanding it can inner peace be attained.

- Master yourself. Learn your strengths and weaknesses. Always learn. Always seek to strengthen your mind, body and spirit.

- Be not prideful or disrespectful. Overconfidence is weakness and illusion. It is best to be humble and confident. Respect all and treat others as you would be treated yourself.

- You must have honor. He who has no personal honor is worthless and lost to the world and to himself.

- There is equal value in the arts of peace and the arts of war. Study them both.

- Judge all by their actions, not their words. Seek out wisdom and listen to those who have it.

- Be wary of other vampires. Vampires are creatures eclipsed by their own darkness. Their tragedy could be your own. Pity them, but also watch them carefully.

- Learn to love and understand that all things have their purpose — even evil things. Being of your own free will means you must choose between the two, and good must be your choice.

- Fight only when there is no other option, and fight with honor if you fight at all.

- Enjoy the company of others, but do not subsist on it. You must not let others define your value; you must do so yourself.

- Believe that there is a greater purpose to everything. There is an Oversoul which guides things. Your vampirism is a test unto you. It will not taint your soul or destroy you unless you let it do so.

History

Around A.D. 550, Asian Kindred visited the Middle East and made friends among the Tal'mahe'Ra. The Kindred taught their Arabic friends their beliefs and, over the course of the next 100 years, the Path of Self-Focus developed. Some have suggested a connection between the beliefs of the mystical Akashic Brotherhood and this path, but little research has been done in this direction.

The Path died out before the year 1000 but was recorded for later use. During the last 150 years, the path has begun growing in popularity among the dominions and younger sect members. It is followed mostly by the Kindred of the Cult of the Erinyes, so many chatterlings also take up this Path of Enlightenment.

While the path has never been popular with European Kindred, it is spreading among the American Hand members and is still practiced by some Middle Eastern members.

Description of Followers

Kindred who follow the Path of Self-Focus tend to be among the most well-balanced of all vampires. They study martial arts, swordsmanship, poetry and painting. They focus through chanting, meditation and t'ai chi. Some even partake of the tea ceremony, though this is a recent addition by American Kindred.

Internalists are usually in good physical shape and almost always respectful of others. They are non-violent warriors who fight with honor. They hold personal honor in the highest regard, and those who call them friends can depend on them.

CommonAbilities: Almost all Internalists have higher-than-average ratings in Brawling, Melee, Artistic Expression, Etiquette, Athletics and Meditation.

PreferredDisciplines: Auspex, Celerity, Fortitude, Potence and Presence are all considered worthy Disciplines.

Views on the other Paths

Path of Caine — “They focus too much on what they are, not who they are. They look for the answers to their own problems in legends instead of inside themselves.”

Path of Cathari — “They are careless creatures who are blinded and weak from their revelry. Their focus on pleasure is merely a distraction from what they fear they have become, and through their distraction they become it even more.”

Path of Death and the Soul — “They ignore this world and their purposes for being in it. They know nothing, because death can only be really understood by the dead.”

Path of Evil Revelations — “They are a blot upon the Oversoul. They are pawns in a sinister game. They are fools who will destroy themselves and lose everything.”

Path of Harmony — “They are close to the truth, but they search for their place by looking at themselves through the eyes of others. They have honor.”

Path of Honorable Accord — “They are honorable, but that is not enough. They merely go through the motions. They lack the true value of their actions and do not understand what they are.”

Path of Lilith — “They are dangerous. Watch them carefully.”

Path of Power and the Inner Voice — “They are the dark reflection of ourselves. They look inside for wisdom and truth but use the knowledge they gain for selfish reasons. They are strong, but unwise because of this.”

Path of the Scorched Heart — “They think they can cut off their emotions like cutting off an arm or a leg, choosing to be unwhole just for survival. But they cannot cut off their feelings so cleanly. Instead they merely repress them, and so who knows what lurks beneath their cold facades?”

Path of Self-Focus Hierarchy of Sins

- 10 Any foolish behavior.
- 9 Laziness of mind, spirit or body.
- 8 Depending upon others; failure to treat anyone as you would be treated yourself.
- 7 Lying; fighting the Beast when you should not; not fighting the Beast when you should.
- 6 Any evil behavior.
- 5 Manipulating others for own gain; being greedy or egotistical.
- 4 Stealing; failure to practice your focus.
- 3 Improper use of combat.
- 2 Disbelief in a higher and greater existence; disrespectful of others.
- 1 Failure to keep your word; fighting dishonorably.





New Abilities

The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

— William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Skill

Blood Preparation

You know the effects of various substances on the blood. You can use this knowledge to recognize foreign substances in any blood you taste, and you also know the art of feeding your victims certain substances to get the desired taste and effects. You are knowledgeable in chemicals, intoxicants, herbs, spices and food and how they affect mortal and immortal blood. You can prepare a variety of flavors for blood feasts, and are capable of combining this art with Toxicology to make the blood of living mortals dangerous to the Kindred.

- **Novice:** You are a dabbler; you can prepare simple meals.
- **Practiced:** You know several recipes and can prepare a variety of meals.
- **Competent:** You know many recipes, though you have trouble preparing truly exotic cuisine.
- **Expert:** You are an excellent chef; you know all the great recipes as well as a wide range of exotic recipes.
- **Master:** You are a master chef; you know a great variety of recipes and you can create your own masterpieces.

Possessed by: Some Toreador, Sabbat, Baba Yaga's chefs, Black Hand Kindred and some cannibals

Specialties: Intoxicants, Spices, Easy-to-Prepare meals, Kindred Poisons, Recognizing and Analyzing Tastes

Knowledges

Mummy Lore

If you are not a Mummy, you have studied with Inauhaten or another of these strange beings. You know of their origins, their history, their cycle of death and rebirth, their magic and, though you are not a practitioner, their spiritual beliefs. You know a little about the Silent Striders, the Setites and the Children of Osiris, but most of your information is confined just to their relations with the Mummies.

- **Novice:** You have seen a Mummy and talked with him a little.
- **Practiced:** You know a few relevant facts.
- **Competent:** You are knowledgeable in their beliefs and practices.
- **Expert:** You possess great insight into their ways.
- **Master:** You understand their cycle of rebirth and the nature of their existence.

Possessed by: Mummies, Eaters of the Dead, some Euthanatos, a few Giovanni, and a rare few members of the Black Hand

Specialties: Mummy Magic, Ancient History, the Nine Divisions of Mummies' Souls, Individual Mummies

Thanatology

You are a student of death. You are knowledgeable about spiritual phenomena, physical aging, near-death experiences, and medical causes of death. You are a student of the transformation from living being into wraith. You are knowledgeable in the art of embalming and the many death rituals of various cultures, both human and supernatural.

- **Novice:** You have read a little on the subject.
- **Practiced:** You know some scientific, philosophical and religious beliefs about death.
- **Competent:** You know a great deal about scientific, philosophical and religious beliefs concerning death, and possess very limited supernatural knowledge.
- **Expert:** You possess expansive knowledge, some of which is supernatural in origin, concerning death, and you have conducted your own experiments.
- **Master:** You think you understand the mystery of death.

Possessed by: Euthanatos, Eaters of the Dead, Mummies, Sabbat on the Path of Death and the Soul, Benandanti, and Black Hand Kindred

Specialties: Near-death Experiences, Aging, the Life Force

Underworld Lore

You know something about the Underworld. While you do not have in-depth knowledge of the various political, professional and spiritual factions of wraith culture, you do know about the various groups. You know a little about the Hierarchy, the guilds, the Renegades and the Heretics. You know how the economy works, what existence is like and some about nearby holdings. You have heard a little about Stygia and about the Tempest. You have also heard about Doomshades, Spectres and other creatures that roam the Tempest.

- **Novice:** You know your way around Enoch.
- **Practiced:** You have heard tales of the Underworld outside Enoch.
- **Competent:** You know a few facts about the Underworld outside Enoch.
- **Expert:** You have traveled a little outside the holding.
- **Master:** You visit other holdings.

Possessed by: wraiths, Mummies, Euthanatos, some Giovanni, and members of the Black Hand

Specialties: Tempest, Guilds, Enoch, Doomshades



The following Background was first presented in *Elysium: The Elder Wars* and is only available to elder characters.

Age

You have survived for many, many years as a vampire. You have seen much of the ever-changing, never-changing dance of politics and pain that forms the worlds of both Kindred and kine alike. This Background does not necessarily reflect your actual age, however. Instead, it reflects the number of years you have been conscious throughout your long existence. If you have fallen into torpor, time passes you by, as does the experience and knowledge you could have gained by participating in the events of that period. Players are free to determine how many times their characters have fallen into torpor, and for how long each time. This enables players to create characters born in truly ancient times.

Every dot in this Background comes with a number of freebie points to use in character creation, but also costs Humanity. This can be repurchased, but elders must spend five freebies per extra dot of Humanity. Amounts given reflect cumulative totals. Note that each dot in Age grants slightly less of an experience advantage than the one before (reflected in freebie points), reflecting the difficulty an elder has in gaining new Abilities as she becomes more and more set in her ways. Additionally, the older a vampire is, the harder it is for her to learn new Traits. This is reflected in the optional system on character development below. Storytellers have the final say in deciding how old characters in their chronicles may be, and should feel free to limit elders to one or two dots in this Background.

- 51-200 years active: +30 freebie points, -1 Humanity
- 201-350 years active: +55 freebie points, -2 Humanity
- 351-500 years active: +75 freebie points, -3 Humanity
- 501-750 years active: +90 freebie points, -4 Humanity
- 751-1,000 years active: +100 freebie points, -5 Humanity

New Disciplines

We feel that we are greater than we know.

— William Wordsworth, "The River Duddon"

The following Disciplines are common among certain bloodlines within the Black Hand. They are extremely rare, and few Kindred outside the Black Hand possess them.

Nihilistics

This peculiar collection of powers originates from the Underworld and from the nothingness energies of Oblivion. This is a trademark Discipline of the Nagaraja which only adds to their image as cruel and demented sorcerers.





• Eyes of the Wraith

The vampire can peer from the Living World into the Underworld and from the Underworld into the Living World the same way.

System: No roll is required, though using the power costs one Blood Point. The effects last the entire scene, and the character can shift her senses from one world into the other at will. While focusing on one world, she cannot perceive what is happening in the other. This power only allows her to look and listen.

•• Consume the Dead

By using her fangs to cause damage, a vampire with this power can subsist on wraiths, gaining one Blood Point per Corpus Level consumed.

System: No roll is required, but the vampire can only drain up to three corpus a turn. Note that this is not like the Kiss, and the wraith can fight to escape.

••• Aura of Decay

The vampire can strengthen the feeling of corruption around her to the point where it can serve several uses. It can gnarl wood, rust metal, and erode plastic, glass and dead organic material. This power has a range of one foot from the vampire's body, but all those in the presence of the vampire will feel her corruption.

System: No roll is required, but this power does cost a Blood Point. Objects subjected to this Aura of Decay generally break down and become useless somewhere between one turn and one day after being targeted, depending upon the material, the type of object, and its complexity. A stereo would stop functioning the first turn, but it would take at least several hours to break down all the plastic, glass, metal and rubber in it. A wooden stake would begin to lose its pointed tip on the first turn and would be rotten and useless within a minute. Note that since this power requires the expenditure of a Blood Point, a character cannot cause an Aura of Decay while staked.

•••• The Dark Touch

The vampire can direct destructive energies toward living, undead, and dead (wraith) opponents. The vampire causes them to suffer terrible pain and to begin decomposing. The nature of the effects varies. The vampire must be within 10 feet of the victim and must reach her hand out toward him.

System: Roll Charisma + Occult (difficulty equals victim's Stamina + 3). The victim suffers 2 levels of damage per success.

••••• Nightcry

The vampire can issue an unearthly cry heard both in the Living World and in the Shadowlands, regardless of where the vampire is at the time. The cry will summon creatures of the Shadowlands. If the vampire is in the Living World, the creatures will appear in the Living World if possible. The Storyteller decides what types of creatures are summoned, though they should be appropriate to the area.

System: Roll Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty 8). The greater the number of successes, the greater the number or power of the creatures summoned. These will usually be the ghosts of people who had some connection to the vampire's current location. Creatures from **Wraith: The Oblivion** may also be used as summoned creatures, or whatever else the Storyteller desires. The character has no control over what is summoned. A botch indicates that the summoned creatures are extremely hostile toward the character.

6•Black Blood

This power makes many functions of vampiric blood work for wraiths as for humans. The Kiss now creates ecstasy, the vampire can Blood Bond wraiths into her service, and ghoul wraiths gain one level of Potence. The Blood Bond functions the same as it does upon any living creature, requiring three drinks to create a Regnant.

System: No roll is required and no Blood Points, except those drank, must be spent.

7•Oblivion's Dance

The vampire swirls about, using her own body as a conduit to bring forth the nothingness energies of the Underworld into the Living Lands. The energy pours from the vampire's eyes, ears, nose and mouth and affects everything in the vicinity.

System: Roll Stamina + Athletics (difficulty 8). The effect lasts two turns for each success. Treat the effects of Oblivion's Dance as Aura of Decay and The Dark Touch, affecting everything in the vicinity except the character, though it will affect the character's possessions.

Temporis

While Troile stole the blood of Brujah, she did not steal his most prized Discipline — Temporis. Now the True Brujah carefully guard Temporis, for those who understand the Discipline can manipulate time itself.

•Time Sense

The vampire can sense contractions and dilations in time. In addition, she can sense the use of Temporis or other time-altering powers. She also has an internal clock which keeps perfect track of time. This is particularly useful with the higher level powers of this Discipline, as it allows the vampire to know just what she is capable of doing with her powers, how long the effects will last, etc.

System: No roll is required and the effects are constant.

••Ramble On

The vampire has the power to cause a single subject to continuously repeat his own actions, without ever realizing he has been repeating himself. The subject gets so caught up that he pays no heed to events around him unless they are



obvious and dangerous. For example, a subject may be walking along when the vampire uses this power on him. The subject may have been intending to go to the store, but gets so carried away that he finds he has been walking for an hour and is now far away from both his home and the store. If the subject had walked out in front of a car, he would have been less likely to notice it, but if he did, the trance-like effects would have been broken.

System: Roll the character's Manipulation + Empathy (difficulty of the subject's Willpower). An obviously dangerous situation will snap the victim out of this trance if he succeeds in a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 6).

1 success	One turn
2 successes	One minute
3 successes	10 minutes
4 successes	One hour
5 successes	One day

••• Zombie's Curse

The vampire can cause one subject to perceive time as having sped up. The victim moves at half speed, and everything she says comes out slowly and in a deep pitch. The subject will have trouble communicating and even more trouble in combat. While bullets, once fired, move at normal speed, punches, kicks, sword swings and other attacks that require personal speed in order to add kinetic force do only half their normal damage dice pool and have their difficulty to hit increased by two.

System: Roll Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty of the target's Willpower). The duration of the effect varies with the number of successes.

1 success	One turn
2 successes	One minute
3 successes	10 minutes
4 successes	One hour
5 successes	One day

•••• Cowalker

The vampire can stop time for a moment, allowing her to appear in two places at once. The vampire appears to teleport or blink from one place to the next, but she is actually slipping out of the normal flow of time and space. The vampire cannot affect objects within the time stream, so the vampire could not attack someone while using this power. Instead she could move behind an opponent, hit him and then blink away again.

System: This power costs a point of Willpower. The vampire cannot open doors or otherwise affect physical objects, though she can move about freely.

••••• Frozen Object

The vampire can stop time for an inanimate object for a predetermined length of time. The vampire could throw a knife into the air and stop time on it, only to later let it continue on its course. The vampire could freeze time on a light switch and then turn it on. When it re-entered time, the



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light would come on. This power can be used on bullets and other projectile and missile weapons, but not on objects touching animate beings. In addition, objects lose no energy during the time stop, so anyone touching the bullet frozen in flight would burn her hand, and the slug would have the same velocity when it re-entered time.

System: Roll Dexterity + Occult (difficulty 6) to freeze time for an object. The number of successes determines how long time may be stopped.

1 success	One turn
2 successes	One minute
3 successes	10 minutes
4 successes	One hour
5 successes	One day

To stop time for projectiles, the character must see and stop them before they reach their destination. Therefore, the vampire must make a Wits + Alertness roll (difficulty 6 to stop thrown weapons, difficulty 8 to stop a single bullet) before using the power.

6•Control Aging

The vampire can slow down and speed up the process of aging. The vampire must be in physical contact with the target, and he can only affect one object or subject at a time.

System: Roll Stamina + Occult (difficulty equals victim's Willpower, or 6 for inanimate objects). For each success, the character can age or reduce in age a target by ten years. This power may only be used once per scene on the same individual,

but an object can be affected as many times as the character likes. Vampires targeted with this power may become unable to gain sustenance from drinking animal or even human blood.

1 success	One year
2 successes	Five years
3 successes	10 years
4 successes	50 years
5 successes	100 years

7•Domain of Evernight

The vampire can dilate time in an area so that a day passes in the blink of an eye, and night seems to come minutes after it left. This is highly useful in a haven. Hunters who enter will realize only too late that, though it should be noon, it is 11 p.m., and the master is awake. The vampire would probably use this only on her private chamber, as prolonged exposure to such effects would drive her servants insane. This power can also be used as an invaluable weapon, causing morning to arrive unexpectedly and leaving vampiric victims in a terrible situation.

System: Roll Intelligence + Alertness (difficulty 7). The character can make a number of hours pass equal to her current Willpower. The number of successes determines how fast time passes.

1 success	One Hour = 10 Minutes
2 successes	One Hour = Five Minutes
3 successes	One Hour = One Minute
4 successes	One Hour = 30 seconds
5 successes	One Hour = 10 seconds

Outside the Hourglass

The vampire can step fully outside the time stream and take whatever actions he pleases. Everything is frozen in time— matter, energy, life, etc. Mechanical devices are also frozen and cannot be operated, except manually. Thus, cars will not run, phones will not work, and computers will not function. The vampire could fire a gun, but the bullet would not leave the chamber until the vampire re-enters time. The vampire's own kinetic energy still functions outside time, so a thrown knife would hit and penetrate a target. However, the subject would not suffer the effects until the vampire re-enters time.

System: Roll Stamina + Occult (difficulty 8). For each success, the character can step outside time for one full turn.

8•Pocket Out of Time

The vampire can cause an entire area to leave the time stream. All those in the Pocket Out of Time can interact at normal speed, but everything outside the Pocket Out of Time seems frozen.

System: Roll Manipulation + Security (difficulty 7). The radius is 10 feet around the caster per success. Characters in the affected area cannot leave it until the one who created the Pocket wills it closed or is destroyed.

8•Rewind Time

The vampire can turn time back to a certain point, where it will commence again. The vampire will remain wherever he is standing before using this power, though everything else will return to wherever it was before. Once rewind, events may be changed by the vampire. The vampire may also cause others to change their actions. However, unless the vampire actually motivates others into different actions, they will take the same actions and their actions will have the exact same results.

System: Roll Strength + Alertness (difficulty 8). The number of successes determines how far back time may be rewind.

1 success	One turn
2 successes	One minute
3 successes	10 minutes
4 successes	One hour
5 successes	One day

If successful, the character remains wherever he was when he used this power, not where he was at the previous time. In addition, the character can change his actions, knowing everything that will occur if he does exactly the same thing.

9•Summon History

The vampire can pull a pocket of space and time from the past. The vampire can concentrate on bringing a certain time forth, but not a particular event. Those inside the summoned area do not see and cannot interact with the present, unless



they have Time Sense. At least one True Brujah may have tried to summon Brujah himself in this manner, but this attempt is believed to have failed horribly. Should such an event occur, the effects upon reality remain unknown.

System: Roll Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 7). The number of successes determines the maximum possible range of the power.

1 success	One year
2 successes	100 years
3 successes	500 years
4 successes	1000 years
5 Successes	5000 years

New Thaumaturgical Path

Thaumaturgy is not exclusive to the Tremere. There were vampires practicing similar ancient arts long before the birth of the clan founder himself. The system of rigid, inflexible Thaumaturgical magic is the creation of supernatural forces, possibly even Lilith or Caine.

The Black Hand may very well have created a number of different Thaumaturgical paths. The magickal knowledge of the Verbena and the Euthanatos, combined with previous knowledge of thaumaturgy, led to many great advancements in the arts. In fact, Blood Magic is believed to be the creation of the Verbena. This may be why an ancient Kindred such as Baba Yaga knew Blood Magic long before the birth of Tremere. She may have once had ties to either the Verbena or even the Black Hand.

The following Thaumaturgic paths are practiced by members of the sect. The origins of the paths remain mysterious and few outside the Black Hand practice them.

Biothaumaturgic Experimentation

This is almost a "dark science" unto itself. Practitioners of this path need a laboratory and all sorts of strange equipment to carry out their experiments. The average cost of experimentation is \$1,000 per week times the rating of the Thaumaturgical power. It costs no Blood Points to use the powers of this path, but it does require one full week of work for each roll made.

• Thaumaturgical Forensics

The vampire can study the blood, hair or remains of subjects to determine various information about them, such as type of creature, whether they were natural or supernatural, age, sex, race, clan, tribe, generation, whether or not they were diabolists, signs of Vicissitude infection, Garou Gifts and vampiric Disciplines.

System: Roll Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty 5). For each success, the character gains one piece of information, such as a Discipline or Gift the deceased possessed.



•• Animal Experimentation

The vampire can Thaumaturgically alter lesser life forms. The vampire can change the size, Attributes, Abilities, instincts, nature, ecology, and internal makeup and appearance of animals and other creatures less complex than humans.

System: Roll Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty 8). For each success, one Attribute dot, two Ability dots, one instinct, one behavior pattern, one aspect of the creature's ecology (such as diet or climate) or some physical feature (such as a leg, tentacle, set of feelers, etc.) may be added, subtracted or altered. The Storyteller must approve all modifications.

••• Thaumaturgical Surgery

The vampire can perform Thaumaturgical surgery on patients using all sorts of wickedly shaped tools. The surgery can heal all sorts of wounds in both natural and supernatural creatures, including aggravated wounds.

System: Roll Wits + Medicine (difficulty 7). For each success, two levels of normal damage or one level of aggravated damage can be healed. Surgery cannot be performed on the same patient more than once per injury. Note that this surgery does not necessarily require one week to perform, but it takes at least that long to recover from.

•••• Human Experimentation

The vampire can perform alterations on humans just as she can on animals.

System: Treat as Animal Experimentation, except that it functions on humans.

••••• Supernatural Experimentation

The vampire can perform alterations on supernatural creatures, such as vampires, Lupines, Mummies, mages, faeries, and wraiths, just as she can on animals and humans.

System: Treat as Animal Experimentation, except that it functions on supernatural creatures.

New Thaumaturgical Rituals

The effects of these rituals last for approximately one hour unless noted otherwise in the specific description.

Level One Ritual

Preserve Corpse

This ritual enables the user to create a special elixir that keeps dead things from rotting and deteriorating. The ritual requires the caster to use her hand, coating the material to be preserved with a special liquid composed of decaying organic materials and rare herbs. Once the liquid dries into the surface, the material is protected indefinitely. The ritual produces

enough of the liquid to cover one large adult corpse. The elixir will lose potency unless applied within a week of its manufacture. This is a widely known ritual among the Nagaraja.

Level Two Ritual

Black Water

The Thaumaturgist can pour a special pitch-black oil into a pool of water, thus turning the water solid black. The black water cannot be seen through from the surface, but it has no other effect. The surface of the water will remain black until the effect is dispelled, the water evaporates or the black water is diluted with a large enough amount of normal water. Ancient Thaumaturgists used this ritual to blacken the water of their moats or pools so their underwater guardians could not be seen.

One pint of oil covers a small swimming pool-size area. The oil will last for a week, but a large amount can be prepared at one time.

Level Three Ritual

Moonlight Dancers

This ritual was created by a lonely and insane Kindred to create the illusion of ghostly apparitions and music. The apparitions resemble five or more dance couples from some time in history chosen by the Thaumaturgist. The apparitions are not spirits, and they are not sentient — they are merely figments which dance to the music. The effects last until sunrise, though the Thaumaturgist can dispel them at any time. Some Toreador cast this ritual at their socials.

Level Four Ritual

Shadowgate

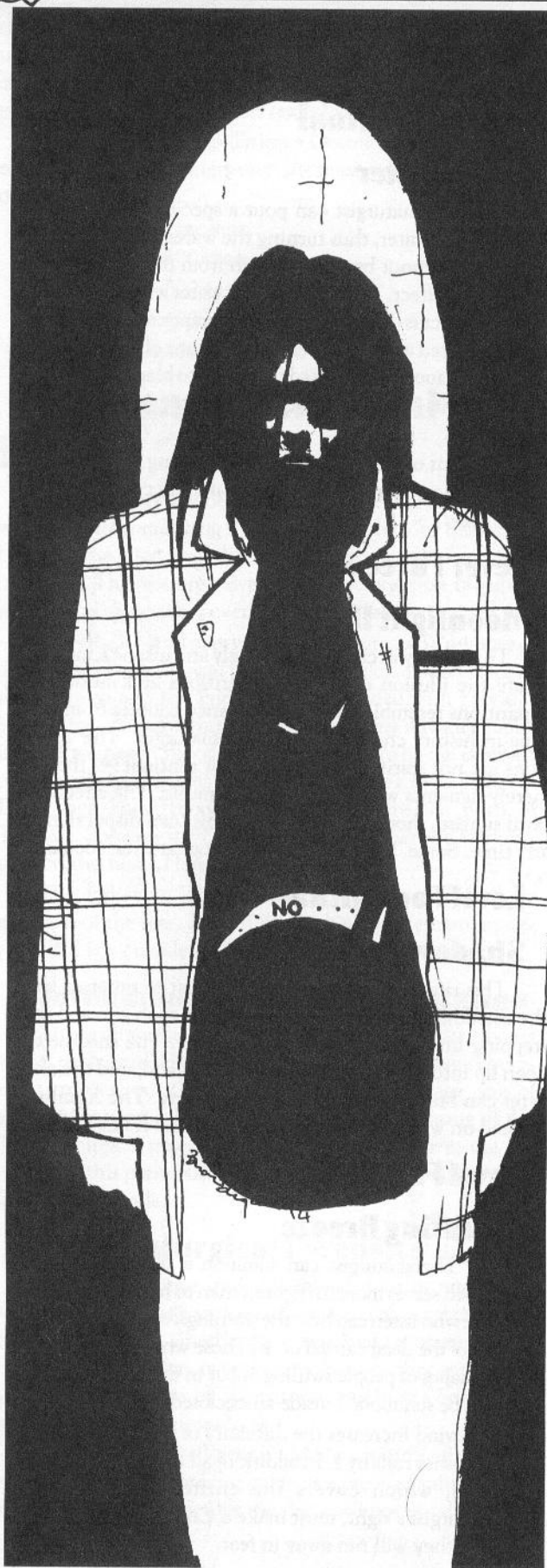
This ritual allows the Thaumaturgist to enter or leave the Shadowlands by painting an X over each eye and then stepping into an extremely dark shadow. The shadow will open up into the corresponding Shadowland, and the character can bring anything that he can carry. The X must be marked on with a powder made of coal and human ashes.

Level Five Rituals

Haunting Breeze

The Thaumaturgist can summon a light, supernatural wind which serves more to frighten than to harm. It is chilling, and those who listen can hear the warnings, curses, screams and laughter of the dead carried on it. Those who look closely can see the shapes of people swirling about in the wind. The wind can even be summoned inside an enclosed area.

The wind increases the difficulty of Perception rolls by 2 and all other rolls by 1. In addition, all mortals subjected to the wind, which covers the entire area within the Thaumaturgist's sight, must make a Courage roll (difficulty 5) or else they will run away in fear.



Shadowland Passage

The vampire can physically pass into any location of the Shadowlands, provided that she has been in that location before. This requires that the vampire symbolically "kill" herself by plunging a specially prepared dagger into her heart (doing at least 2 wound levels) and falling into a body of water deep enough to cover her. The dagger must be made from the purest silver, and the hilt must have at least one vampire fang worked into its construction. When she returns from the Shadowlands, she will reappear in the water. Members of the Black Hand use this ritual to get to Enoch.

Level Six Ritual

Mass Grave

Most members of the Black Hand first reach Enoch via this ritual, which is similar to Shadowland Passage except that it can affect an entire group. Everyone going to the Shadowlands must be buried together in one grave, using dirt mixed with the remains of at least one freshly killed sentient creature.

New Merits & Flaws

Variety is the mother of Enjoyment.

— Benjamin Disraeli, Vivian Grey

Many of the Merits and Flaws listed below are designed for elder characters. Storytellers should carefully consider whether younger characters could possess these.

Aptitudes

Animal Affinity (1 pt. Merit)

You have an innate understanding of and rapport with a certain type of animal, such as dogs, bats, rats, cats or wolves. Animalism and Animal Ken rolls with these animals have their difficulty reduced by 2.

Entrepreneur (1 pt. Merit)

Making money comes easy to you, and you know what it takes to succeed in business. All rolls that involve acquiring money through business reduce their difficulty by 2.

Supernatural

Mage Companion (3 pt. Merit)

You have a friend and ally who just happens to be a mage. Though you have the right to call upon her in times of need, she can call on you as well. Most likely this mage is of the Euthanatos or Verbena, but she can be of any Tradition or Convention.

Wraith Companion (3 pt. Merit)

This is the exact same Merit as Spirit Mentor. Just bear in mind that the spirit mentor is a wraith, and you can see and touch him in the Underworld. For those with **Wraith: The Oblivion**, consider the character one of the wraith's more powerful fetters.

Faerie Hatred (2 pt. Flaw)

You are hated by the fey. They find you totally repulsive because of some past action — or for no reason whatsoever. You cannot interact with them and, should they get the opportunity, they will thwart your every effort.

Demon Plagued (2 pt. Flaw)

Either you once practiced Infernal Diablerie and then tried to break it off, or you have angered Infernal Diabolists, be they Baali, Sabbat or mortal cultists. Whatever the case, you are plagued by the evil efforts of a demon. The demon constantly tries to cause all sorts of problems for you, but it is seldom powerful enough to face you directly.

Kindred Ties

Blackmailed (1 pt. Flaw)

You are being blackmailed by a Kindred powerful enough or smart enough to keep you from destroying her. Your blackmailer uses you to her personal advantage, forcing you to do all sorts of awful things you hate doing. She may take money from you, she may take blood, or she may force you to aid her in her own schemes.

Capable Assistant (7 pt. Merit)

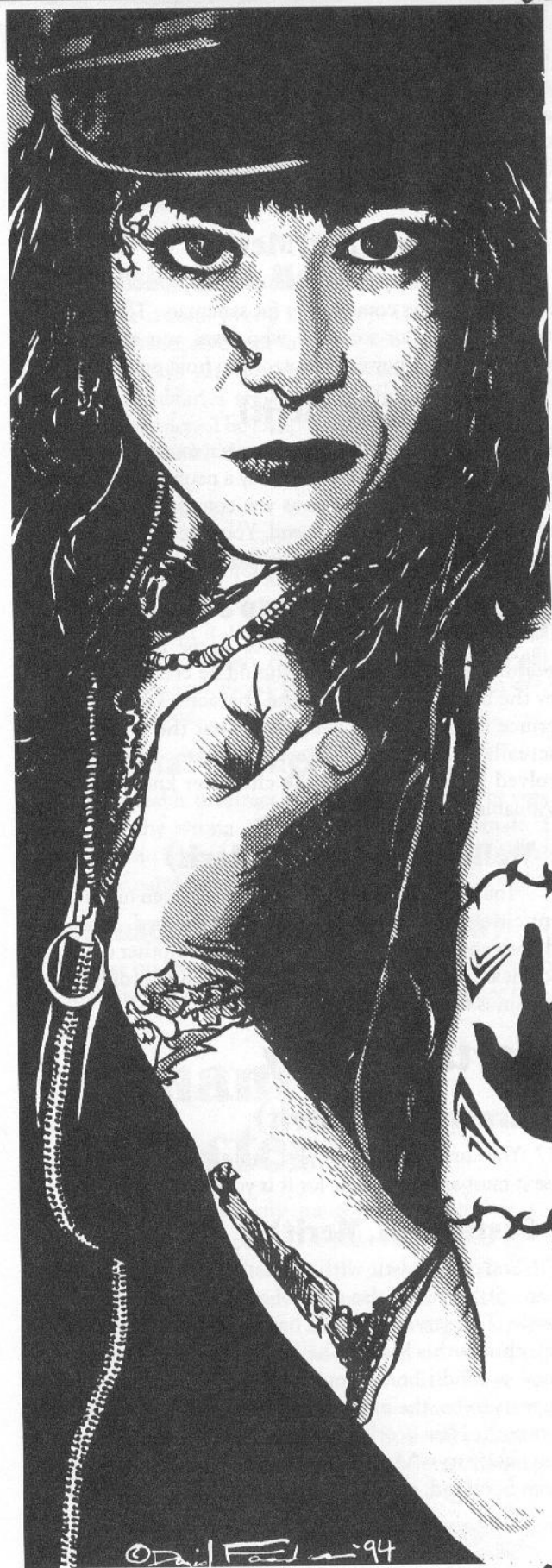
You have another vampire who acts as your right hand in everything. She is loyal, capable, and powerful enough to stand against those in her way. She may be Blood Bound to you, but would serve your will anyway.

Elysium Domain (1 pt. Merit)

You control some part of the city's Elysium. You are its recognized protector, and in many ways it is considered your domain. However, it does not belong to you, and other Kindred can enjoy it freely. While this Merit involves some measure of responsibility, you can enjoy this Elysium domain at your leisure, and you gain respect and Status as its protector.

Inconnu Associate (4 pt. Merit)

You are friends with another Kindred who belongs to the Inconnu. Though you may call upon your friend in times of need, she may call on you as well. Neither of your sects appreciate such relationships, and your leaders would punish you if your friendship were discovered. Arranging methods of communication and meeting places will be difficult.



Safe Passage (1 pt. Merit)

You have the right to pass through the territory of some other vampire or sect that does not normally allow others (or at least members of your particular sect) passage through their territory. Toreador often have this Merit for various hostile cities, allowing them to enjoy the Elysiums of those cities without fear.

Sanctuary (2 pt. Merit)

Another vampire has promised you protection from all harm should you come to her for sanctuary. This may be a mentor, a sire, or someone who owes you a boon. The vampire has the power to protect you from most threats.

Student (1 pt. Merit)

You serve as a mentor to a younger, more inexperienced vampire. The student is most likely a neonate or an ancilla. This student will assist you as you command, but you also consider this Kindred your ward. You take responsibility for training this vampire and for protecting her from harm.

Valuable Secret (1 to 3 pt. Merit)

Others would kill or die to know this secret you guard. The Valuable Secret should be created and given by the Storyteller. Perhaps the character knows that the prince is an Infernal Diabolist or that the primogen are actually all Sabbat. Whatever the case, only those involved in the secret and the character know about the Valuable Secret.

Well-Traveled (2 pt. Merit)

You have traveled all over the globe, seen many different cities and met a great number of Kindred. There is a chance you will know of a vampire from another city when you hear his name. This is an Intelligence roll (difficulty of 10 minus the Kindred's Status).

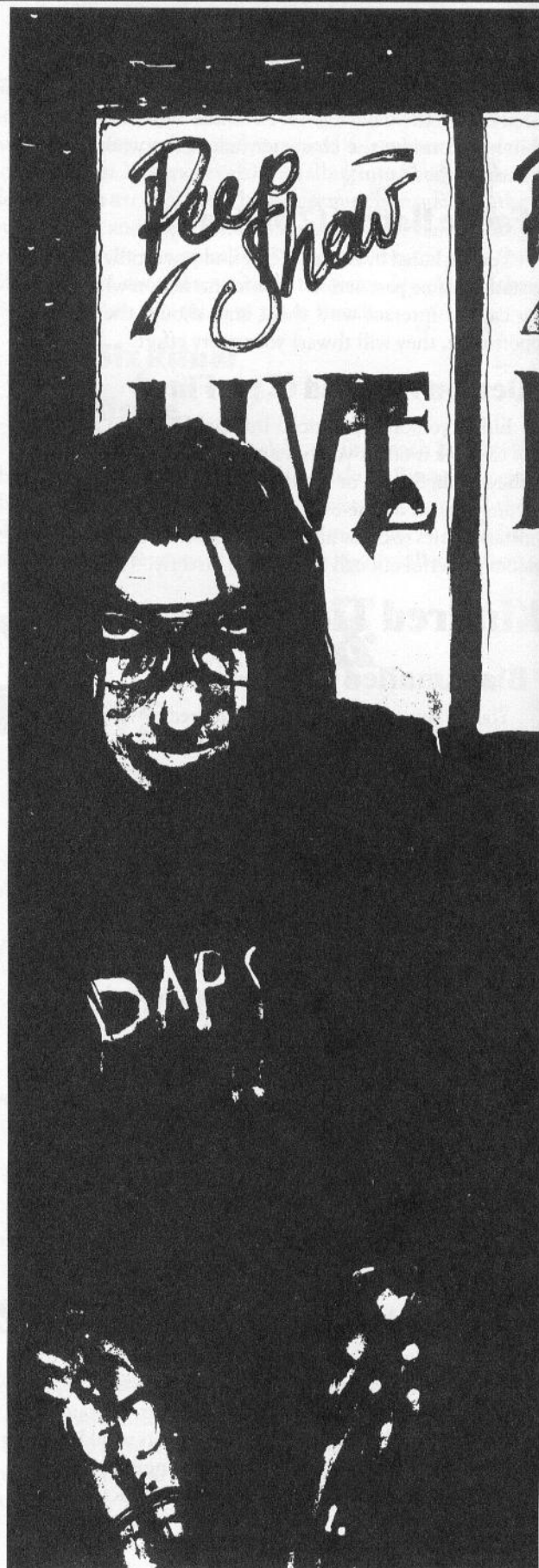
Mortal Society

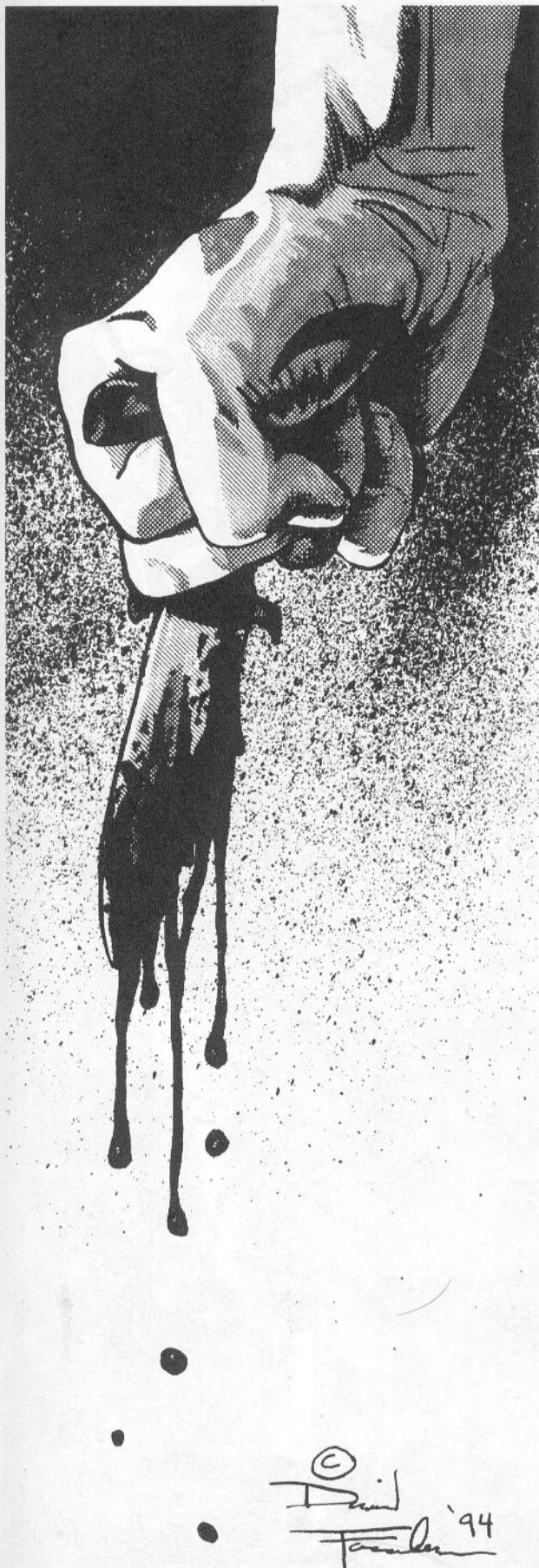
Airport (4 pt. Merit)

You control a major airport, and all Kindred who would use it must answer to you, for it is your domain.

Castle (5 pt. Merit)

You own a castle with at least 50 rooms and maybe as many as 500. You also control a large estate around the castle. The servants, if you have any, are provided for if you choose this Merit. The castle can be in as poor or as good a condition as you wish. The more inhabited it appears to be, the more attention it will garner. Characters in the New World cannot have this Merit unless they can justify it — "An insane relative had the castle moved from Scotland, stone by stone."





Extremist Group (4 pt. Merit)

You have both Influence over and Contacts within an extremist group of some sort. This could be a group of near-insane survivalists with a cause, some hate group or a terrorist group. This group provides you with assistance, and possibly even agents to handle your dirty work. It might also provide you with ties to similar groups. The more often you use your ties, the weaker they grow.

University (4 pt. Merit)

You have control over a university. The trustees and important officials serve your interests. You have full access to the school, and you can hunt the campus freely. The professors and libraries are useful in providing you with research information. The campus also has lots of computer equipment, along with those who know how to use it.

Physical

Strong Blood (5 pt. Merit)

Your blood is especially potent. Any Kindred who tastes your blood will find it extremely rich and potent and will recognize its great strength. Any diabolist who tastes it will lust after it. You can Blood Bond someone with but two drinks of your blood.

Irretractable Fangs (1 pt. Flaw)

You are unable to retract your fangs. You should be very careful, lest the wrong mortals see them. Vicissitude 3 (Bonecraft) can be used to forcibly cause them to shrink, but the process is painful and the fangs will return the next night.

Methuselah's Thirst (7 pt. Flaw)

You are no longer capable of drinking mortal blood to sustain yourself and must feed upon the vitae of other Kindred.

Revenant Characters

Nature hath framed many strange fellows in her time.

— William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

The four ghoulish families of the Black Hand occasionally carry on business dealings with one another and join together in their service to the sect. They also arrange marriages between members of their families as gestures of goodwill, especially in settling disputes with one another. Those who do not marry still come together with one another at the Temple of Lilith in Enoch to procreate. Storytellers looking for more information on revenants should refer to the *Storytellers Handbook* to the Sabbat.

Playing Revenants

*She's got a date at midnight
With Nosferatu
Oh baby, Lily Munster
Ain't got nothing on you
Well when I called her evil
She just laughed
And cast that spell on me
Boo Bitch Craft*

—Type O Negative, “Black No. 1”

While it is possible to play revenant characters, they have many advantages and disadvantages to take into consideration. The fact that they do not have to drink blood is one most vampires envy, and one which could take away some of the horror of the game if their inhumanity is not played up.

Also, do not give revenants additional Disciplines after they are Embraced, though they may gain additional Disciplines at their normal clan cost. Otherwise, many players would play revenants just to pick up three additional points in Disciplines (three as revenants and three more after the Embrace). This would make them too powerful at the start.

Revenants can be useful supporting characters, adding mystery, flavor and a sense of the absurd to stories. Feel free to alter these ghoul-families or to add more. It is possible that there are other ghoul-families similar to the Rafastio, hiding from mortals, their fellow ghoul-families and most Kindred.

Revenant Character Creation

Revenant characters are not meant to be as powerful as true vampires, for they are simply long-lived mortals with some vampiric advantages. However, it is up to the Storyteller to decide the level of power with which revenant characters should begin the game. Here are four levels:

Ghouls and the Blood Bond

Ghouls cannot Blood Bond others to themselves. Those who have vampire blood in their veins can create Blood Bonds, however. Anyone who drinks the ghoul's blood will be one step closer to being Blood Bound to the Kindred whose blood the ghoul drank. If the ghoul drank a mixture of many different Kindred's blood, then no effect (not even the Vinculum) is created. It takes three drinks of a Kindred's blood, even when carried through a ghoul intermediary, to create a Blood Bond. After a Regnant is established, the subject will immediately feel the effects of the Blood Bond, though she may not even know to whom she is in Thrall.





Young Revenant

Age Range: 15 to 50

Attributes: 7/5/3

Abilities: 13/9/5

Disciplines: 3

Backgrounds: 7

Virtues: 8

Freebie Points: 15

Old Revenant

Age Range: 50 to 150

Attributes: 9/6/4

Abilities: 17/9/7

Disciplines: 5

Backgrounds: 9

Virtues: 7

Freebie Points: 15

Elder Revenant

Age Range: 150 to 400

Attributes: 10/7/5

Abilities: 20/12/8

Disciplines: 7

Backgrounds: 12

Virtues: 6

Freebie Points: 15

Ancient Revenant

Age Range: 400 to 750

Attributes: 9/6/4

Abilities: 25/12/8

Disciplines: 10

Backgrounds: 13

Virtues: 6

Freebie Points: 15

Note: Character creation is the same as for all other characters. Revenants may have some Merits and Flaws normally available to Kindred if the Storyteller permits it, as well as those available to mortals (including those in *The Hunters Hunted*). However, Unbondable is a 6-point Merit for revenants, and Iron Will is a 4-point Merit. In addition, some Rafastio revenants may have Abilities, Backgrounds or Merits and Flaws provided in *Mage* and *The Book of Shadows* in addition to those provided in *Vampire* and *The Vampire Players Guide*. Revenants cannot possess Numina, nor can any develop True Faith (except with Storyteller approval).

Origins of the Black Hand's Ghoul-Families

It was this indefinable peculiarity... their only inheritance, those feelings of repugnance and superstitious terror with which the people of the town, even after awakening from their frenzy, continued to regard the memory of the reputed witches. The mantle, or rather the ragged cloak, of old Matthew Maule had fallen upon his children. They were believed to inherit mysterious attributes...

— Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of The Seven Gables*

The first revenants of the Black Hand were created in Eastern Europe somewhere between 700 B.C. and 300 B.C. The Verbena understood the power within Kindred blood and discovered it could be passed through mortals. It was one of the many secrets they discovered about the Kindred during their period of membership with the sect.

Since then, more than a dozen ghoule families have come into existence, though some are believed destroyed. The Tzimisce relied on them the most, especially using them against Gypsies and other dangerous mortals. Only eight ghoule families are believed to still exist. Four, the Bratovitches, Grimaldis, Obertuses and the Zantos, joined the Tzimisce in the Sabbat. One family, the Ducheski, are believed to now serve the Tremere. The other three continue to serve their true masters — the Kindred of the Black Hand.

Ghoul-Family Descriptions

The prince of darkness is a gentleman.

— William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

Enrathi

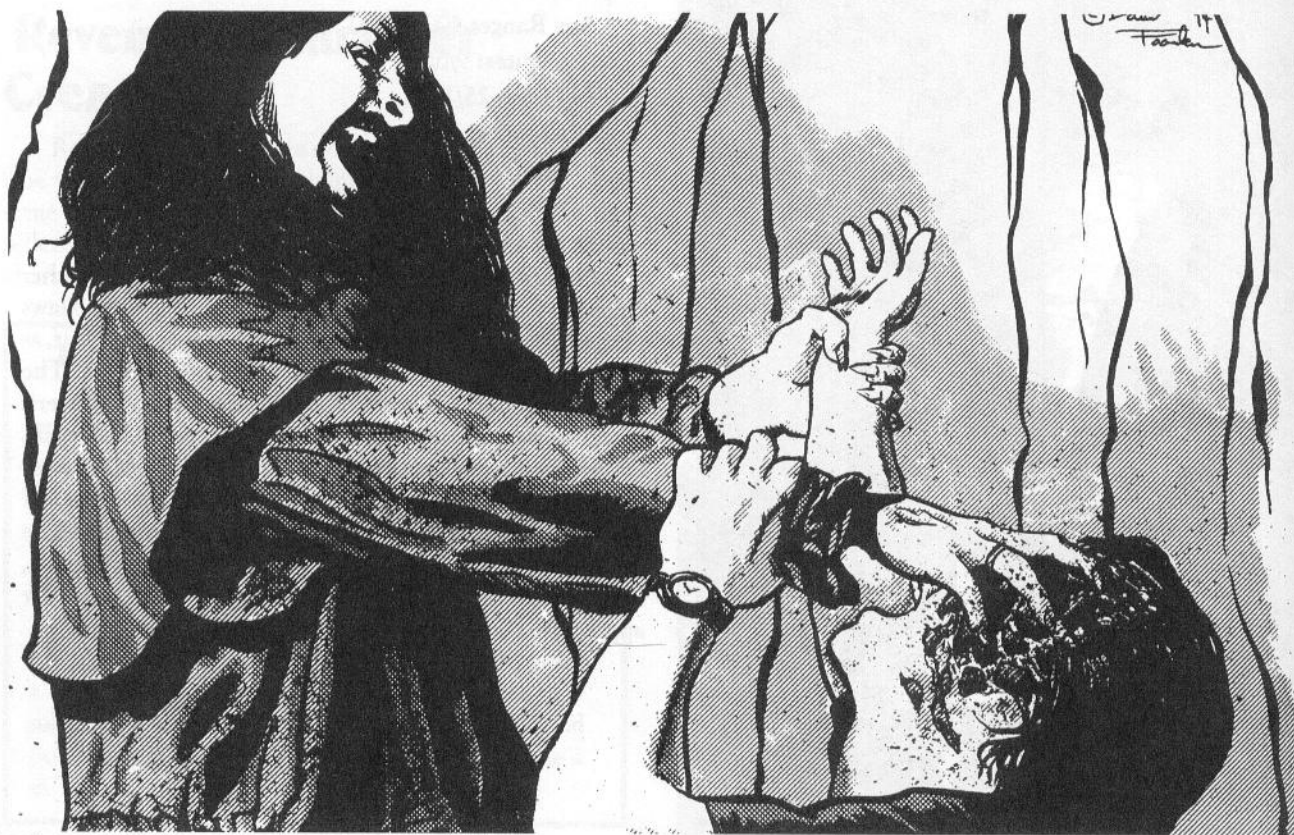
Nicknames: Snatchers

Description: The Enrathi were originally a simple farming family, but over the centuries they grew in power and reputation. Their members were black market dealers during the Middle Ages, providing Kindred, mages and mortals with needed slaves. Even more frightening, they were bankers, and they accumulated a great deal of wealth, which they used for the Black Hand.

The Black Hand chose the Enrathi to gather worthy children for training as chatterlings. The family proved especially adept at its duties and, with the discovery of the New World, managed to spread its influence to the Americas. The Black Hand has rewarded the Enrathi for its service with continued existence.

All former chatterlings owe the Enrathi family three greater boons: one for releasing them from their former lives, one for showing them the way to power as chatterlings, and one for giving them the opportunity to become Kindred. Should they fail to repay these boons when called upon, they will be shamed and may even receive punishment from sect leaders.

Appearance: The family was originally of Italian descent, but its members have bred with other ghoule families. The younger ones are mostly of Eastern European/Italian



descent. They are generally clean-cut and dress well. The snatchers tend to be in good shape and are usually armed.

Family Estates: There are nine Enrathi estates: Florence, Milan (Italy), Dresden (Germany), Brussels (Belgium), Saragossa (Spain), Cape Town (South Africa), St. Louis (Missouri), San Diego (California) and Manhattan (New York). The estates vary in size, but most house between five and ten family members, some of whom travel a great deal of the time. The estates are all very old but well cared for.

Backgrounds: They are all raised in private schools and learn their family's secrets around the age of 18. They are expected to serve their vampiric masters or face death at the hands of their own kin. Some who cannot find it in themselves to kidnap and enslave children manage to either escape or serve the family in other ways.

Character Creation: All are dilettantes. Their Natures tend to reflect their often-cruel duties of kidnapping children; many are Deviants, Bravos and Fanatics, but they can have any Demeanor. Physical Attributes are usually primary, while Mental Attributes are secondary. Talents are primary. Common Backgrounds include Contacts, Mentor and Resources.

Disciplines: Dominate, Obfuscate, Potence

Weaknesses: Due to the harsh nature of their work, they cannot have Humanity ratings higher than 3. Most prefer following a Path of Enlightenment. In addition, they can never have a Conscience rating above 2. Those who develop higher ratings usually go insane, kill themselves or run away from their family. In addition, each is Blood Bound to at least one of the seraphim.

Preferred Paths: They prefer the Path of Cathari, though some follow the Path of Death and the Soul.

Family Organization: Each estate is controlled by a patriarch. The women have virtually no power in the family. They are considered inferior and are meant to serve only as the bearers of children and as keepers of households. The first-born sons are always given the most influence and power. The Enrathi treat their elder family members and all Kindred (even those not of the Black Hand) with great respect.

Gaining Family Recognition: Those who best serve the Black Hand by acquiring children who mature into the best chatterlings, and eventually into vampires, gain the most respect.

Sect Duties: They are charged with the duty of "snatching" children who show enough physical and intellectual potential to become chatterlings.

Quote: *Come here little girl... Want some candy? Quick! Grab her!*

Marijava — "They serve our masters, but they cannot be trusted to keep our secrets. Avoid them whenever possible and tell them as little as you can."

Rafastio — "They are very strange and certainly dangerous and evil. Do not cross them, for their spells are potent."

Black Hand — "Only through their efforts will we save humanity. I am glad to serve them well."

Marijava

Nickname: Stalkers

Description: Long ago, the head of the Marijava family was also the leader of a Thuggee sect of robbers and assassins. He served some of the early Euthanatos of the Tal'mahe'Ra and, as a reward, became a ghoul. He continued serving the sect and eventually trained his own family in the Thuggee arts. They too served the sect, and eventually his children and their children were chosen to become ghouls. From that point on, the Marijava were a ghoul family.

While the Marijava are still trained as thieves and assassins, they primarily serve as spies. They are all highly educated and use the sect's influence to attain positions of power all over the world. From these positions, they help keep watch over the activities of other Kindred. They keep up with all manner of Blood Cults, sects, packs, gangs, coteries and individual Kindred. They record whatever they can discover and relay it to Black Hand leaders.

They often trade information with the Nosferatu, and they are also said to be connected in some way to the Calibans of the Gypsies. They refute this despite their known interaction with them. Some wonder if the Marijava are not also providing information to the Rom. However, so far the family has proven intensely loyal. Some are still called upon to perform daytime vampire assassinations.

Appearance: They are Indian in ancestry, and the family is large enough to inbreed without many defects, which is good since they dislike breeding with members of the other ghoul families. They all dress to fit their chosen worldly occupations, though they often wear black ceremonial garb during family ceremonies.

Family Estates: There are only two family estates, one in Bombay (India) and one in Kabul (Afghanistan). The rest of their large family is spread across the world. Most are in positions of authority and have access to important information.

Backgrounds: They are all highly trained assassins, thieves or professionals in some white-collar field. Many use their Presence to assist them in getting jobs in various government agencies. They all come from a very strict upbringing, and they understand the value of secrecy and loyalty.

Character Creation: They all have professional concepts, which are really combinations of outsider, criminal, investigator, and soldier backgrounds. They can have any Nature and Demeanor, except for Rebel and other antisocial ones which would prevent them from "fitting in." Mental Attributes are generally primary, as are Skills. Common Backgrounds include Allies, Contacts, Influence and Resources.

Disciplines: Celerity, Obfuscate, Presence

Weaknesses: They are all very susceptible to the Blood Bond and they can become Bound to a vampire with only one drink. They often acquire the blood of several Kindred and mix it together instead of drinking from just one. However, even this method creates a Vinculum effect in the revenant (see *The Players Guide to the Sabbat*).

Preferred Paths: Most retain their Humanity, though some follow the Path of the Scorched Heart.

Family Organization: The Marijava are very hierarchical. They all answer to Umath Marijava, the founder of their family. Umath provides his many family members with blood from various Black Hand Kindred.

Gaining Family Recognition: Both males and females are given equal respect and, while age is certainly respected, quality of service is considered far more important. Those who manage to locate and keep up with the most elusive and powerful of Kindred are given the most respect. Also, anyone honored with the opportunity to destroy a vampire receives great respect — if she succeeds.

Sect Duties: They are charged with information gathering, vampire hunting and assassination work.

Quote: *I am always ready and willing to serve my masters should they call upon me, for my blade is sharp and quick. Until then, I watch and wait, collecting secrets useful to my masters.*

Enrathi — “They are disgusting perverts whose dreadful services are deemed necessary by our masters, though I cannot understand why.”

Rafastio — “They are wicked and mysterious. Avoid them.”

Black Hand — “Of all the Kindred we watch, our masters are surely the most dedicated to the freedom and survival of the human race. We must serve them well, else Gehenna will be the end for us all.”

Rafastio

Nickname: Witches

Description: The Black Hand's connection with the Verbena degenerated long ago, but a little of it remains as one family, the Rafastios, continues to serve the Black Hand. Most are merely witches, but a few are full-fledged mages of the Verbena Tradition.

The Rafastio family of Northern Italy enjoyed its connections to the Tal'mahe'Ra. The sect provided the witches with blood and secrets and, in return, studied with the witches. Some eventually decided they would accept the offer to become ghouls of the Black Hand. They knew it would give them the ability to pass along self-produced vampire vitae to their children, which it did after a few generations — and a bit of magick.

Most members of the Rafastio family study magick, but few are actual mages. However, all seem very adept at Thaumaturgy, especially Blood Magic. These “witches” are very reclusive and tend to occupy themselves with their own pursuits of power and wealth. Still, they often provide the Black Hand with potions. The Verbena of the family provide even greater services.

Appearance: They vary greatly in appearance, having interbred with many other ghoul families. Some even believe they have bred with the Ducheski who serve the Tremere, though the Rafastios deny it. They tend to be very attractive and dress in the styles of clothing popular when they were



young (which is often hundreds of years ago) but they otherwise seem "normal."

Family Estates: They tend to live in very large and very old family mansions. There are 12 known family estates: Mobile (Alabama), Savannah (Georgia), Charlotte (North Carolina), Austin (Texas), Winnipeg (Manitoba), Edmonton (Alberta), Sydney (Australia), Casablanca (Morocco), Piombino, Verona, and Trieste (Italy), and Marseilles (France).

Backgrounds: Those who prove worthy are taught the ways of Thaumaturgy when they reach a responsible age. They all tend to be well-educated, but they are mostly taught at home and never allowed to attend public school. Almost all are trained in some, if not all, of the following: Alchemy, Herbalism, Kindred Lore, Lupine Lore, Occult, Spirit Lore, Toxicology and Underworld Lore.

Character Generation: They are all dilettantes. They can have any Nature and Demeanor, though the two are usually very different. Mental Attributes are primary, as are Knowledges. Common Backgrounds include Allies and Resources.

Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Thaumaturgy

Weaknesses: They are susceptible to the phases of the moon. On nights of the new moon, they are at -2 on all dice pools involving their Disciplines. On nights of the quarter moon they are at -1, and on nights of the half moon they are at no penalty. On nights of the full moon, however, they are at +2 on their dice pools involving their Disciplines.

Preferred Paths: Almost all retain their Humanity, though a few follow the Path of Lilith.

Family Organization: The Rafastios all gather twice a year, on Halloween and at some other variable time during the year. The Rafastios are not controlled by one individual — all family members have their say. Still, each branch of the family has a matriarch or patriarch who tends to speak for all close kin.

Gaining Family Recognition: Any efforts that increase the power of the family gain respect. Developing new Thaumaturgical rituals or performing some grand act of magickal significance does the same. Rafastios consider their duties to the Black Hand a burden in some respects, but they always act loyal to the sect.

Sabbat Duties: They are keepers of Thaumaturgical lore and other secrets. They occasionally provide support through the use of their powers.

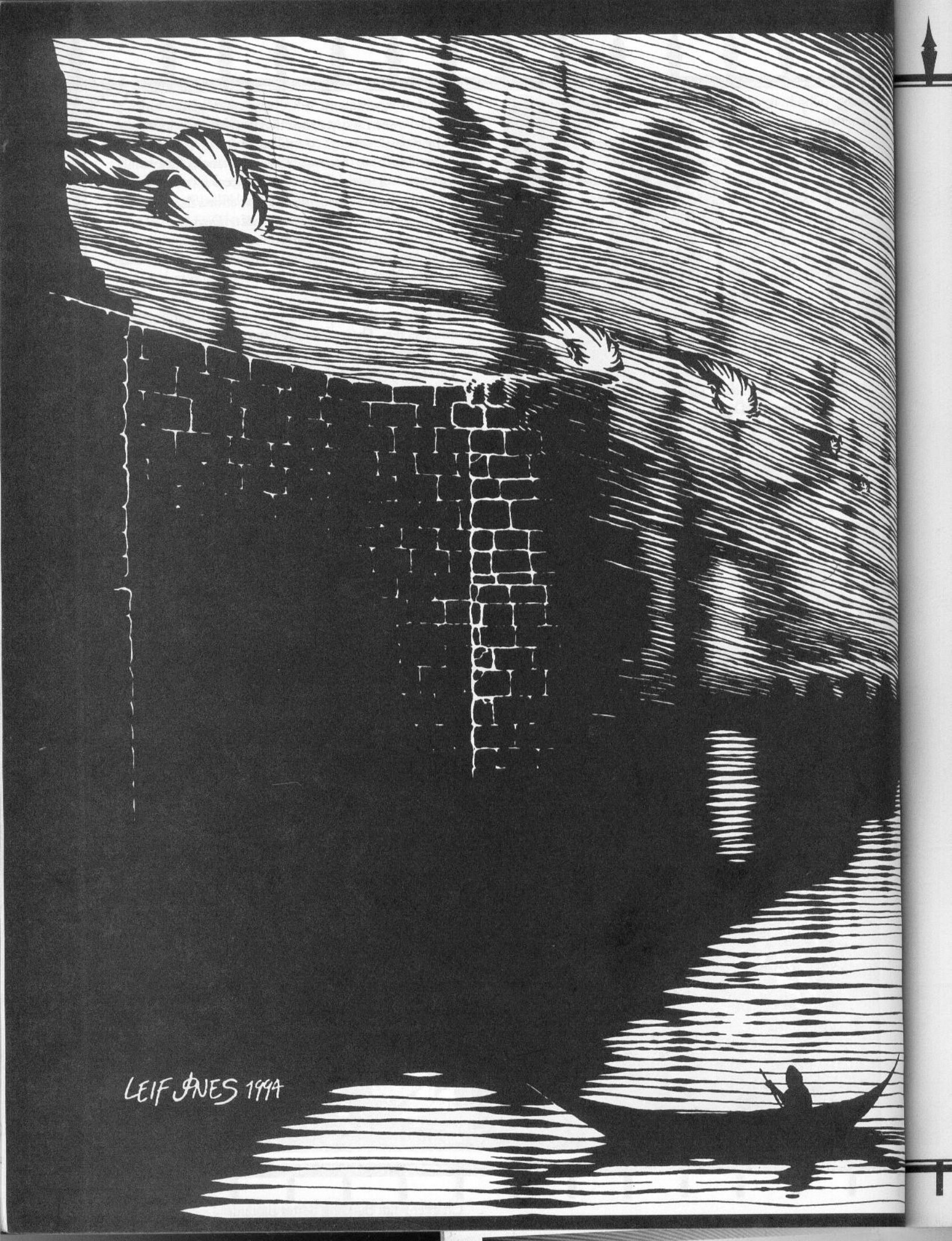
Quote: *Aye yes, I do have a simple talisman which might be of some use to you. However, I must ask that you return it after you finish with it, for it holds great sentimental value to my family... master.*

Enrathi — "They are cowardly fools who steal children. We do not associate with them, except when absolutely necessary. They fear us, so we are safe from them."

Marijava — "They are dangerous. Watch them closely, for they spy upon us, too. One day they may try to slit our throats, for it is obvious how they feel about us."

Black Hand — "They are our masters and we have no choice in the matter. Though we no longer require their blood, they gave us the gift — and they can take it away. Serve them as they request to be served."





LEIF JONES 1994

Chapter Five: Enoch, the City Caine Built

I looked upon the scene before me — upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain — upon the bleak walls upon the vacant eye-like windows — upon a few rank sedges — and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees — with an utter depression of the soul, which I can compare to no earthly sensation...

— Edgar Allan Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher*

There is a place where souls go after death, a realm called the Underworld. In this spirit realm the dead take form and spend an eternity living shadows of their former lives. In its Shadowlands, in those places where the Underworld comes closest to the Earth, the undead of the Black Hand make their home. Far away from all earthly threats, they watch over their Antediluvians and await Gehenna in a place of eternal night — a place they call Enoch.

The Spiritual Homeland

*I used to wonder
About living and dying —
I think the difference lies
Between tears and crying.
I used to wonder
About here and there —
I think the distance
Is nowhere.*

— Langston Hughes, "Border Line"

Enoch is a land unto itself. Wraiths rarely go there, for even in the Shadowlands it is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean. Those who do visit never leave. Vampires who attempt to find its parallel location on Earth end up sailing around the ocean, never finding the land that might be Enoch.

Within the Shadowlands, however, Enoch rests behind mammoth walls, its palaces restored to their former glory. While the halls of this fabled city do not ring out with the voices of living souls, the undead and their wraith servants call this Enoch their home.

Another Form of Undeath

*Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss.*

— William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

The Underworld is the place where "Restless Dead," also known as wraiths, go when their lives expire. Wraiths may yet attain transcendence and gain access to the true afterlife, but they might also be swallowed up by the Oblivion, a massive force of entropy destroying the Underworld. Not all people become wraiths, but those who do wander the Shadowlands, trying to come to terms with their being.

Wraith Existence

A wraith begins "life" after death as an *Enfant*, wrapped in a *Caul*, an ectoplasmic covering that protects her during her larval stage. The *Caul* warps her perceptions until it is removed. The wraith who removes the *Caul* is called the "Reaper."

A wraith's body is called its *Corpus*. The *Corpus* is composed of a substance called *plasm*, which composes everything else within the Underworld. Wraiths can be killed again by other wraiths, but this is only a temporary condition, and they will re-form in a slightly weakened state.

Wraiths become weak and vulnerable unless they feed upon *Pathos*, or emotion. They do so by pursuing their *Passions* — the things they enjoyed in life. The degree to which they pursue their *Passions* determines how much *Pathos* they gain. The *Pathos* recharges their *Willpower* and allows them to use their *Arcanos* — their wraith powers.

Arcanos include *Argos* (the power to travel safely through the Underworld), *Castigate* (which provides some control over the Shadow), *Embody* (manifestation into the living world), *Fatalism* (recognizing marks of fate), *Inhabit* (possessing objects), *Keening* (influencing emotions through song or music), *Lifeweb* (recognizing and controlling the ties that bind the wraith to the living world), *Moliate* (the power to alter *plasm*, including one's own), *Outrage* (psychokinetic powers), *Pandemonium* (releasing pure chaos), *Phantasm* (controlling the dreams of mortals), *Puppetry* (possessing the living) and *Usury* (causing entropy, death and decay in the living world, as well as transferring *Pathos*).

Wraiths can attune objects, people and places to themselves by expending *Willpower* each time they use or visit them. It is easier to use *Arcanos* in affecting attuned objects.

All wraiths also possess what is called a *Shadow*. This *Shadow* is in many ways another individual, because it is a deep part of the wraith and can take form. The *Shadow* is powerful and uncontrollable. It can spell doom for a wraith who cannot overcome its many tricks and snares.

The Form of the Underworld

*...for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.*
— Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach"

The Underworld is made up of four parts — the *Shadowlands*, the *Tempest*, *Stygia*, and the *Far Shores*, and is separated from the living world by the *Shroud of Death*. This barrier is weaker at night, on *Halloween* and in certain places. It is extremely difficult for a wraith to affect the living world in any way.

The *Shadowlands* are composed of the aspect of Earth that is inhabited by wraiths. The *Shadowlands* form something of an "outershell" around the world. Wraiths can travel the *Shadowlands*

and interact with the living and supernatural beings. There are places called *Haunts* which are less of a barrier between the world of the living (also known as the *Skinlands*) and the world of the dead. These places usually seem haunted in the living world.

Within the *Shadowlands*, *Necropolises* correspond to the darkest places within the cities of the living, and wraiths gather in these dismal reflections of Earth's cities. The wraiths form strongholds called *Citadels* within the *Necropolises*.

The *Tempest* is a great storm which is always raging in the Underworld. It makes passage between the *Shadowlands* and the inner realms difficult and collects the memories and nightmares of those who pass through it. There are paths through the *Tempest* called *Byways*.

The *Far Shores* are places far beyond the *Tempest*, such as *Valhalla* and the *Thousand Hells*. These realms are primarily interested in acquiring more power through the collection of souls.

The History of Enoch

The kingdom of perpetual night.

— Shakespeare, *Richard III*

The fabled *Book of Nod* describes the known history of the First City, but no version makes mention of it existing in the *Shadowlands*. The *Black Hand* originally believed it discovered a means of passage into the Underworld on its own, and that it was merely luck or the providence of *Caine* that they found the valley of *Enoch*. However, most now believe the *Antediluvians* led their minions to the city they had re-formed from their memories.

For ages *Enoch* remained under the dominion of the sect. Then, as the *Inquisition* created havoc on Earth, the *Hand* came under assault in *Enoch*. A large force of *Spectres* and *Doomshades*, perhaps under the direction of a wraithlord, arose from the *Tempest* and swarmed *Enoch* during one of the worst *Maelstroms* ever. Many members of the *Hand* were lost that night, for some were in *Enoch* when the city fell.

The *Del'Roh* and the more powerful *Kindred* escaped to Earth, where they remained for centuries, leaving the *Aralu* to the dead. They did not return to *Enoch* until the *Eastern* and *Western Hands* reunited. The first force they sent to *Enoch* found the city deserted, though there were signs of a great struggle. Some claim the city's conquerors were attacked by other *Doomshades* or *Underworld* beings, others say a great *Maelstrom* destroyed them, and a few fear the *Aralu* may have awoken and destroyed the infiltrators themselves. Should the last be true, surely the lack of courage shown by the *Black Hand* angered the clan sires.

The *Hand* has restored *Enoch* to its former splendor and guards the holding with all its might. The tombs of the *Aralu* remain unopened, and the imprisoned and insane *Kindred* outside the sealed tomb chamber doors, who await the *Antediluvians* as food, have yet to be consumed. But there is hope the clan sires will return soon.



The Black Citadel

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate.

(All hope abandon, ye who enter here!)

— Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Inferno*

Much of the holding is now located behind great, 10-foot-thick, 100-foot-high walls of black marble, in which is set a great bronze gate bearing what is believed to be the seal of Caine. The walls were rebuilt after the retaking of the city to prevent future attacks by Oblivion-driven monsters. The walls are guarded by slave wraiths trained as sentinels.

Inside the walls is the re-created “First City.” Though this Underworld city is, at best, merely a reflection of the real First City, many believe it appears as it did so long ago. The statues throughout the city are believed to be the work of Arikel, the first Toreador, and the ancient library built by Brujah stands near the center of town. The hanging gardens designed by Malkav remain in full bloom. The streets and buildings designed by Ventruue are in perfect condition, as are the slave pits which Jrad of the Second Generation filled with those captured in his conquests.

Enoch is unique, but bears many similarities to the architecture of early Mesopotamia, especially the Citadel of Sargon II. The entire Citadel is sizable, covering nearly 10 square miles. Most of this space remains empty, however, and there are living quarters for far more beings than have ever been in Enoch.

Notable locations include a large, black-and-red building called the Temple of Lilith, which seems to have been dedicated to the Dark Queen; the “Catacombs of the Antediluvians,” which contain the sealed tombs of what are believed to be four Antediluvians; the Pool of Zillah, a small pool of crystal clear water which is said to provide visions of the future to those who know how to see them; and a prison where criminals were held until they would become Caine and his childer’s meals. The chatterlings are housed and trained in one section of Enoch and are not permitted to venture into the rest of the city until reaching a certain age.

The Dread Palace Ghemal, High House of Caine

That sweet city with her dreaming spires.

— Matthew Arnold, “Thyrsis”

In the center of the Black Citadel stands a massive palace called the High House of Caine. According to myth, Caine and his childer would gather here and feast upon the specially prepared blood of honored vessels. The palace is lavishly decorated with furnishings provided by the finest craftspeople in all the lands. Many murals of Caine and his childer grace the walls, telling the stories of the First City. Statues, precious stones and metals, painted golden reliefs, and artwork from many ages adorn the halls and chambers of the palace. It is from Ghemal that the Del’Roh rules the Black Hand.



The Possibility of Fraud

In the Wild, only gods die gladly... while demons must be slain.

— Batman: Dark Joker - the Wild

Many wonder if the four beings are actually Antediluvians. Some claim they are not. Regardless, they hold great sway over all Kindred, and the Black Hand believes it follows their will. The most blasphemous of Kindred claim Enoch of the Underworld was merely designed to appeal to the imaginations of Methuselah and ancilla alike. They claim that there was never a real city and that the **Book of Nod**, in all its various forms, is also a complete fraud. There may not even be four of the beings, as they have never been seen. It is possible that there are more or less, and they are all using their powers to make it seem that there are four.

There are expert linguists who claim that the ancient Sumerian used in the various writings found in the library is from a far later time period than when the First City would have existed. Others claim that the time period for the First City must be wrong. Many Lilins (followers of the Path of Lilith) have turned up possible evidence suggesting that Caine never built a city, and that the city is actually Lilith's. It may never have even existed in the Living Lands.

Kindred would love to know the truth, but there is evidence to support many different theories. Certainly, if there are Antediluvians, they could make the myths as they please and back them up with their own evidence. Even the Del'Roh does not know the truth... or at least not that she will admit.

The first level of the palace is the great meeting hall where all members of the sect may discuss business. Much of this level serves also as a museum and armory, though the archaic weapons are no longer used. This floor served as the court of Jrad, the Second-Generation Cainite whom the Hand believes led his sire's armies. Caine's Ivory Throne sits in the middle chamber.

The second level is the Hall of Havens, where all members of the Hand, including non-vampires, can make their home when they visit Enoch. It is large enough to provide lavish havens for more than 200, though most of the chambers remain unused.

The ceremonies and grand social events are held on the third level. It serves as a massive pleasure den, and the sect believes many mortals lost their lives here feeding the thirst of Caine and the Antediluvians. Some members of the wazir make their havens on this level.

The Del'Roh rules from the fourth floor. While she has no guards or locked doors, the entire level is her haven and only those specially privileged may enter it. The Del'Roh keeps a harem of vampiric vessels, and new mortals are brought in and Embraced to serve her as food.

The fifth level of the palace is closed to all, for the Black Throne of Basalt, where the sect believes Caine will one night pass judgment on all Kindred, is here.

The Catacombs of the Antediluvians

The great cycle of the ages is renewed.

*Now Justice returns, returns the Golden Age;
a new generation now descends from on high.*

— Virgil, *Eclogues*

Though none have been brave enough to find out what really lies behind the magically sealed walls of the “Catacomb of the Antediluvians,” the sect claims it houses four Antediluvians who appear to sect members in dreams.

Loz comes in nightmares as a fierce warrior. His face is never seen and few can remember anything but the fear of being in his presence when they awake. Ninmug is said to provide prophecies which magically write themselves in blood in books within Brujah’s library. Nergal is said to be a beautiful woman who tells those she comes to what they must do to save the world from destruction. The Del’Roh herself is believed to see Nergal in dreams each day. The fourth Aralu has never been seen or heard, even in dreams, but many get a “peculiar feeling of being watched” whenever they near the fourth one’s tomb.

Unlife in Enoch

*Hell is the place of those who have denied;
They find there what they planted and what dug,
A Lake of Spaces, and a Wood of Nothing,
And wander there and drift, and never cease
Wailing for substance.*

— W.B. Yeats, “The Hour Glass”

A few Kindred make their havens in Enoch, but all members of the Black Hand have visited. They are guaranteed protection from one another by the Del’Roh, and should they break this peace, they would pay with their unlives. The city is usually free from violence, but the intrigue here is unsurpassed. Some compare it to ancient Persia, where many of the same Kindred once gathered to play their political games.

Two dozen members of the sect, 10 revenants, 20 chatterlings, and at least 100 wraiths call Enoch home. While most sect members maintain private havens in the Living Lands, they also have their own private set of apartments in Enoch. All are expected to spend at least some time in the city, meeting with the Del’Roh and other leaders, studying in its library and celebrating its rituals.

~ Many festivals are held in the city, and most sect members attend these celebrations unless they have a very good excuse. The old holidays of the great thanksgiving after an eclipse, Midsummer’s Eve and Allhallow’s Eve are kept, as well as special events declared by the Del’Roh.

The wraiths of Enoch act primarily as servants. Most no longer enter the Shadowlands, but they prefer the protection of the Del’Roh, anyway. They find the lifestyle they have in Enoch preferable to the one they would have in Stygia. There are wraiths who serve as professional entertainers, craftspeople, librarians, housekeepers, guards and messengers. The Nagaraja help keep them in line.





LEIF JONES
1994



Chapter Six: Templates

Look, who comes here! a grave unto a soul.
William Shakespeare, *King John II*

There are many strange Kindred among the Black Hand, as well as other foul and assorted creatures. Most would consider members of the Black Hand to be the typical, run-of-the-mill Machiavellian vampire politicians, but many, if not most, are certainly not. The Black Hand is extremely diverse, giving the sect much of its strength.

Here are 10 vampire character templates which you can use as player or Storyteller characters. Feel free to tamper with the numbers, Nature, Demeanor or anything else in the description to make a character fit your needs. These templates are meant to serve as guides in helping you create your own characters. The best characters are the ones you design and develop totally on your own.

Antiquarian

*Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still,
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside.*
— Matthew Arnold, "Thyrsis"

Quote: *The answers to all the mysteries of our kind are out there. I intend to find them or die trying.*

Prelude: You were of the Rom, traveling with the Gypsies during the 1700s. You only learned your uncle was a Kindred when he bit you on the neck. He left you to make your own way in the world, and being of the folk, you had little problem.

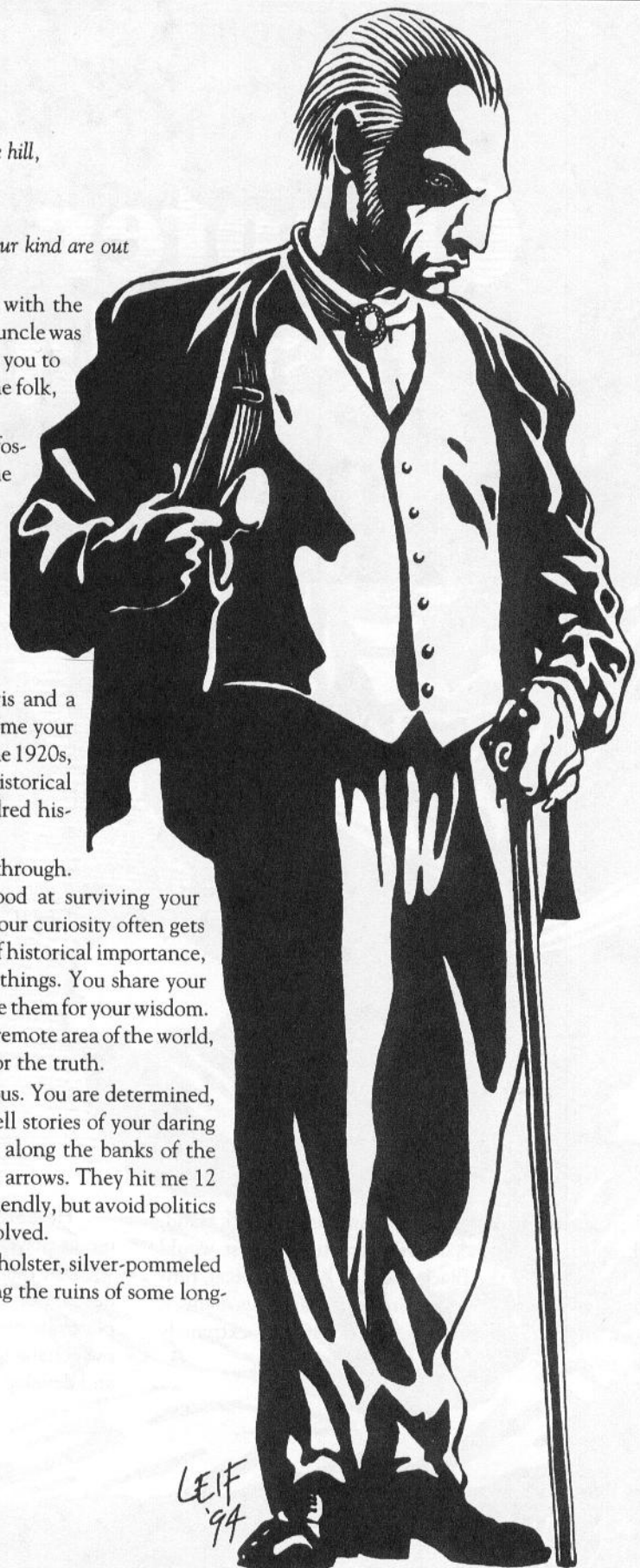
Always fascinated by stories, your travels fostered an interest in Cainite lore and history. By the 1920s, you were a leader among Kindred archeologists. Your findings included pieces related to Enoch, and it was during this time that you caught the attention of the Black Hand. A Rawis recognized your yearning for knowledge and your great ability to find it. You were watched for years and eventually asked to join.

Since that time, you have become a Rawis and a Lilin, but you are best known for what has become your deepest passion—collecting antiquities. Since the 1920s, you have collected many rare and valuable historical artifacts, many of which directly relate to Kindred history.

Concept: You are a Gangrel through and through. Your love of nature is what makes you so good at surviving your explorations. You are intrepid and daring, but your curiosity often gets you into trouble. You love artifacts and objects of historical importance, gladly trading knowledge and services for such things. You share your knowledge with those you trust, but always charge them for your wisdom. You are usually involved in a dig somewhere in a remote area of the world, and nothing has deterred you from your quest for the truth.

Roleplaying Tips: Be courageous and curious. You are determined, and your thirst for artifacts is unquenchable. Tell stories of your daring adventures — "I remember when I was chased along the banks of the Amazon by a hunting party armed with wooden arrows. They hit me 12 times and three nearly pierced my heart..." Be friendly, but avoid politics except when you have no choice but to get involved.

Equipment: Trusty .45 revolver in shoulder holster, silver-pommeled cane, ancient jewelry, passport, old map detailing the ruins of some long-forgotten place



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: Praise-Seeker

Demeanor: Pedagogue

Concept: Antiquarian

Sire:

Generation: 9th

Clan: Gangrel

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●○○○○○

Dexterity ●●●○○○○○

Stamina ●●●●○○○

Social

Charisma ●●●○○○○○

Manipulation ●●●○○○○○

Appearance ●●○○○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●●○○○○○

Intelligence ●●●●○○○

Wits ●●●○○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ○○○○○○○○

Alertness ●●○○○○○○

Athletics ●●○○○○○○

Brawl ●●○○○○○○

Dodge ●●○○○○○○

Empathy ○○○○○○○○

Intimidation ○○○○○○○○

Leadership ○○○○○○○○

Streetwise ○○○○○○○○

Subterfuge ○○○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ●●○○○○○○

Drive ●○○○○○○○

Etiquette ●●○○○○○○

Firearms ●●○○○○○○

Melee ○○○○○○○○

Music ○○○○○○○○

Repair ●●○○○○○○

Security ●○○○○○○○

Stealth ●●○○○○○○

Survival ●○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ●○○○○○○○

Computer ●●●○○○○○

Finance ●○○○○○○○

Investigation ●●●●○○○

Law ●○○○○○○○

Linguistics ●●●○○○○○

Medicine ●○○○○○○○

Occult ●●●○○○○○

Politics ●●●○○○○○

Science ●○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Animalism ●●●○○○○○

Auspex ●●●○○○○○

Fortitude ●●●○○○○○

Obfuscate ●○○○○○○○

Protean ●●●○○○○○

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○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Age ●●○○○○○○

Allies ●●●●○○○

Contacts ●●●●○○○

Generation ●○○○○○○○

Herd ●●●○○○○○

Resources ●●●●○○○

Retainers ●●●●○○○

Virtues

Conscience ●●●○○○

Self-Control ●●●○○○

Courage ●●●○○○

Other Traits

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Humanity

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Willpower

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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised ☐

Hurt -1 ☐

Injured -1 ☐

Wounded -2 ☐

Mauled -2 ☐

Crippled -5 ☐

Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)

Corporate Conspirator

You are not like Cerebus, three gentlemen at once, are you?

— Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Rivals*

Quote: *Why no, I don't believe we've met. Nice to meet you, er, Mr.... Mr. Nelson. Yes, please have a drink. We have a couple of ex-dancers strung up in the back room. Psst... meet me by the river... usual spot... 4 a.m. Bring the package. I'll bring the money.*

Prelude: You were born to a poor family in the Old Country, but your parents brought you to America as a child. You found the American Dream was not so easily had, but you worked hard. You were naturally smart, and one of the prostitutes across the street used to be a teacher. You would borrow her books and study them when you could.

Her madam turned out to be a vampire. Your dedication impressed her, and she made you first her assistant and then her childe. You used your Disciplines regularly, continued to provide for your family, and by the 1920s, you were a multimillionaire.

You became involved in both the Camarilla and Sabbat, but only to learn as much from them as you could. You played each sect against the other without anyone ever knowing you were a member of both. It was not until a Sabbat bishop began watching you that your Alternate Identities were discovered. He turned out to be from the Black Hand, and your membership was all but assured.

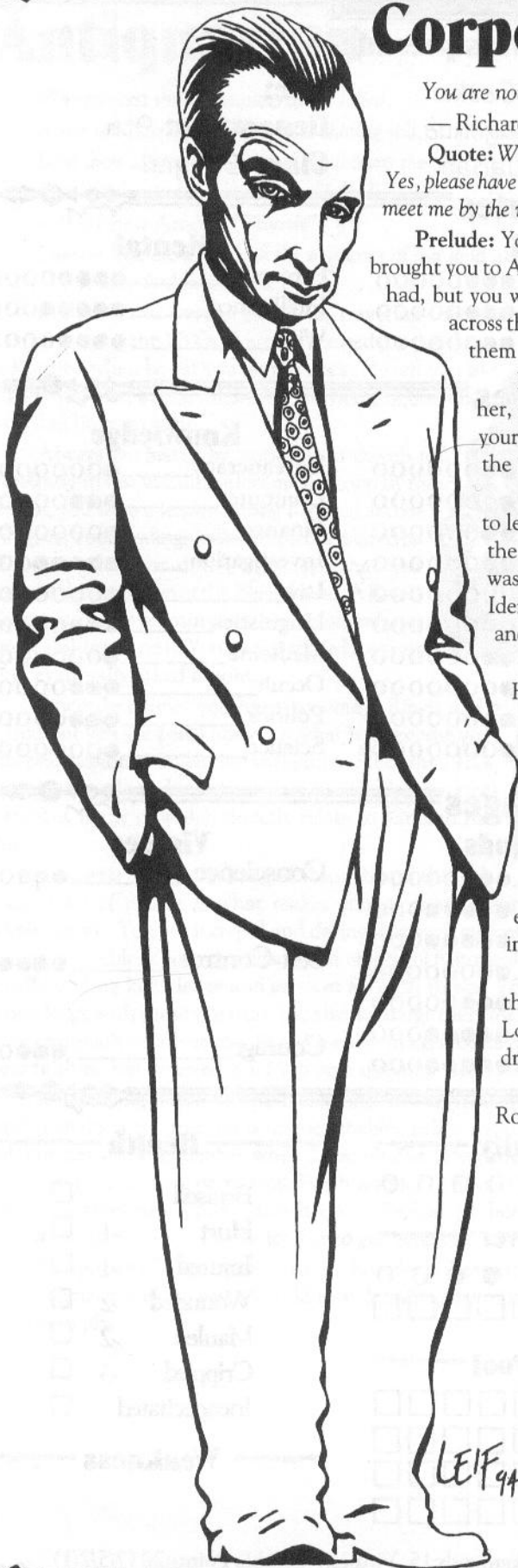
You now serve your own interests, along with those of the Black Hand. While the two sometimes clash, you are almost always able to convince others that your decision was for the benefit of the sect.

You continue to belong to both the Sabbat and the Camarilla, and you report your secrets of one sect to the other and the secrets of both the sects to the Black Hand.

Concept: You are a conspirator and manipulator, good at the political games of the Kindred. You have many enemies, but you have also worked hard to make yourself important enough that not even one of your three sects can afford to lose you. You are blackmailing several Kindred, and you hold Regnant over others.

Roleplaying Tips: Convince others that you are always doing things in their best interests. Never reveal your secrets to anyone. Look for weaknesses in other Kindred to use against them. Always drive a hard bargain when it comes to boons.

Equipment: Cellular phone, diamond jewelry, top-of-the-line Rolex, black limousine and three huge ghoulish bodyguards



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Confidant

Concept: Corporate Conspirator

Sire:

Generation: 8th

Clan: Lasombra Antitribu

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●○○○○○○
Dexterity ●●●○○○○○
Stamina ●●●○○○○○

Social

Charisma ●●●●○○○○
Manipulation ●●●●○○○○
Appearance ●●●●○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●●○○○○○
Intelligence ●●●○○○○○
Wits ●●●○○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ●●●○○○○○
Alertness ●●●○○○○○
Athletics ○○○○○○○○
Brawl ●●○○○○○○○
Dodge ●●○○○○○○○
Empathy ●●○○○○○○○
Intimidation ●●○○○○○○○
Leadership ●●○○○○○○○
Streetwise ●●○○○○○○○
Subterfuge ●●○○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ○○○○○○○○
Drive ●○○○○○○○
Etiquette ●●○○○○○○○
Firearms ●○○○○○○○
Melee ○○○○○○○○
Music ●○○○○○○○
Repair ○○○○○○○○
Security ●○○○○○○○
Stealth ●○○○○○○○
Survival ○○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ●●●○○○○○
Computer ○○○○○○○○
Finance ●●●●○○○○○
Investigation ●●●○○○○○
Law ●○○○○○○○
Linguistics ●○○○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○○○○
Occult ○○○○○○○○
Politics ●●●○○○○○
Science ○○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Dominate ●●●○○○○○
Obtenebration ●●●○○○○○
Presence ●●●○○○○○
○○○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○○
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Backgrounds

Age ●○○○○○○○
Allies ●●●○○○○○
Contacts ●●●●○○○○○
Generation ●●○○○○○○○
Influence ●●●●○○○○○
Resources ●●●●○○○○○
Retainers ●●●○○○○○

Virtues

Conscience ●●●○○○
Self-Control ●●●○○○
Courage ●●●○○○

Other Traits

○○○○○○○○○
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Humanity

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○
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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)

Coup Leader

O conspiracy!

Sham'st thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,

When evils are most free?

— William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Quote: I'm glad you could all be here tonight. It's good to know that there are those who share my view on that overbearing prince. Perhaps there is something we could do to change things.

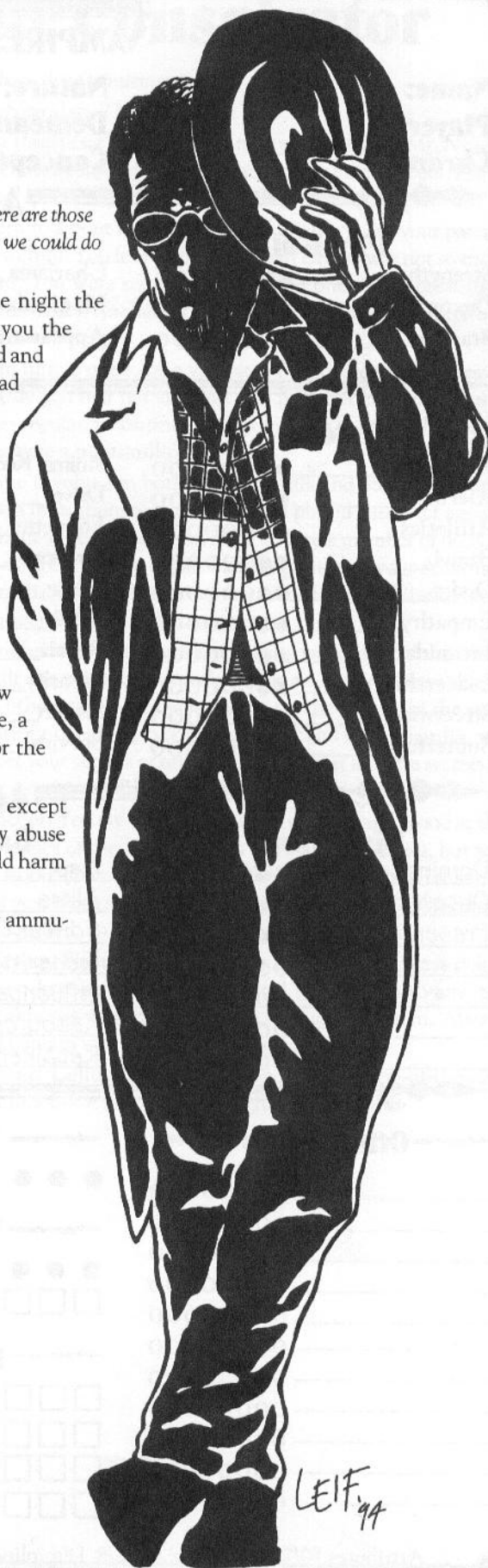
Prelude: You were content to be an English cobbler until the night the Sabbat needed you for an attack on a Ventruë elder. They gave you the Creation Rites and sent 15 of you on the attack. Three of you survived and were attached to an already existing pack. After the pack leader had your trio lead an attack that resulted in your companions' destruction, you figured you would be better off with different friends.

The Camarilla of the New World was not much different, however. Their evil dealings and treacherous ways revolted you, and the anarchs were no better. Instead of joining these groups, you spent your years trying to block all their plots and plans. After successfully interfering in a Sabbat siege, you came to the attention of the Black Hand. Within 20 years it had recruited you, giving you even more resources with which to battle the other undead. Now if only you could turn these resources against the Hand itself.

Concept: Your own kind disgusts you and mortals, no matter how much you love them, remain forever apart. You may become a prince, a dominion or even the Del'Roh, but you would throw it all away for the chance to be mortal once more.

Roleplaying Tips: Be clever. Never reveal any of your secrets except your love for mortals. Hold other Kindred in contempt when they abuse mortals in any way. Defend innocents from other vampires who would harm them. Plot and scheme. Make allies and connections.

Equipment: Stylish clothing, Colt Anaconda with manstopper ammunition, concealable tape recorder, notepad, pen, \$2,000 in cash



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: Plotter

Demeanor: Architect

Concept: Coup Leader

Sire:

Generation: 8th

Clan: Nosferatu Antitribu

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●○○○○
Dexterity ●●●●○○○○
Stamina ●●●○○○○○

Social

Charisma ●●●●○○○○
Manipulation ●●●●○○○○
Appearance ●●●●○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●●○○○○○
Intelligence ●●○○○○○○
Wits ●●●○○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ●●●●○○○○
Alertness ●●●○○○○○
Athletics ●○○○○○○○
Brawl ●●●○○○○○
Dodge ●●●○○○○○
Empathy ○○○○○○○○
Intimidation ●●●●○○○○
Leadership ●●●○○○○○
Streetwise ●●○○○○○○
Subterfuge ●●●○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ○○○○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○○○○
Etiquette ●○○○○○○○
Firearms ●●●●○○○○
Melee ●●●●○○○○
Music ○○○○○○○○
Repair ○○○○○○○○
Security ●●○○○○○○
Stealth ●●○○○○○○
Survival ●○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ○○○○○○○○
Computer ○○○○○○○○
Finance ○○○○○○○○
Investigation ●●○○○○○○
Law ●○○○○○○○
Linguistics ●○○○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○○○○
Occult ●○○○○○○○
Politics ●●●●○○○○
Science ○○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Animalism ●●●○○○○○
Fortitude ●○○○○○○○
Obfuscate ●●●●○○○○
Potence ●●○○○○○○
Presence ●○○○○○○○
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○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Age ●●●○○○○○
Allies ●●○○○○○○
Contacts ●●○○○○○○
Generation ●●○○○○○○
Military Force ●●●○○○○○
Retainers ●●●○○○○○
○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Callousness ●●●●○
Instincts ●●●●○
Morale ●●●○○

Other Traits

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Scorched Heart

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○
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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)

Doting Mentor [Nagaraja]

*Tut! I have done a thousand dreadful things
As willingly as one would kill a fly.*

— William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*

Quote: Oh child, did that anarch hurt you? Damn him! He will pay for this. He will not see the next moon rise in this unlife, and when he gets to the next life — well, let's just say I'll handle it personally from there! Hans! Gustav! Go burn that place to the ground and wait around to make sure no one comes out. He won't mess around with my little darlings anymore!

Prelude: The son of a poor Cajun family, you supported yourself through hunting, trapping and a little farming. War proved to be your natural vocation, and the draft was the best thing that ever happened to you — until a vampire discovered that you were a natural-born killer.

She was right, for you did enjoy killing — not the taking of life as much as the fear and rush that comes with being in battle with death all around. Your sire, however, reveled only in the destruction, and soon she began to sicken you. Her final outrage, the destruction of a busload of high-school students, turned you against her. You might not have won that battle had a shakar not joined the fight.

The Black Hand had planned on destroying both of you, but saw the betrayal of your own sire as proof that you should join the sect. Now you try to amend for your past while still reveling in the death around you.

Concept: You are something of a godfather, but you have an even darker side — you prefer death to life. You deeply care for those you watch after, but even they fear your black arts and unpredictable temper, as you might just love them to death.

Roleplaying Tips: Be charming and soft-spoken whenever you can, but when you get angry there is no limit to your violent side. You always get revenge and you seldom show mercy, except for your wards — and even some of them have passed the limits of your forgiveness.

Equipment: Old suit, Cuban cigar, expensive watch and a bodyguard



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: Pedagogue

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Concept: Doting Mentor

Sire:

Generation: 7th

Clan: Nagaraja

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●●○○○

Dexterity ●●●●○○○○

Stamina ●●●●○○○○

Social

Charisma ●●○○○○○○

Manipulation ●●○○○○○○

Appearance ●●●●○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●●●○○○○

Intelligence ●●○○○○○○

Wits ●●●●○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ○○○○○○○○

Alertness ●●○○○○○○

Athletics ●●○○○○○○

Brawl ●●●○○○○○

Dodge ●●●○○○○○

Empathy ○○○○○○○○

Intimidation ●●○○○○○○

Leadership ●○○○○○○○

Streetwise ○○○○○○○○

Subterfuge ○○○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ●○○○○○○○

Drive ●○○○○○○○

Etiquette ●●○○○○○○

Firearms ●●●○○○○○

Melee ●●○○○○○○

Music ●●○○○○○○

Repair ○○○○○○○○

Security ●●○○○○○○

Stealth ●●○○○○○○

Survival ●○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ○○○○○○○○

Computer ○○○○○○○○

Finance ●○○○○○○○

Investigation ●○○○○○○○

Law ○○○○○○○○

Linguistics ●●○○○○○○

Medicine ●○○○○○○○

Occult ●●○○○○○○

Politics ○○○○○○○○

Science ○○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Auspex ●●○○○○○○

Celerity ●○○○○○○○

Necromancy ●●●○○○○○

Nihilistics ●●●○○○○○

Potence ●○○○○○○○

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Backgrounds

Age ●○○○○○○○

Allies ●○○○○○○○

Contacts ●●○○○○○○

Generation ●●○○○○○○

Resources ●●●○○○○○

Retainer ●○○○○○○○

○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Conscience ●●●○○○

Self-Control ●●●○○○

Courage ●●●○○○

Other Traits

Thanatology ●●●○○○○○

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Humanity

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised □

Hurt -1 □

Injured -1 □

Wounded -2 □

Mauled -2 □

Crippled -5 □

Incapacitated □

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)

Former Chatterling

Where the lion's skin will not reach, you must patch it out with the fox's.

— Plutarch, Lysander

Quote: Of course I support the prince in this matter. Why else would I have given her the address of those anarchic rabble? However, I heard that someone else conveniently forgot to tell the prince about his meeting with a Sabbat bishop ... Oh, I have my ways. Don't worry, my friend; I understand these things, but I fear the prince would not. I will not tell her, for such small indiscretions are of no consequence — should you convince the primogen to go along with the prince's orders in this matter.

Prelude: You were captured by one of the Enrathi at the tender age of 7 and taken to the Underworld city of Enoch. You learned everything the Hand would teach you — you really had no choice.

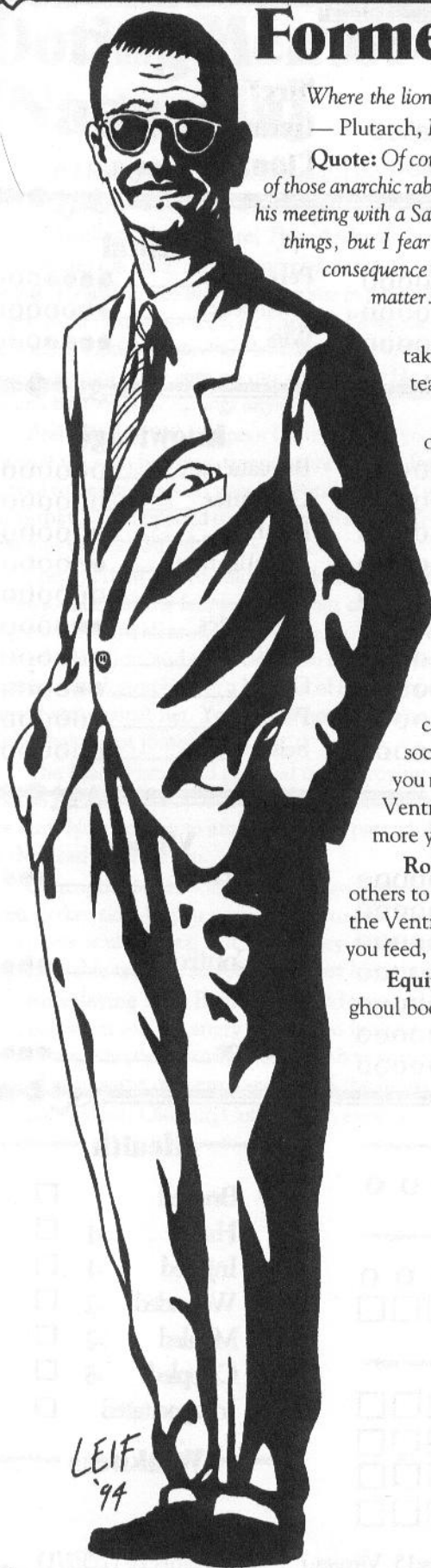
The bizarre world of the Black Hand was the only one you knew for most of your years, and you left Enoch fully convinced that what the sect had taught you was true. You were sponsored before the prince of your current city as the progeny of one of the primogen — who also happened to belong to the Black Hand.

Since that time, you have worked hard at maintaining the status quo. You have stepped on the backs of many Kindred, and your adopted sire assists your climb. Still, you have begun to have second thoughts about your allegiance, for you have now experienced the true excitement of being a vampire.

Concept: You are the consummate Kindred politician. You always dress conservatively and in the most expensive clothes. You attend all Toreador socials and have even performed secret work for the primogen, who has found you most effective. You make everything appear as though you are a conservative Ventrue, but you secretly manipulate things for the benefit of the Black Hand. The more you experience, however, the more you question your old values.

Roleplaying Tips: Be cordial and friendly to all. Be secretive, but try to get others to talk about themselves. Always stand against anarchs and the Sabbat. Fake the Ventrue weakness by preying on certain types of mortals, but never let anyone see you feed, else they will learn your secret.

Equipment: Cellular phone, expensive suit, sunglasses, new limousine and a ghoulish bodyguard



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: Judge

Demeanor: Conformist

Concept: Former Chatterling

Sire:

Generation: 8th

Clan: Toreador

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●○○○○

Dexterity ●●●●○○○○

Stamina ●●●●○○○○

Social

Charisma ●●●●○○○○

Manipulation ●●●○○○○○

Appearance ●●●○○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●○○○○○○

Intelligence ●●●○○○○○

Wits ●●●○○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ●●●○○○○○

Alertness ●●○○○○○○

Athletics ○○○○○○○○

Brawl ●●○○○○○○

Dodge ●●○○○○○○

Empathy ●○○○○○○○

Intimidation ●○○○○○○○

Leadership ○○○○○○○○

Streetwise ○○○○○○○○

Subterfuge ●○○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ○○○○○○○○

Drive ●○○○○○○○

Etiquette ●●○○○○○○

Firearms ●●○○○○○○

Melee ●●○○○○○○

Music ●●●○○○○○

Repair ●●○○○○○○

Security ●●●○○○○○

Stealth ●●●○○○○○

Survival ●○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ○○○○○○○○

Computer ○○○○○○○○

Finance ○○○○○○○○

Investigation ●●○○○○○○

Law ○○○○○○○○

Linguistics ●○○○○○○○

Medicine ●○○○○○○○

Occult ●●●○○○○○

Politics ○○○○○○○○

Science ●○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Auspex ●●●●○○○○

Celerity ●●●○○○○○

Fortitude ●○○○○○○○

Presence ●●●○○○○○

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Backgrounds

Allies ●○○○○○○○

Contacts ●○○○○○○○

Generation ●●○○○○○○

Mentor ●●●○○○○○

Retainer ●○○○○○○○

Secret Identity ●○○○○○○○

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Virtues

Conscience ●●○○○

Self-Control ●●○○○

Courage ●●●●●

Other Traits

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Humanity

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○

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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised ☐

Hurt -1 ☐

Injured -1 ☐

Wounded -2 ☐

Mauled -2 ☐

Crippled -5 ☐

Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)

Globe-Trotting Assassin

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?

— William Blake, "On Another's Sorrow"

Quote: *Not expecting to see me here, eh Don Diego? You see, there is one thing I love more than anything else (burst of speed and glimpse of a wooden stake) — destroying trash like you (pulling out a machete). Your reign of terror is over.*

Prelude: A child prodigy and an expert musician, you came to the attention of a Malkavian elder at a very young age. When you turned 17, he knew your hands would never be in finer condition, and he Embraced you.

He kept you locked away in his big mansion, insisting you perform only for him. Your hatred knew no bounds, and you planned your revenge as intently as you had ever planned a performance. You played the piano as his body crackled in the fire.

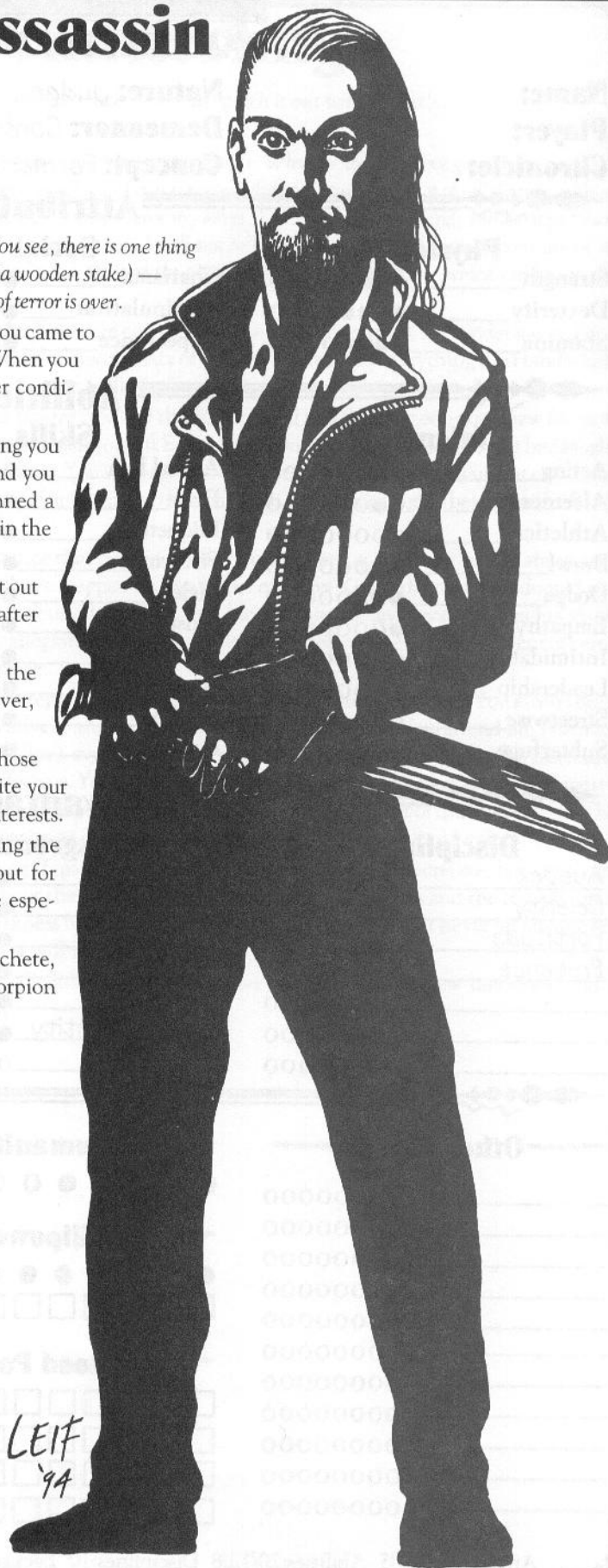
You decided there must be other vampires, so you set out to destroy them all. The Black Hand found you soon after and tried to show you that not all vampires are evil.

You became a shakar for the sect, hunting down the most evil of vampires who were evil. Sometimes, however, you again realize just how monstrous you all are.

Concept: You are a deadly assassin and hunt down those who have hurt innocents like your sire hurt you. Despite your violent line of work, you remain very human in your interests.

Roleplaying Tips: Spend much of your time playing the piano or practicing your martial skills. Keep an eye out for Kindred who mistreat others and repay those who are especially vile.

Equipment: Stylish clothes, motorcycle jacket, machete, three wooden stakes, fake identification and a Skorpion submachine gun with extra clips



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Loner

Concept: *Globe-trotting Assassin*

Sire:

Generation: 7th

Clan: Malkavian

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●●○○○
Dexterity ●●●●●○○○
Stamina ●●●●●○○○

Social

Charisma ●●○○○○○○
Manipulation ●●●○○○○○
Appearance ●●●○○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●●●●○○○
Intelligence ●●○○○○○○
Wits ●●●●●○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ●○○○○○○○
Alertness ●●○○○○○○
Athletics ●●○○○○○○
Brawl ●●●○○○○○
Dodge ●●●○○○○○
Empathy ○○○○○○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○○○○
Leadership ○○○○○○○○
Streetwise ○○○○○○○○
Subterfuge ●○○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ●○○○○○○○
Drive ●○○○○○○○
Etiquette ●○○○○○○○
Firearms ●●●●○○○○
Melee ●●●○○○○○
Music ●●●○○○○○
Repair ●○○○○○○○
Security ●●●○○○○○
Stealth ●●●○○○○○
Survival ●○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ○○○○○○○○
Computer ○○○○○○○○
Finance ○○○○○○○○
Investigation ●●○○○○○○
Law ○○○○○○○○
Linguistics ●●●○○○○○
Medicine ●○○○○○○○
Occult ●○○○○○○○
Politics ●○○○○○○○
Science ○○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Auspex ●●●○○○○○
Celerity ●●○○○○○○
Dominate ●●●○○○○○
Fortitude ●○○○○○○○
Obfuscate ●●●●○○○○
Potence ●○○○○○○○
Quietus ●●○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Age ●○○○○○○○
Generation ●●●○○○○○
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Virtues

Conscience ●●●●○
Self-Control ●●●○○
Courage ●●●○○

Other Traits

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Humanity

● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○
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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)

Government Leader

I am falser than vows made in wine.

— William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

Quote: *I have no idea what you're talking about, Ms. Reporter! I am merely a lawyer for the CIA. I am not involved in anything illegal, nor do I have any knowledge concerning anything you're talking about! Now get that damn camera outta my face before I make both of you disappear!*

Prelude: Your first clan was not Kindred but Scottish, and you fought with all your might in the wars that rocked 17th-century Britain. A member of the Rosicrucians, you controlled a spy ring throughout Great Britain and reported back to James I. When James I ascended to the throne of England, you went along as a minister of security. You worked hard at infiltrating existing power structures and soon uncovered the existence of two deep conspiracies.

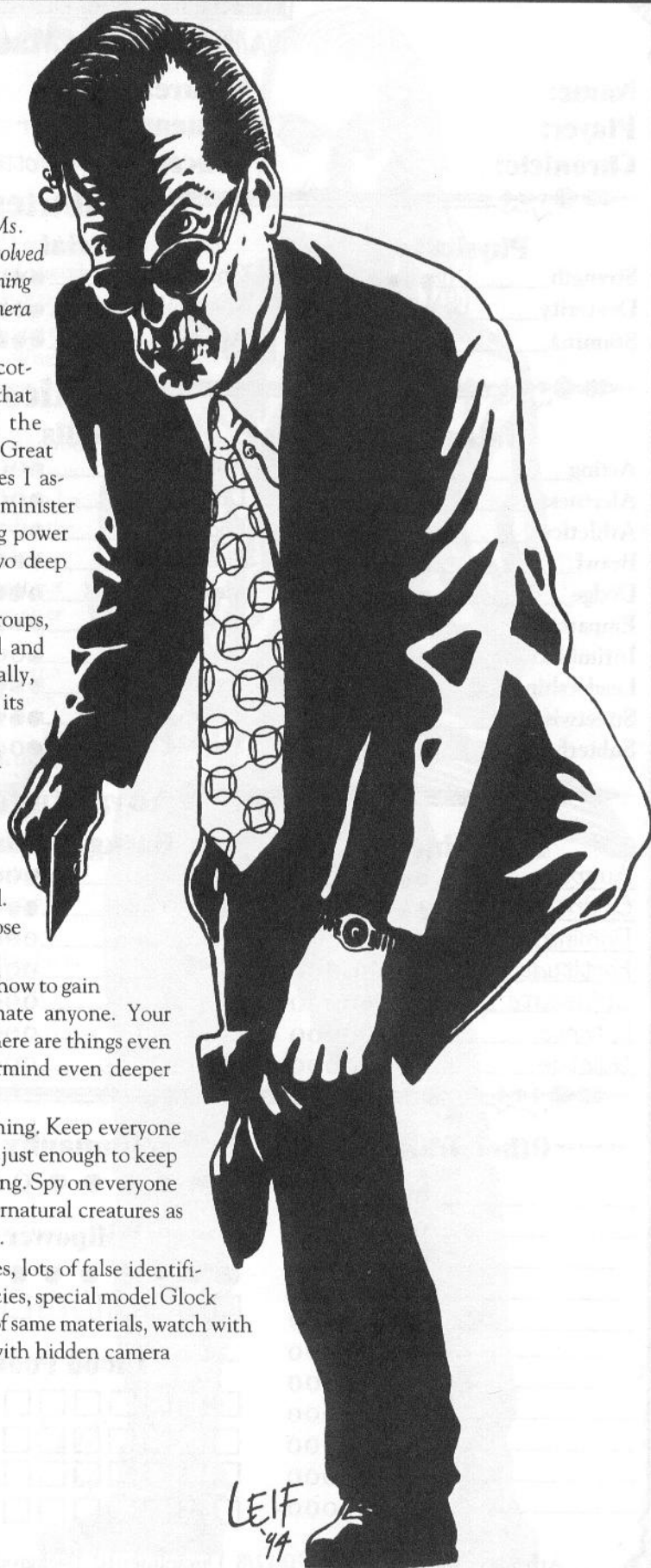
Further prying revealed vampires behind both groups, but before you could tell the King, they captured and Embraced you. You served your Camarilla master loyally, but then discovered the Black Hand. Now you serve its conspiracy.

You have played a key role in infiltrating mortal governments. You no longer control them, but you still keep up with everything they do. Your agents cover up Kindred activity, explore supernatural events, investigate supernatural creatures and places, and collect valuable information for the Black Hand. You sometimes even use your agents to terminate those who pose serious security risks.

Concept: You are a master intriguer. You know how to gain the confidence of anyone and you can impersonate anyone. Your knowledge is vast and your secrets run deep... but there are things even you do not know. You fear other vampires mastermind even deeper conspiracies.

Roleplaying Tips: Never trust anyone or anything. Keep everyone else in the dark as much as possible. Lie to everyone just enough to keep them guessing and reveal enough to keep them guessing. Spy on everyone you know. Collect as much information on all supernatural creatures as you can you can never have too much information.

Equipment: Wire taps, listening gun, explosives, lots of false identification, fake badges for various state and federal agencies, special model Glock 17 (can pass through metal detectors) with silencer of same materials, watch with secret two-way radio, concealed microphone, pen with hidden camera



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Nature: Martyr

Sire:

Player:

Demeanor: Conniver

Generation: 8th

Chronicle:

Concept: Government Leader

Clan: Ventrue

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●●●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●●●●
Stamina ●●●●●●●●

Social

Charisma ●●●●●●●●
Manipulation ●●●●●●●●
Appearance ●●●●●●●●

Mental

Perception ●●●●●●●●
Intelligence ●●●●●●●●
Wits ●●●●●●●●

Abilities

Talents

Acting ●●●●●●●●
Alertness ●●●●●●●●
Athletics ●●●●●●●●
Brawl ●●●●●●●●
Dodge ●●●●●●●●
Empathy ●●●●●●●●
Intimidation ●●●●●●●●
Leadership ●●●●●●●●
Streetwise ●●●●●●●●
Subterfuge ●●●●●●●●

Skills

Animal Ken ○○○○○○○○
Drive ●○○○○○○○
Etiquette ●○○○○○○○
Firearms ●●●○○○○○
Melee ●●○○○○○○○
Music ○○○○○○○○
Repair ○○○○○○○○
Security ●●●○○○○○
Stealth ●●●○○○○○
Survival ○○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ●●●●●●●●
Computer ○○○○○○○○
Finance ○○○○○○○○
Investigation ●●●●●●●●
Law ●○○○○○○○
Linguistics ●○○○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○○○○
Occult ○○○○○○○○
Politics ●●●○○○○○
Science ○○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Auspex ●●●○○○○○
Dominate ●●●○○○○○
Fortitude ●●●○○○○○
Presence ●●●○○○○○
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Backgrounds

Age ●●○○○○○○○
Contacts ●●●○○○○○
Generation ●●○○○○○○○
Resources ●●●○○○○○
Secret Identity ●●○○○○○○○
Status ●●●○○○○○
○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Conscience ●●○○○
Self-Control ●●●●●
Courage ●●●○○

Other Traits

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Humanity

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Willpower

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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)

Jyhad Fanatic

Let him who desires peace prepare for war.

— Vegetius, *De Rei Militari*

Quote: *I am prepared for the clan sire's return. I await his every command and for him I would willingly die... or kill. He speaks to me in visions. He says that I will be among the few who will not be destroyed. Though I am unworthy, I will serve him as best as I can.*

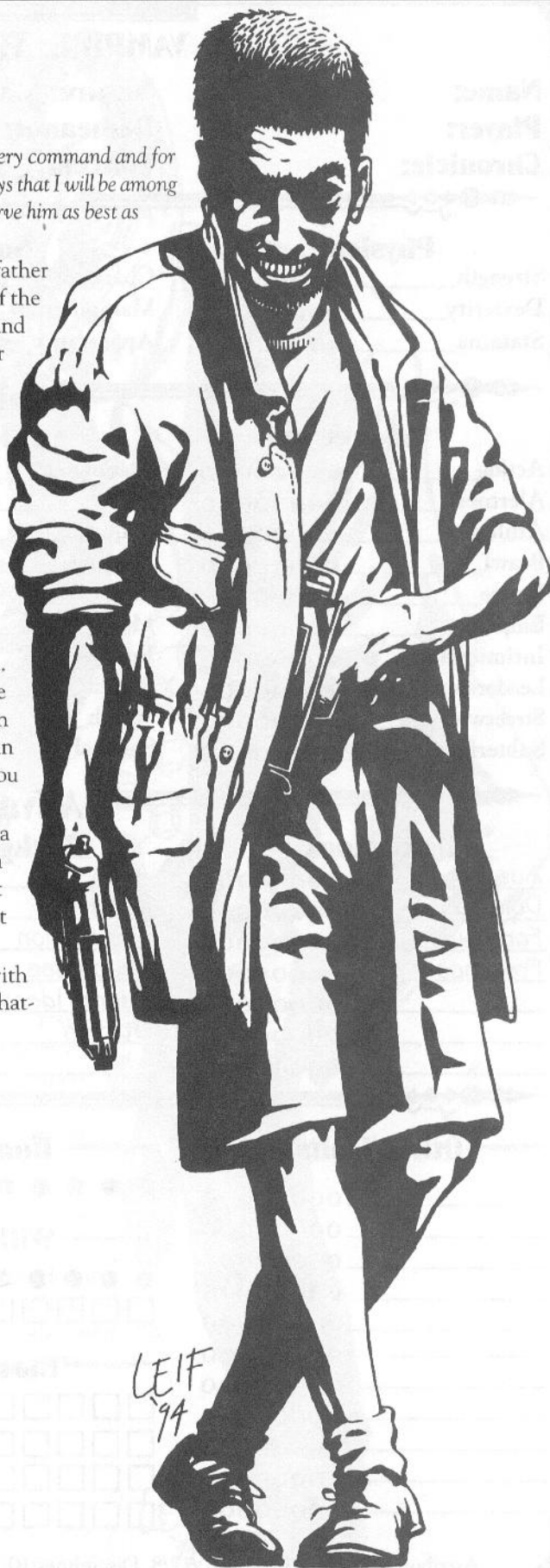
Prelude: You traveled extensively as a mortal, for your father used the guise of a merchant to cover up his activities as one of the feared assassins. You too were inducted into the secret society and spent years learning its ways. The secrets became even deeper when the leader Embraced you and inducted you into the Eastern Black Hand.

You have since become a leading shakar and hunt down all those who would threaten the sect. During one assassination attempt, your efforts were thwarted by a powerful vampire who appeared out of nowhere. To this very night you cannot remember what he or she looked like, but only that it was ancient and said it had selected you to be its tool. You now work for this Methuselah and for the Antediluvians and look forward to the coming of Gehenna.

Concept: You are not the stereotypical terrorist fanatic. You are a fanatic, but only because you have seen proof of the power of the ancients and because you know they have chosen you. You fear death and would do anything they demanded in order to retain your unlife. You have no love for mortals, but you know the Antediluvians frown on their abuse, so you do too.

Roleplaying Tips: Be ruthless when you must. You are a remorseless killer, and you have no qualms about blowing up a busload of people, or even the World Trade Center. Talk about the Antediluvians as if they are real. Occasionally brag about how they selected you to serve them.

Equipment: Casual clothes, Mac 10 submachine gun with extra clips, Glock 22, C4 explosive, tape, blasting caps and whatever other weapons and equipment you need for your work



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Nature: Fanatic

Sire:

Player:

Demeanor: Fanatic

Generation: 7th

Chronicle:

Concept: Jihad Fanatic

Clan: Assamite Antitribu

Attributes

Physical

Strength _____ ●●●●○○○○
Dexterity _____ ●●●●○○○○
Stamina _____ ●●●●○○○○

Social

Charisma _____ ●●●○○○○○
Manipulation _____ ●●○○○○○○
Appearance _____ ●●●○○○○○

Mental

Perception _____ ●●●○○○○○
Intelligence _____ ●●○○○○○○
Wits _____ ●●●○○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting _____ ○○○○○○○○
Alertness _____ ●●●○○○○○
Athletics _____ ●●●○○○○○
Brawl _____ ●●●○○○○○
Dodge _____ ●●●○○○○○
Empathy _____ ○○○○○○○○
Intimidation _____ ○○○○○○○○
Leadership _____ ●○○○○○○○
Streetwise _____ ○○○○○○○○
Subterfuge _____ ○○○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken _____ ●●○○○○○○
Drive _____ ●○○○○○○○
Etiquette _____ ○○○○○○○○
Firearms _____ ●●●○○○○○
Melee _____ ●●●○○○○○
Music _____ ●○○○○○○○
Repair _____ ●○○○○○○○
Security _____ ●●●○○○○○
Stealth _____ ●●●○○○○○
Survival _____ ●●●○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy _____ ○○○○○○○○
Computer _____ ○○○○○○○○
Finance _____ ○○○○○○○○
Investigation _____ ●●○○○○○○
Law _____ ○○○○○○○○
Linguistics _____ ●○○○○○○○
Medicine _____ ●○○○○○○○
Occult _____ ●●●○○○○○
Politics _____ ○○○○○○○○
Science _____ ○○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Auspex _____ ●●○○○○○○
Celerity _____ ●●●○○○○○
Fortitude _____ ●●○○○○○○
Obfuscate _____ ●●●○○○○○
Quietus _____ ●●●○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Age _____ ●●●○○○○○
Generation _____ ●●●○○○○○
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Virtues

Conscience _____ ●●○○○
Self-Control _____ ●●○○○
Courage _____ ●●●●●

Other Traits

_____ ○○○○○○○○
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Humanity

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)

Seller of Secrets

*Thou art the book,
The library whereon I look.*
— Henry King, *The Exequy*

Quote: You seek the name of the Methuselah who lies in torpor beneath the Pyrenees, near the town of Graus? Yes, I might be of some small help. I do remember a collection of old letters from the Tremere Regent of Barcelona to another in Belgrade concerning that ancient, but I would not know where to begin looking for those darn things, and I just don't have the time... Why yes, I suppose a boon of that magnitude would be worth making the time. Hmm. Now that I'm thinking about it, I believe there could be a map of the Kindred's burial haven around here as well. I could hunt it too — if only it were worth my time.

Prelude: Your rich southern family sent you to Harvard when you showed such a strong aptitude for learning, but your real education came from the spiritualist movement of the Northeast. You studied with the best, and it was not long before the Arcanum asked you to join it in its studies.

Your interests turned to vampire lore after you met one of the creatures during an investigation. As you studied more and more about them, your focus narrowed to their belief in Antediluvians and their ties to Caine.

You made a deal with a Kindred of the Black Hand — if she would Embrace you, you would provide her with everything you had learned concerning eschatology and Kindred lore. The vampire agreed, and you became a True Brujah.

You found life as a member among the undead exciting, though it cost you your mortal ties. The Black Hand inducted you, and you suddenly found yourself privy to some of the true secrets of the spirits... and you have been unearthing secrets ever since.

Concept: Your true passion is knowledge, particularly the answers to important secrets. You have become the foremost seller of secrets within your city. All Kindred know they can come to you when they need to find out the weaknesses of another or when they need information worthy of blackmail. No one trusts you, but all depend on you. While you seldom involve yourself in politics, those who are involved depend on you if they are to succeed.

Roleplaying Tips: You are inquisitive and always willing to trade information. You never pass up the opportunity to learn more about Kindred history.

Equipment: Reading glasses, camera, flashlight, several pens, a notepad, and an old tome handwritten in some dead language.



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: Jobsworth

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Concept: Seller of Secrets

Sire:

Generation: 7th

Clan: True Brujah

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●○○○○○○○
Dexterity ●●○○○○○○○
Stamina ●●●○○○○○

Social

Charisma ●●○○○○○○○
Manipulation ●●●○○○○○
Appearance ●●●○○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●●○○○○○
Intelligence ●●●○○○○○
Wits ●●●○○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ●●○○○○○○○
Alertness ○○○○○○○○
Athletics ●●○○○○○○○
Brawl ●○○○○○○○
Dodge ●○○○○○○○
Empathy ●●○○○○○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○○○○
Leadership ●○○○○○○○
Streetwise ●●○○○○○○○
Subterfuge ●●○○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ●○○○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○○○○
Etiquette ●●○○○○○○○
Firearms ●○○○○○○○
Melee ●○○○○○○○
Music ●○○○○○○○
Repair ○○○○○○○○
Security ●●○○○○○○○
Stealth ○○○○○○○○
Survival ○○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ●●○○○○○○○
Computer ●●○○○○○○○
Finance ●○○○○○○○
Investigation ●●○○○○○○○
Law ●●○○○○○○○
Linguistics ●●○○○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○○○○
Occult ●●○○○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○○○○
Science ●●○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Animalism ●○○○○○○○
Auspex ●●○○○○○○○
Dominate ●○○○○○○○
Obfuscate ●○○○○○○○
Potence ●●○○○○○○○
Presence ●●○○○○○○○
Temporis ●●○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Age ●○○○○○○○
Contacts ●●○○○○○○○
Generation ●●○○○○○○○
Resources ●●○○○○○○○
Retainers ●●○○○○○○○
Secret Identity ●●○○○○○○○
Status ●○○○○○○○

Virtues

Conscience ●●●○○○
Self-Control ●●●○○○
Courage ●●●○○○

Other Traits

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Humanity

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Willpower

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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)

Shadow Crusader

There is no witness so dreadful, no accuser so terrible as the conscience that dwells in the heart of every man.

— Polybius, History

Quote: *I don't think you understand the magnitude of our problem. I'm not talking about a few isolated incidents of harpies infested with Vicissitude. I'm talking about the whole damn primogen... maybe even the prince.*

Prelude: You were born in Transylvania in the 1500s, the daughter of a blacksmith who worked for the nobles of the land. One of those nobles fell in love with you and spirited you to his castle, where you became the bride of an Old Clan Tzimisce.

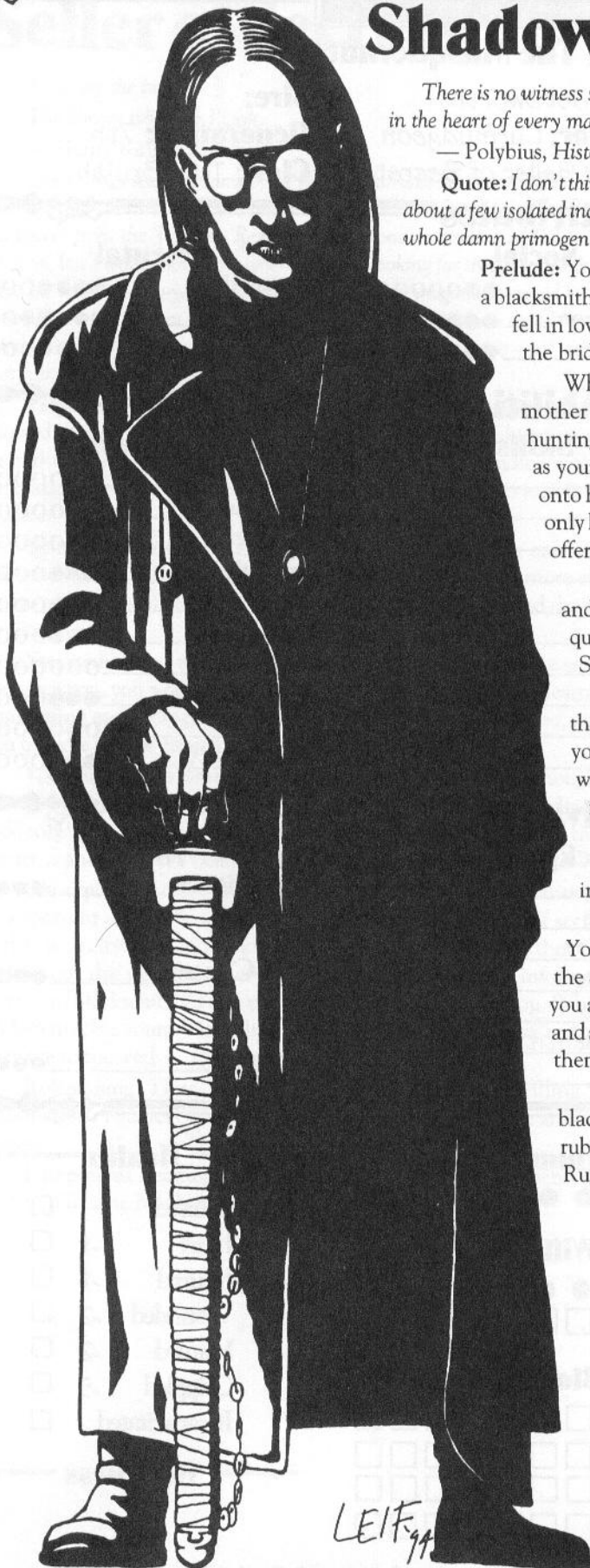
When the Sabbat destroyed the two vampires he claimed as mother and father, you joined him and his revenant minions in hunting down the killers. You rode right into a trap and watched as your love died before a revenant grabbed you and pulled you onto his horse. He took you to yet another vampire, one you had only heard of in hushed whispers, and that vampire made you an offer.

He revealed that possessed Tremere had aided the Sabbat, and that the two of you should seek vengeance together. Your quest for revenge led you to your first encounter with the Souleaters — and then to the Black Hand.

Concept: You hunt truly evil Kindred whenever you get the chance, but you fight a deeper evil full time. You focus your time and energy on eliminating the Souleaters, and while the crusade has cost you wealth, health and political influence, you consider it all well worth the price. Others may consider you paranoid, or fear that you believe they too are Souleaters, but you know that in a crusade there are no innocent victims.

Roleplaying Tips: You are paranoid, but for good reason. You hate evil vampires, especially the Sabbat, but you hate the Souleaters even more. You are not afraid of anything, but you are not stupid either. Never tackle any opponent head on, and always make it a point to overpower your enemies, catching them by surprise whenever possible.

Equipment: Black shirt, black pants, black trench coat, black gloves, ancient broadsword, silver amulet with huge ruby, mirrored shades, pocket full of dirt from Transylvania, Ruger Redhawk and a couple of wooden stakes



ELYSIUM

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Fanatic

Concept: Shadow Crusader

Sire:

Generation: 7th

Clan: Old Clan Tzimisce

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●○○○○
Dexterity ●●●●○○○○
Stamina ●●●●○○○○

Social

Charisma ●●●○○○○○
Manipulation ●●○○○○○○
Appearance ●●●○○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●●●○○○○
Intelligence ●●●○○○○○
Wits ●●●○○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ○○○○○○○○
Alertness ●●●○○○○○
Athletics ●●●○○○○○
Brawl ●●●○○○○○
Dodge ●●●○○○○○
Empathy ○○○○○○○○
Intimidation ●●○○○○○○
Leadership ●●●○○○○○
Streetwise ●○○○○○○○
Subterfuge ●●○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ●●○○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○○○○
Etiquette ○○○○○○○○
Firearms ●●●○○○○○
Melee ●●●●○○○○
Music ○○○○○○○○
Repair ○○○○○○○○
Security ●○○○○○○○
Stealth ●●●○○○○○
Survival ○○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ○○○○○○○○
Computer ○○○○○○○○
Finance ○○○○○○○○
Investigation ●○○○○○○○
Law ●○○○○○○○
Linguistics ●○○○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○○○○
Occult ●●●○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○○○○
Science ○○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Animalism ●●○○○○○○○
Auspex ●●●○○○○○
Celerity ●●●○○○○○
Dominate ●●○○○○○○○
Fortitude ●●○○○○○○○
Obfuscate ●●○○○○○○○
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Backgrounds

Age ●●●○○○○○
Allies ●○○○○○○○
Contacts ●●○○○○○○○
Generation ●●●○○○○○
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Virtues

Conscience ●●●○○○
Self-Control ●●○○○○
Courage ●●●●●

Other Traits

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Humanity

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Willpower

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Blood Pool

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Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

Attributes:10/7/5 Abilities:20/12/8 Disciplines:10 Backgrounds:15 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:20 (7/5/2/1)



LEIF NES
1994

Appendix One: Those You Should Fear

*Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was white as leprosy,
The nightmare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thickens man's blood with cold.*
— Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

While any member of the Black Hand is noteworthy in her own right, some have stood out even beyond the rest. This chapter details these fearsome figures, as well as providing the Storyteller with the Traits of more typical members of the sect.

Noteworthy Members

*I am whatever was, or is, or will be; and my veil no mortal
ever took up.*

— Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris*

Qadi Vardek

The Kindred who calls himself Vardek is extremely old, possibly as old as the Tal'mahe'Ra. He calls himself the Qadi of the Ventrue and claims that a majority of the Camarilla princes are his descendants. Noted for his quick wit and cunning, some suspect he has foul plans in the works and that he has led the Del'Roh into secret dealings with the Aralu.

When Vardek is not with the Del'Roh, he is on Earth, trying those who he claims acted against the best interests of the Black Hand. Most suspect he is using his power to eliminate his potential enemies. Vardek has been instrumental in at least one good thing he convinced the Del'Roh to create the kamuts and call for the crusade against the Souleaters.

Seraph Si'Djeha

Si'Djeha, a seraph of the Eastern Black Hand, has been a leader within the region for centuries, even before her induction into the Black Hand. She is responsible for much of the continued bloodshed in the region, but considers her efforts an attempt to maintain the tenuous balance of power between the Assamites, Setites, Black Hand, Baali and others.

Si'Djeha may have recently attained the mystical state of Golconda, though those who know her well dismiss this as an impossibility. If it is true, her goals and methods may change, which may lead to an even greater upheaval in the region.

Khunufseh

As the centuries passed, the number of mages within the Black Hand continued to dwindle — until the Egyptian acolyte named Khunufseh began actively recruiting more. He ignored the sect's policy of long-term observation and slow, deliberate action in favor of the immediate enticement of new members.

Khunufseh established a small Chantry in Paris and now actively seeks out potential mages and initiates them into the Black Hand. The Qadi have called for his head, but the liches and some among the marid have opposed them. Many consider Khunufseh a rogue and cite his behavior as an example of the disrespect among the mages of the sect. They go so far as to call for an end to recruiting mages into the sect at all. The Del'Roh has yet to make her decision, and in the meantime, Khunufseh continues to search for more mages.

Zubeida the Abomination

Centuries ago, a Silent Strider began the long and near-impossible task of bringing together the disparate tribes of Africa. Her quest to bring about some form of unification met with initial success — and immediate opposition. Her battles against mages in Ethiopia and Wyrms-creatures in the Sahara are legendary, but none tell of her battle against the Kindred of Egypt.

Zubeida never had a chance of victory, and her Quixotic efforts ended with her being Embraced in the shadow of the Sphinx. For more centuries she served her Setite masters, bound to them by the powers of their minds, blood and corruption. It was not until the Black Hand destroyed the temple that controlled her that she felt free will flow once more through her limbs, and she tore out her intestines.

The Black Hand prevented her destruction, and for decades the sect worked to end her lust for suicide. They have not completely succeeded, and they constantly watch her for signs of a relapse into depression and misery. She willingly serves the sect, however, believing it does some good. Were its members to relax their vigilance, she would gut herself at once. Until that night, she carries out missions with the utmost abandon, seeking her destruction at the hands of others. She believes that some evil presence is now hunting down and killing off all the other Abominations, and she seeks this being every night.

Inauhaten

Long ago, members of the Tal'mahe'Ra encountered a strange being capable of dying, only to be reborn again into the same body. After being hunted and captured by the Hand, he revealed himself to the Euthanatos as Inauhaten, a Mummy. He was once an architect, but after his first rebirth, he began the study of death to learn more about himself and the afterlife.

The Hand agreed to protect Inauhaten's body during his time of death and teach him everything it knew of the land beyond. In exchange, Inauhaten reported back to them the things he saw in the Underworld, including knowledge of wraiths, Doomshades, Spectres and Deathlords. Most impor-

tantly, he spoke of a realm named Enoch, where beings called the Aralu lay entombed. He spoke of their great tombs and of the many names, such as "Loz, Arikel, Al-Marhi, Nergal, Ventru," carved upon the seals of the outer chambers.

The sect accepted Inauhaten as a member on the condition that he would lead them to Enoch. Its members spent decades creating (some say rediscovering) the ritual to take them to the lands of death. Upon their arrival, they drove off the few Spectres in the city and claimed it as their own.

Today Inauhaten holds a place of respect and reverence among the Kindred of the Black Hand. Though he is not a member of the wazirs, he sits on the council as he pleases. He speaks with the Del'Roh and he can command those of the sect to do his bidding. He is venerated and provided for in both the Living World and in Enoch.

Marge Kahn

Kahn is a cunning and dangerous mission overseer within the Black Hand. This power-mad, egotistical Malkavian (who claims to be a Toreador) rose from her lowly status as an inept field agent to that of overseer through lies, betrayal and far worse — proving the Black Hand is as bad as any other sect in many ways. Kahn stumbled onto the Black Hand by accident, but quickly learned of its great power. She got her start by being partnered with another, far more capable, field agent.

After using this partner for all he was worth, she betrayed him and staked him through the back. She took full credit for their successes together and claims her former partner destroyed himself through his own foolishness. Kahn has many extremely capable Retainers and field agents, but she always takes full credit for their successful missions. She is so audacious that she actually claims she personally performed the missions with no help from anyone else, and yet always casts the blame for failures (including her own) upon her minions. Needless to say, many Kindred recognize her for what she is, but there are others who do not.

Kahn claims she follows the Path of Honorable Accord, but is secretly on the Path of Evil Revelations. It may only be a matter of time before other Kindred peer through her facade and see the creature that lurks beneath. By then her corruption may have spread throughout the entire Black Hand. Already there are those within the sect who have been warped by her evil.

Black Hand Stereotypes

Night hath a thousand eyes.

—John Lyly, *Maides Metamorphosis*

This section details typical members of the sect (as if there could ever be such a thing) for Storytellers to use during a story. Feel free to adjust their Traits in any way necessary. Remember that the more unique a character is, the more she will bring a story to life.



Mortals and Ghouls

Chatterling

Character Information: Chatterlings are mortals raised since early childhood within the Underworld. They are trained to become physically and mentally superior to other humans. They often do not understand the mortal world because they have been away from it for so long, but they are extremely dangerous and effective in their duties. Almost all are fanatically devoted to their sect's goals.

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Competitor

Generation: None

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 4 (through Vicissitude)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3

Skills: Etiquette 1, Firearms 2, Meditation 1, Melee 3, Security 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Knowledge: Black Hand Lore 2, Camarilla Lore 1, Investigation 1, Linguistics 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2, Science 1, Sabbat Lore 1

Disciplines: None

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Black Hand Status 1, Mentor 5, Resources 2

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 5, Courage 5

Path of Enlightenment/Rating: The Path of Self-Focus/7
Willpower: 6

Enrathi Snatcher

Character Information: These revenants capture children and take them to the Black Hand so they can become chatterlings.

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Confidant

Generation: None

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Intimidation 1, Streetwise 3

Skills: Drive 3, Firearms 1, Melee 1, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 3

Knowledge: Area Knowledge 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1, Occult 1

Disciplines: Dominate 2, Obfuscate 1, Potence 1

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 2, Resources 3

Virtues: Callosity 1, Instincts 1, Morale 2

Path of Enlightenment/Rating: The Path of Cathari/5
Willpower: 5

Marijava Thuggee

Character Information: These are the revenants who serve as spies within mortal intelligence agencies and secret societies. They also act as vampire-hunters, performing most of their work during the day.

Nature: Martyr

Demeanor: Loner

Generation: None

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 2, Security 3, Stealth 1

Knowledge: Black Hand Lore 1, Camarilla Lore 1, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Linguistics 2, Sabbat Lore 1

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Obfuscate 1, Presence 1

Backgrounds: Alternate Identity 4, Contacts 3, Resources 3

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 5, Courage 5

Humanity: 8

Willpower: 6

Rafastio Witch

Character Information: These are the revenants who share a deep tie to the Verbena. They have learned their own witchery and craft skills and apply them to the service of the Black Hand. Many question their loyalty to the sect.

Nature: Plotter

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Generation: None

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 3, Dodge 2, Dreaming 3, Empathy 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Dancing 2, Debate 2, Herbalism 3, Melee 1, Music 3

Knowledge: Alchemy 3, Black Hand Lore 2, Camarilla Lore 1, City Secrets 2, Linguistics 2, Occult 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Necromancy 2, Thaumaturgy 2

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 2, Resources 1

Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 3, Courage 2

Humanity: 9

Willpower: 8

Kindred

Rawis

Character Information: These vampires are the Black Hand's "Keepers of the Lore." They are charged with protecting and studying the *Guarded Rubrics* and are the sect's experts in Kindred history.



Nature: Artist

Demeanor: Judge

Generation: 7th

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 6, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 5, Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Intrigue 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Blood Preparation 3, Debate 4, Etiquette 6, Melee 3, Research 6, Security 3

Knowledge: Alchemy 3, Anthropology 3, Archeology 6, Astrology 2, Black Hand Lore 5, Camarilla Lore 5, History 6, Investigation 3, Kindred Lore 5, Linguistics 6, Lupine Lore 3, Magus Lore 3, Mummy Lore 5, Occult 6, Sabbat Lore 6, Spirit Lore 4, Thanatology 5, Underworld Lore 6

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Dominate 3, Necromancy 2, Nihilistics 5, Obfuscate 3, Presence 3, Thaumaturgy 3 (Movement of the Mind 2, Weather Control 1)

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5, Herd 2, Influence 2, Resources 4, Sect Status 5

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 3, Courage 2

Path of Enlightenment/Rating: The Path of Lilith/9

Willpower: 7

Shadow Crusader

Character Information: These vampires have taken up the cause of fighting the Souleaters. They are vicious and cruel killers who fight to save humanity from the curse the sect unleashed upon it. They often join together in kamuts to carry out the crusade.

Nature: Survivor

Demeanor: Fanatic

Generation: 8th

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Intrigue 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Drive 2, Escapology 3, Firearms 5, Melee 4, Security 5, Stealth 5

Knowledge: Black Hand Lore 5, Camarilla Lore 3, Computer 2, Linguistics 3, Sabbat Lore 4, Underworld Lore 2

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Celerity 4, Domination 3, Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 3, Potence 3, Protean 2, Quietus 1, Vicissitude 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 3, Resources 3, Sect Status 3

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

Path of Enlightenment/Rating: Humanity/9

Willpower: 8

Shakar

Character Information: These are the professional hunters and killers of the Black Hand. They tend to work alone, but can turn a coterie into an efficient machine — or a pile of corpses.

Nature: Cavalier

Demeanor: Sycophant

Generation: 7th

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 3, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 6, Athletics 6, Brawl 6, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Archery 4, Blind Fighting 3, Demolitions 2, Disguise 3, Drive 2, Etiquette 2, Fast Draw 5, Firearms 6, Interrogation 4, Melee 6, Security 5, Stealth 6

Knowledge: Black Hand Lore 2, Camarilla Lore 4, Investigation 2, Linguistics 4, Sabbat Lore 4

Disciplines: Auspex 1, Celerity 4, Domination 2, Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 2, Obtenebration 1, Potence 2, Protean 2, Quietus 1, Vicissitude 2

Backgrounds: Resources 2, Sabbat Status 3

Virtues: Callosity 5, Instincts 4, Morale 5

Path of Enlightenment/Rating: The Path of Caine/7

Willpower: 8

Terrorist

Character Information: These vampires have become experts at terrorism. They perform these acts primarily against other Kindred, weakening political support for those who oppose the Black Hand's goals. They usually work in small groups, though occasionally a single terrorist will act on her own.

Nature: Bravo

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Generation: 9th

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Intrigue 3, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Demolitions 5, Disguise 5, Drive 4, Firearms 5, Melee 4, Security 5, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Knowledge: Black Hand Lore 2, Camarilla Lore 3, Law 3, Linguistics 2, Sabbat Lore 3

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Celerity 3, Dominate 3, Fortitude 2, Obfuscate 4, Protean 5

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Herd 2, Mentor 4, Resources 4

Virtues: Callosity 3, Instincts 3, Morale 5

Path of Enlightenment/Rating: The Path of Cathari/6

Willpower: 7



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Appendix Two: The Hidden Agenda

*Truth that wakes,
To perish never.*
— William Wordsworth, "Ode"

The Souleaters

*He who has a thousand friends has not a friend to spare,
And he who has one enemy will meet him everywhere.*

— Ali ibn-Abi-Talib, *A Hundred Sayings*

There are many varieties of Souleaters, all with the same basic Attributes, Abilities and supernatural powers and weaknesses of their hosts. Souleater Derangements, Virtues and Willpower are often those of their former hosts, but they occasionally develop their own. No Souleaters have ratings in Humanity or a Path of Enlightenment, but they often pretend to follow the same path their former host followed.

The Souleaters can take over any creature, including Lupines, mages and mortals, so long as the victim has become infected with the Vicissitude "Discipline." While vampiric Souleaters do not lose any of their hosts' vampiric Disciplines, Souleaters of other creatures usually lose the Gifts, Spheres and Numina belonging to their hosts. Souleaters gain great mastery over their own forms through Vicissitude.

Their ratings in it range from one to nine, depending on the individual Souleater, but most Souleaters have a slightly higher rating than the former host had.

Note that the fourth level Vicissitude power "Horrid Form" is believed to be the natural form of the Souleater. However, some Souleaters are not powerful enough to take on the Horrid Form. Lupine Souleaters can only transform into the Horrid Form from Homid form.

The bloodline known as the Blood Brothers was born of Vicissitude, and their Discipline, known as Sanguinus, is a mutated strain of Vicissitude. Some Souleaters have this Discipline as well.

All Souleaters can use Vicissitude without any cost whatsoever. However, vampire Souleaters must expend Blood Points to use their other vampiric powers. All Lupine Souleaters lose their hosts' Gifts, but they can still change into the various forms by expending a point of Willpower and revert back to their hosts' original forms without any cost.

Souleater Creations

Here's the devil-and-more to pay.

— Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*

Fleshy Collectives

Fleshy collectives are basically huge, sentient blobs of oozing, free-floating flesh and guts which squish about, absorbing others into them. Those who are absorbed into the collective do not die, but their flesh joins with the rest of the victims' bodies. The victims' brains — even their entire heads — continue to float about inside the thing, and they remain conscious and in extreme pain, though not in control of their actions. Thus, the collective will try to absorb even its own loved ones into the flesh.

Physical: Strength 5-9, Dexterity 1-2, Stamina 5-9

Social: Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Brawl 3-5

Skills: None

Knowledges: Sewer Lore 5

Disciplines: Fortitude 2-4, Potence 2-4, Sanguinus 5, Vicissitude 8

Backgrounds: None

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 0, Courage 4

Humanity: 0

Willpower: 4

Blood Pool: Nil

Roleplaying Tips: Absorb anything that moves, both living and undead.

Ghastly Babies

At first glance, these creatures resemble human infants. Their bodies and proportions are nearly the same, but those who glimpse their faces know the truth of their horrifying existence — they are Souleaters who crawled from their host before their hosts fully developed. In most cases, their host was killed before they finished taking it over.

Their faces are disgustingly inhuman. Their heads are almost rectangular, they have two little black orbs for eyes, and their mouths are down-turned maws with vaguely formed lips. They have two runny, blackish-red holes where their noses would be. They are pale, hairless little creatures.

They are incapable of changing form. They must kill and consume fresh flesh in order to continue their development. While this always leaves a bloody trail of chopped-up, half-consumed bodies, they have an instinctive self-defense mechanism and incredible powers of stealth, allowing them to stalk their prey with ease.

They usually try to stake resting vampires during the day. They attack mortals, and vampires after staking them, with butcher knives, meat cleavers, straight razors, ice picks and whatever else they can find.

