

A SOURCEBOOK FOR VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE



VAMPIRE

T H E M A S Q U E R A D E

COMPANION

VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE

The Masquerade Companion

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Introduction

I think — don't you? — that there are some things one is not meant to know, and some one is meant not to know.

— EDITH NESBIT, “HURST OF HURSTCOTE”

Welcome to the darkness...

The Vampire: The Masquerade Companion is intended as a thank you to World of Darkness enthusiasts, provided as a complimentary gift to those who have long been with us or who have just joined us on their first steps into this world of shadows and secrets.

This book provides a number of fresh options for players and Storytellers alike. From new clans to new Traits to a more expanded look at mortals and ghouls as players' characters, the *Vampire: The Masquerade Companion* expands opportunities for characters to explore the World of Darkness.

We hope you enjoy it!



Part I:

THE CLANS
AND
THEIR APTITUDES



Each of the clans presented herein is suitable to play in a chronicle, whether around the table, at a virtual tabletop, or in more emergent formats like online chat servers. As always, the Storyteller has the authority to restrict access to certain character types, clans, and Disciplines.

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a red dress with a black floral pattern, stands against a vibrant background of red and blue concentric circles and abstract patterns. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

*Rogues
Ravens
Daredevils
The Haunted*

*To dazzle and fade
— forever in motion
and always on the run*



A clan almost annihilated in the opening salvo of the Gehenna War, its embers are now growing brighter with each passing night. Others know them as message-bearers, wanderers, and mind-fuckers, but the Ravnos know their legacy to be far greater. They walk in the footsteps of Anansi, Coyote, Hanuman, Hermes, Rabbit, Loki, and their ilk, a flame of capricious divinity simmering in their Blood. They range across domains and continents, only rarely settling down, always a step ahead of the Antediluvian judgement that pursues them (and occasionally brings them into conflict with clans like the Gangrel, who otherwise might share an affinity for the world's liminal spaces). Their methods are not brute force, adoration of crowds, or meticulous centuries-spanning plots, but rather wit and panache, artful charm, and outright illusion.

Or, as one Ravnos put it: "Tomorrow we may burn, but tonight we're on fire!"

Who Are the Ravnos?

Masters of misdirection, the Rogues prefer not to fight or bleed for something they can obtain through subtler means. They can charm and vanish within the same mortal breath, and those once fooled quickly learn to question their very senses when in the company of Ravens. For that reason, Ravnos vampires seldom advertise their nature, and once their cover is blown they are quick to make their escape. Not that they have much choice in the matter, as inexorable doom lurks in their vitae, threatening to consume them if they ever come to rest. But as the flashover of the supposed destruction of their progenitor burns through the clan, new generations have managed to stay a step ahead of this blood-borne conflagration and are quietly re-establishing the lineage.

Driven by omens of their own destruction and possessing a supernatural capacity for illusion, the Ravnos have always attracted and been attracted

to mortals who gamble with their lives and those of others. Confidence artists, confidantes, venture capitalists, performance artists, and plain wayfarers all contribute to the manifold cast that is the Ravnos clan in the modern nights. Which isn't to say that they're harmless or even sympathetic — much risk-taking requires a heart hardened to the plight of others, and more than a few Daredevils were "self-interested" even before they became blood-drinking night-haunts. Still, that makes for an easier transition, and many Ravnos fledglings do take to the undead state with more ease than those of other clans, having already cut their ties to friends, family, and society.

While the nomadic habits — even requirements — of the clan make any kind of proper organization difficult, something like a Ravnos revival is forming, taking root among the more communal members of the clan. A complex set of signs and signals, known and taught only to members of the clan, helps them find and identify each other, as well as set up occasional gatherings to swap rumors and trade information on the state of Kindred affairs across domains. Storytelling is popular, and a mythology of sorts is emerging among young Ravens in which they identify as descendants of various mythological trickster deities, going so far as to form coteries or Embrace broods devoted to one clever god or another. Lacking still-active ancestors, they make up their own, elevating their craft to divine mandate.

The Ravnos' relationship to mortals varies. Historically they have latched on to various subaltern societies, where the imbalance of power means that even should they be discovered, few of their victims would be in a position to do anything about it. Numerous Ravens have even attached themselves to itinerant commercial groups such as traveling carnivals, where they not only have a steady cycle of prey, but might even be able to turn their talents to a profit. As with most relationships of the Kindred to their herds, the Rogues' vampiric influence is rarely benign, and while some Ravnos genuinely care for their charges, others see them merely as tools or vessels, to be used and disposed of. A ship of refugees is

as likely to see port, delivered safely by a mysterious benefactor, as to arrive at port empty, a ghost ship, with bones and bloodstains the only signs of its past passengers.

For these reasons and more an increasing number of Daredevils are making do on their own, or fighting their curse in an attempt to settle in established domains. To avoid their curse they set up multiple havens and frequently employ an equally impressive number of mortal masks. No clan is as adept at blending in as the Ravnos, and many operate under the radar of the Kindred community of the domain, or present themselves as innocuous Caitiff. Those who do fly the colours of their heritage tend to adopt a staunchly independent position, selling their services as spies, saboteurs, and negotiators to the highest bidding sect. Few Ravens can maintain this for long, though, and most eventually find themselves packing. Whether due to an accumulation of enemies, vengeance-driven victims, or the doom seething through their very Blood, a Ravnos vampire always ends up on the run. This is fine with most other Kindred, who can't help but see a cautionary lesson in the Ravnos, as they represent the most final outcomes of the Gehenna War.

Disciplines

ANIMALISM: The Ravnos maintain an almost affable relationship with animals, especially ravens, foxes, coyotes, spiders, and monkeys. (At the Storyteller's discretion, reduce the Difficulty for Animalism tests involving these animals by one and increase it for all other kinds of animals.) Employing these familiars as spies, distractions, and the occasional companion, a Ravnos is never truly alone on the road.

OBFUSCATE: While many Rogues are able to vanish from sight and remain hidden, the clan is also adept at extending the use of Obfuscate to craft elaborate and sustained hallucinations, effectively using their Presence to propel the properties of the Discipline to encompass more than their own visage.

PRESENCE: The go-to method when natural charm and persuasion isn't enough. Few Daredevils are without at least some measure of this Discipline. They make frequent use of Presence to procure victims in a pinch, and the Discipline also has a part to play in hallucinatory powers.

Bane

The Ravnos are *doomed*. The sun's fire that incinerated their founder rages through the Blood of the clan, erupting from their very flesh if they ever settle down for long. If they slumber in the same place more than once in seven nights, roll a number of dice equal to their Bane Severity. They receive aggravated damage equal to the number of 10's (critical results) rolled as they are scorched from within. This happens every time they spend the day in a location they've already slumbered less than a week before. What constitutes a location in this regard depends on the scope of the chronicle, but unless otherwise stated, two resting places need to be at least a mile apart to avoid triggering the Bane. Furthermore, a mobile haven, such as a movers' truck, is safe so long as the place where the truck is parked is at least a mile from the last location. Ravnos characters cannot take the No Haven Flaw at character creation.

COMPULSION: TEMPTING FATE

The vampire is driven by their Blood to court danger. Haunted as they are by righteous fire burning its way up their lineage, why not? The next time the vampire is faced with a problem to solve, any attempt at a solution short of the most daring or dangerous incurs a two-dice penalty. (Suitably flashy and risky attempts can even merit bonus dice for this occasion.) The Daredevil is free to convince any fellows to do things their way, but is just as likely to go at it alone. The Compulsion persists until the problem is solved or further attempts become impossible.

Ravnos Archetypes

Midnight Motorcycle Courier

When the package absolutely needs to be delivered in one piece, on time and in the dead of night, the Midnight Motorcycle Courier is on the job. The Courier isn't listed on any known website, but those of note, mortal and undead, have their number on speed dial. The Courier knows which routes to take when the sect war flares up, whose palms to grease





Operative for Hire

The Operative is a rare breed among Rogues: discreet, professional and above all, trustworthy. They will perform their mission according to spec, whether it involves espionage, diplomacy or the occasional assassination. On payment, they disappear until called upon again. Everyone knows the Operative works for all sides, but they're just too damned useful to move against. And besides, nobody wants them as an enemy. Most keep the Operative on a small retainer, to guard against that risk. The Operative likes it that way.

Travel Agent

Seeing the world can be a daunting proposition for those who spontaneously combust in sunlight and have the scattered eyes of global intelligence looking for them. That's where the Travel Agent comes in. Operating a discreet agency with contacts in the far corners of the globe, nowhere is unreachable. Their clients know what they sign up for, or they're out of options anyway. Whether it means spending 13 days in a refrigerated truck trailer or playing the part as cargo raided by pirates from the Gulf of Guinea, the Travel Agent gets them to their destination. The client might not be quite the same when they get there, but that's a risk they'll have to take.

Antiquarian

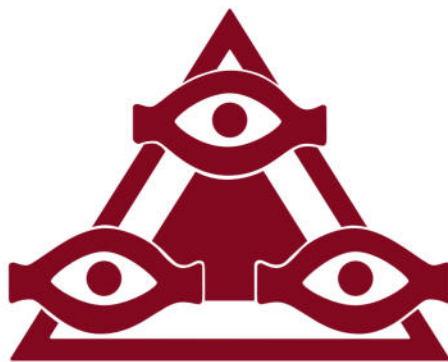
With a keen sense of history, an eye for detail, and personal reasons to seek out forgotten artifacts, the Antiquarian seems forever on the verge of another significant discovery. Sometimes these translate into personal gains, such as by selling artifacts to museums or private collectors. In other cases, though, the Antiquarian specializes in unearthing items of distinct interest to Kindred, whether bibelots exalting individual lineages or relics of import to the Damned as a whole. If it's worth finding, the antiquarian can find it and dig it up... or at least convince you that's what you're seeing.



*Cyclops
Soul-Thieves
Dajjals
Saulot's progeny*

*To make one's haven
in the vale of sorrows
and forever tread
a path of thorns*





SALUBRI

The schemes of the Kindred yield winners and losers, and each winner demands a loser to pay the price of that success. Such is the case with the Salubri, centuries ago renowned for wisdom and erudition, but now little more than a despised footnote in the schemes of the Damned. Tonight, the Salubri are arguably no longer even a clan, their progenitor, so it is told, having succumbed to the fangs of a more ambitious usurper who bolstered his own clan with that purloined Blood. Theirs is a legacy of tragedy, but also a bitter lesson in the millennia-spanning Eternal Struggle, for in their destruction, those who overtook them burdened them with the reputation for the crime to which they were the victim. As if to compound the recognition of this guilt, every Salubri bears a third eye in the center of their forehead, the indicator of their lineage.

Who Are the Salubri?

Salubri childer are few — it is whispered that only seven ever exist at one time, but whether or not that remains true in the modern nights cannot be confirmed. According to their custom, Salubri sires Embrace only when they reach Golconda, thereby passing on their curse anew each time, but again, the current state of Kindred affairs calls this into question. Thus the choice of childer is an even more intensely personal decision for the Salubri than for other Kindred. They seek those with inquisitive natures, nigh-pious will, and no small note of personal difficulty about them. To Salubri sires considering progeny, a potential childe must have a problem to solve; Salubri do not Embrace on whim. They may Embrace the terminally ill, those who have endured a family tragedy, or those with an unquenchable drive to right a worldly wrong.

It is believed that the progenitor of the clan, the enigmatic Saulot, was in fact the first Kindred to

attain Golconda, and his lineage still attempts to walk that path centuries after his destruction. They often lead troubled unives, weighed down by the Kindred condition but buoyed by the promise of redemption, however elusive it may seem. Undaunted, the Salubri pursue the answer to Caine's damnation, and have even helped others find their own personal absolution.

Or have they? With the power to grant aid comes the power to harm, especially to hear the tales of soul-stealing and congress with unholy entities that swirl in the wake of Clan Salubri's ruin. This, combined with details of the aggressive stance some Salubri take toward their fellow Kindred — hunting and destroying those they deem dangerously proximate to the Beast — have muddled the reputation of the clan to those few who know of them. But is this credible or hearsay?

Few Princes want them in their domains, because they're usually on the outs with somebody, and even Anarch Barons may feel sympathy for the Salubri, but rarely to the extent that they're willing to harbor a fugitive in their territory. Much of the Salubri lot is being hated and hunted for something their sires may or may not have done centuries ago.

The fate of the Salubri in these final nights is grim, but they face their lot with a perspective rare among the Kindred. Willing as they are to help others walk the difficult path of Golconda, many Salubri seem to actually want to "solve" the problem of being a vampire rather than indulging it. Some others vow to destroy the more blatant transgressors of the Kindred condition and enlist the aid of others to pursue them, redeeming or destroying Wights, low-Humanity vampires, and those who otherwise revel in their damnation.

Disciplines

AUSPEX: Much of the storied wisdom of the Salubri comes from being able to perceive beyond the ken of less observant Kindred. Considered by a philosophical mind, the hidden truths of the world reveal themselves.

DOMINATE: The Salubri use Dominate to unburden others of the horrors of being a vampire — or from witnessing the atrocities Kindred may commit. Whether erasing troubling memories or bolstering individuals against the undesired consequences of their actions, the Salubri have developed the ability to on occasion apply this Discipline as a balm.

FORTITUDE: A clan so despised needs every advantage it can to survive the modern nights, and the Salubri have also learned to will forth their own hardiness as a boon to others' well-being.



Bane

The Salubri are *hunted*: Kindred of other clans are especially... *appreciative* of Salubri vitae. When a non-Salubri partakes of the blood of a Cyclops, they often find it difficult to pull themselves away. Consuming enough to abate at least one Hunger level requires a Hunger Frenzy test (See **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 220) at a Difficulty 2 + the Salubri's Bane Severity (difficulty 3 + the Salubri's Bane Severity for Banu Haqim). If the test fails, *they just keep consuming*, to the point that they may have to be physically fought off.

Additionally, the third eye that Saulot opened while on one of his many journeys passes down through the bloodline every time a Salubri Embraces. This third eye is not always recognizably human in origin, and rumors persist of vertical, serpentine pupils, or even worm-like eyespots. While this third eye can be physically covered, such as with a headscarf or hood, it is always present, and no supernatural power can obscure it. Any time a Salubri activates a Discipline power, the third eye weeps vitae, its intensity correlating to the level of the Discipline being used, from welling up to a torrential flow. The blood flow from the third eye triggers a Hunger Frenzy test from nearby vampires with Hunger 4 or more.



COMPULSION: AFFECTIVE EMPATHY

When a Salubri suffers a Compulsion, the Kindred becomes overwhelmed with empathy for a personal problem that afflicts someone in the scene, seeking to further its resolution. The scale of the personal problem isn't important; the Salubri understands that sometimes suffering is part of a cumulative situation and not an isolated stimulus. Any action not taken toward mitigating that personal tragedy incurs a two-dice penalty. The Compulsion persists until the sufferer's burden is eased or a more immediate crisis supersedes it, or the end of the scene.

Salubri Archetypes

There are too few Salubri extant in the modern nights for archetypes to be relevant. If a Salubri is present in the chronicle's domain, they're there for a purpose.



A painting of a woman with a dragon's head and multiple arms. The woman's head is in profile, facing left, with a dragon's snout and teeth. Her hair is dark and pulled back. She has multiple arms, some of which are holding a large, dark, textured object. The background is a mix of warm and cool tones, with a prominent blue and green area on the right. The overall style is painterly and somewhat surreal.

*Dragons
The Old Clan
Voivodes
Stokers*

*Not to lead, not to
triumph, but to rule
— to own utterly*



TZIMISCE

To the Tzimisce, possession is all. They aim to conquer and rule the subject of their possessiveness, jealously guarding it like their namesake dragon would its hoard. The clan's charges have traditionally been defined geographically, such as a land or a regional people, and elder Tzimisce have reputations for being the shuddersome lord in the castle that looms above the crags. The young generations, though, have extended their obsessions to more liberal claims of possession: cults, companies, gangs, even military units. Their covetousness limited only by lack of expansive ambitions, they are exceedingly hard to dislodge once they've sunk their claws in.

Who Are the Tzimisce?

To have been Embraced a Tzimisce means to own for the sake of owning, and to keep it out of the hands of others at all costs. In fact, many Tzimisce regard the Embrace itself as an act of ownership,

and have decidedly traditional relationships with their childer, whom they may even regard as property in extreme cases. If pushed to the edge they'd rather burn with their charge than let it fall into the hands of others; as dragons, they are utterly familiar with the meaning of "scorched earth." Even tonight, they are the iron fist, with the velvet glove entirely optional. In a few cases their subjects are willing, but in most cases these subjects live in fear of an aloof master caring not about the happiness of its prize — only that it stays theirs. Visiting members of other clans are occasionally shocked to see Tzimisce domains that are run-down, neglected, or barren, until they remember that the Dragons don't necessarily care whether their charges flourish, only that they are wholly owned. A decrepit tenement is just as likely to be a Tzimisce holding as an opulent estate on ancestral lands.

This relentless possessiveness extends as well to the physical form — and beyond — of the Tzimisce, who consider themselves the ultimate owners of

their bodies, even beyond the limitations of the Curse of Caine itself. Many Dragons practice a specialization of the Protean Discipline known as Vicissitude that allows them to rework their bodies and those of subjects and even less willing victims. Indeed, those savvy to the lore of the clan recall the early nights of Vicissitude, when the Tzimisce refused to heed Protean limitations of wolf- and bat-forms, and pushed their mastery even further.

Even beyond the practice of physical Vicissitude, the Dragons are eager to extend that mastery into the realm of the mind and spirit. These Tzimisce practice a form of transcendentalism that concerns itself with the very limits of vampirism itself. They transform themselves into statues or ikons, or alter the traits of gender (such vestigial mortal trappings...), or cultivate retinues of lookalikes to subsume their own individuality. To hear the hoariest tales, some Voivode lords have themselves become one with their havens, or even suffused themselves into their homelands, merging their consciousness with the very soil of the domain. What better way to show ownership of the land and its folk than to become that very land and sustain the generations to come?

As might be expected, this makes for harsh divides between young Tzimisce, who often have little that would be considered property in the traditional sense, and older Dragons, who have had time to claim and redouble their precious holdings, and this has been true since time out of mind. No surprise, then, to learn that the Tzimisce participated vigorously in the Anarch Revolt, and were one of the founding clans of the Sabbat, rebelling against the tyranny of elders. Even tonight this wariness exists, and Dragons are exceptionally cunning when it comes to defining the charges over which they claim ownership, lest a more-covetous voivode seize the charge for their own.

Few carry a grudge or hate an elder like a Tzimisce, and the clan has numerous members in both the Sabbat and the Anarchs. Among the Black Hand, a nigh-medieval mindset drives the grasping Dragons to destroy the pawns of the despised ancients. Similarly, being shut out of the most

desirable domains often drives young Tzimisce into the modern ways of the Anarchs, as they redefine themselves and their charges to claim holdings relevant to the night. Some few Tzimisce, generally arch-traditionalists, find a familiar (some would say anachronistic or even stagnant...) comfort in the neofeudalism of the Camarilla, but these are comparatively rare, and most Camarilla courts have little love for their avarice. Few Tzimisce see sect as much more than a means to a personal end, and the Camarilla gives them little trust in return. At their worst, the Tzimisce are tyrants, without the sense of obligation or duty that nobility usually conveys.

Disciplines

ANIMALISM: Some Tzimisce cultivate Animalism as an extension of their oneness with their domains. Others see it as a tool the better to command hosts of lesser beasts in order to claim those domains. In any case, Tzimisce have long felt an affinity with the more bestial denizens of their ancestral lands.

DOMINATE: The perfect Discipline for enforcing one's edicts through sheer mental force. Dominate not only helps the Dragons seize the object of their obsession, but also conditions long-term servitors into extensions of the Fiend's unquestionable will.

PROTEAN: As masters of their own physical forms, the Tzimisce use Protean to force themselves into other shapes, especially those associated with many of the ancestral lands of the Old Clan, such as the bat and wolf. Beyond these traditional Kindred guises, many Tzimisce practice the methods of Vicissitude, which allows them to transcend the rote forms of Protean and treat their own bodies and those of their subjects as primal clay.

Bane

The Tzimisce are *grounded*: Each Tzimisce must choose a specific charge — a physical domain, a group of people, an organization, or even something

more esoteric — but clearly defined and limited. The Kindred must spend their daysleep surrounded by their chosen charge. Historically this has often meant slumbering in the soil of their land, but it can also mean being surrounded by that which they tonight rule: a certain kind of people, a building deeply tied to their obsession, a local counterculture faction, or other, more outlandish elements. If they do not, they sustain aggravated Willpower damage equal to their Bane Severity upon waking the following night.

COMPULSION: COVETOUSNESS

When a Tzimisce suffers a Compulsion, the Kindred becomes obsessed with possessing something in the scene, desiring to add it to their proverbial hoard. This can be anything from an object to a piece of property to an actual person. Any action not taken toward this purpose incurs a two-dice penalty. The Compulsion persists until ownership is established (the Storyteller decides what constitutes ownership in the case of a non-object) or the object of desire becomes unattainable.

Tzimisce Archetypes

Landlord

Since time immemorial, the Tzimisce have been the lords of their domains. In the modern nights, however, the lord on the mountain has all but vanished. The Tzimisce are a crafty clan, though, and though they may no longer be manorial lords in ancestral Old World estates, they find ways to exert control over urban domains and rural territories where they may. Landlords may own tenement slums or fashionable high-rises, but the result is the same: They bleed their tenants for their wealth just as they bleed their victims for their blood, and they consider both to be extensions of their property.



Gang Leader

It's not a gang so much as it is a way to make sure everyone's watching everyone else's back when the rest of the world has written them off. The Gang Leader goes out of the way to show how everyone working toward a common goal that society tells them they can't have simply needs to reach out and take it. If they weren't running a drug cartel or a protection racket, the Gang Leader would be hailed as a captain of industry.



Grudgebearer

So long as the Tzimisce have claimed domain, they have been in conflict with those who seek to take it from them, which is often everyone to the covetous Fiends. In particular, the Tzimisce have longstanding hostilities toward the Tremere, Gangrel, and Nosferatu, whom they see variously not only as usurpers of the Blood but also as interlopers in territories that rightfully belonged to them or their sires. Grudgebearers rise each night to exact some small mote of cold revenge against those they perceive to have slighted them, and that guilt may well have transferred through a reviled lineage, leaving the Stoker to prosecute vendettas against the childer of childer of hated rivals.

Special Forces Commandant

Possessed not of a traditional land domain, the Special Forces Commandant has instead the nigh-fanatical respect of their unit, and their soldiers would follow them into Hell itself. So the Special Forces Commandant bides their time and trains their troops, for when they can perhaps parlay an insurrection or policing action into a greater claim of domain.

Servitor Ghouls

More than just fleshcrafted victims, infamous Tzimisce ghouls known as *szlachta* and *vozhd* are created through long-forgotten rituals, endowing them with Blood-imbued weaponry and a loyalty far beyond even Blood Bound thralls. While extremely rare in the modern nights, still-active elder Fiends have been known to make use of these inhuman creatures, if only as a last resort, and some now-masterless thralls may still protect the havens of long-departed Kindred.

Beyond even these shuddersome creatures, rumors persist of entire families of ghouls in service to hoary elders, the Tzimisce foremost among them. Whether that means such elders feed great torrents of their blood to entire families or have somehow contrived a way to have the quality of being a ghoul pass on through familial congenital is too foul to think.



Szlachta

The loyal minions of Tzimisce masters, *szlachta* are often chosen for their existing loyalty rather than having it ingrained in them. Still, it never hurts to be sure....

Szlachta take many forms, from the subtly altered majordomo of a Fiend's estate to the twisted-to-purpose bearers of the master's sedan chair. Especially among the retinues of young Tzimisce, more specialized and modern *szlachta* may be found in service. Which is to say, there's no such thing as an "average" *szlachta* — presented below is a baseline servant that Storytellers can modify to suit story needs.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 2, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 10, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: One specialised skill: 8

Disciplines: Two level 1 powers

Special: When crafted for war, the rituals imbue the bone spurs of the *szlachta* with properties equivalent to Feral Weapons. Some *szlachta* with especially ruthless conditioning are effectively immune to mind-bending powers and Disciplines such as Dominate or Presence.



Vozhd

These nightmarish leviathans are hybrids created from dozens of *szlachta* who have been grafted together through Vicissitude and Blood Sorcery. Primeval juggernauts, they are said to be employed in remote areas almost like the siege engines of eras past, with terror and mayhem as its primary goals.

The *vozhd* has no personality. It cannot choose to defy its master, nor can it creatively interpret its purpose. That also means it cannot be tricked, though it may be evaded, outrun or even, however unlikely the thought, defeated by even more potent combatants. It needs nothing to eat to sustain it, other than the master's blood once per month, yet its appetite seems infinitely ravenous.

Storytellers should feel free to adjust individual Traits to reflect the unique nature of each *vozhd*, but players are unlikely to deal with these war-ghouls frequently enough for such nuances to be truly recognizable.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical

10, Social 0, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 14, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl: 12 Melee: 12

Disciplines: Potence 3 Fortitude 3

Special: A *vozhd* has Vicissitude-augmented physical modifications that behave as weapons, dealing non-halved Superficial damage (+4 damage modifier) to vampires and other supernatural creatures. They are also covered with the equivalent of 4 (or more) points of armor, and Storytellers are encouraged to be creative in regards to further modifications. They are immune to mind-altering powers, let alone simple reasoning. Good luck!



DISCIPLINE POWERS

Auspex

Level 2

OBEAH

Amalgam: Fortitude 1

The vampire soothes the mental or emotional turmoil of their subject, restoring to them a modicum of steadfastness. It is especially effective when used on mortals, either to help them through momentary agitation, or to calm them before feeding on them.

Cost: One Rouse Check and additional Willpower depending on circumstances

Dice Pool: Composure + Auspex

System: The vampire rolls Composure + Auspex against Difficulty 2 and restores a number of superficial Willpower damage levels equal to the margin on the roll. Alternatively, the user restores one aggravated Willpower damage level for every three successes in the margin.

If successfully used on a mortal, Obeah similarly calms them if they're in a turbulent emotional state, or puts them otherwise at ease.

Use of this power takes a whole turn. If the vampire spends an entire scene instead, reduce the Difficulty to 0. Obeah must be used on someone other than the vampire invoking the power. A subject can be affected by the power only once per night.

If the user soothes more than one subject per night, the user suffers superficial Willpower damage equal to half the number of successes in the margin for every additional subject, as they take on the burden of so many charges.

Duration: N/A

Level 5

UNBURDENING THE BESTIAL SOUL

Amalgam: Dominate 3

Prerequisite: Obeah

As seekers of the promises of Golconda, some vampires explore ways to remedy the turbulent souls of their fellow Damned. This power shares some amount of the vampire's moral serenity with a repentant Kindred, allowing some semblance of remorse to be restored while also keeping the Beast at bay. It does require the user to take on part of the mind and spirit of their subject, shackling their will to that of the user. (Most often seen among the Salubri, this power has no doubt contributed to their reputation as monstrous soul-thieves...)

Cost: Two Rouse Checks, gain one Stain

Dice Pool: Composure + Auspex vs. Humanity

System: The vampire spends a scene in seclusion with the subject and rolls Composure + Auspex vs. the Humanity of the subject. For every success in the margin, they can remove one Stain from the subject, or erect a psychological "shield" that will protect the subject from future Stains on a one-for-one basis. For example, a margin of three applied to a subject with no Stains would effectively "cancel out" up to three Stains acquired later in the session.

On a critical win the user can choose to forgo the above benefits, instead restoring a single point of Humanity to the subject, but no vampire can gain that benefit more than once, ever.

Unburdening the Bestial Soul works only on vampires, and only on subjects whose Humanity is lower than that of the user.

No matter the benefits received, for the rest of the session the subject is numbed, having part of

their mind merged with the user, and any Dominate powers used on them by this power's user succeed automatically with no eye contact necessary.

When the power expires, all psychological “shields” not used up are lost, though Stains removed or Humanity gained on initial application do not revert.

Duration: One session

Dominate

Level 2

DOMITOR'S FAVOR

Kindred are creatures of cruel irony, and the name of this Discipline power is one such example. While conditioned with the Domitor's Favor, a thrall with a Blood Bond to that vampire finds it much more difficult to act against their master. Domineering Tzimisce are especially fond of this power, using it to ensure the loyalty of their servants.

Cost: One Rouse Check

System: Defiance rolls for willful thralls under the effects of Domitor's Favor are made at a three-dice penalty and thralls may not spend Willpower on them. Additionally, total failure on a defiance roll means that the Blood Bond does not weaken that month. See pp. 233-244 of *Vampire: The Masquerade* for more information on Blood Bonds and rolls made to defy them.

Duration: One month

Fortitude

Level 2

VALEREN

Amalgam: Auspex 1

The vampire projects their Fortitude outwardly, willing the power of their Blood to mend the injured body of another vampire.

Cost: One Rouse Check and additional Health depending on circumstances

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Fortitude

System: The vampire rolls Intelligence + Fortitude against Difficulty 2 and mends a number of superficial Health damage levels equal to the margin on the roll. Alternatively, the user mends one aggravated Health damage level for every three successes in the margin.

Use of this power takes a whole turn. If the vampire spends an entire scene instead, reduce the Difficulty to 0. Valeren must be used on someone other than the vampire invoking the power, and can be used only on vampires. A subject can be affected by the power only once per night.

If the user mends more than one subject per night, the user suffers superficial Health damage equal to half the number of successes in the margin for every additional subject, as they take on the burden of so many charges.

Duration: N/A

Obfuscate

Level 2

CHIMERSTRY

Amalgam: Presence 1

The vampire is able to create brief but vivid hallucinations, distracting and drawing the attention of those affected. A hallucination can affect any single sense — it can be visual, audial, tactile, etc. — occurring long enough to make an impression before ceasing. The user decides on the specifics of the hallucination, though due to its brief nature it cannot convey more than something glimpsed in the corner of the eye or a voice faintly heard (it cannot be employed to create a fake ID, for example).

Dice Pools: Manipulation + Obfuscate vs Composure + Wits

Cost: One Rouse Check

System: The vampire rolls their Manipulation + Obfuscate. Anyone unprepared and within eyesight of the vampire and eligible to experience the hallucination (by being in line of sight of its projected appearance, or by being the target of a tactile sensation) is distracted, losing two dice on their next action. Additionally, those who fail to resist using

their Composure + Wits lose their next active action if they fail. (However, they can still defend and resist as normal, with a two-dice penalty.)

Other effects resulting from the hallucination are up to the Storyteller, but they are advised to err on the side of caution.

These hallucinations can never be recorded or transmitted (such as by using Ghost in the Machine).

Duration: One turn

Level 3

FATA MORGANA

Amalgam: Presence 2

The vampire can craft elaborate hallucinations, making any subjects in their vicinity see, hear, and feel whatever the user can devise. From seeing and tasting a takeout container filled with maggots and rice to a thunderous torrent of reeking, rancid blood boiling out of the sewers, Fata Morgana causes witnesses to experience circumstances that just aren't real.

There is no limit to the number of victims who can be affected simultaneously, but in order to be affected by Fata Morgana a subject needs to be able to see the user or vice versa, though they do not need to be actively aware of them. The vampire does not need to remain present once a victim is affected.

Visual effects are always separate objects. They cannot be used to “mask” or otherwise disguise items or individuals, and can never entirely block line of sight. Fata Morgana hallucinations cannot appear to affect the surrounding reality: The torrent of blood won't wash away cars parked in the street or pedestrians, and an explosion created with Fata Morgana will not cause any damage, hallucinatory or otherwise. A collapsing staircase won't tumble anyone currently descending the staircase. Sensory effects created by Fata Morgana cannot blind or deafen or in other ways overload senses, not even those supernaturally augmented. Similarly, hallucinations are not caught on camera or other kinds of recording devices.

Cost: One Rouse Check

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Obfuscate

System: The user makes a Manipulation + Obfuscate test against a Difficulty equal to one plus the number of senses the hallucination targets. (An audio-visual hallucination would thus be Difficulty 3, while a complete five-sensory experience would be Difficulty 6.) The easiest visual hallucinations to create are fairly small or discreet — increase the Difficulty by one for room-sized hallucinations, two for house-sized hallucinations, and so on. Further complications can add additional Difficulty, but that is left to the Storyteller's discretion. Any attempt to mimic the appearance of a specific individual or in other ways deceive can require additional Performance or Subterfuge tests as appropriate.

Vampires and other supernatural creatures have a chance to disbelieve the hallucination, but mortals can do this only if they have reason to suspect it to be fake. In both cases they roll Intelligence + Awareness against the user's Manipulation + Presence. A success means that the individual in question is no longer affected by the hallucination, and it effectively disappears for them. Any attempt to interact with the hallucination will also cause it to lapse entirely, as everyone present will become aware of its unreal nature (as with the collapsing staircase example, if someone is using the staircase). Note that the use of this power is not overt, so even if the hallucination is revealed, it is not obvious from whom it originated.

These hallucinations can never be recorded or transmitted (such as by using Ghost in the Machine).

Duration: One scene, unless the vampire chooses to let it lapse before that.



Protean

Level 2

VICISSITUDE

Amalgam: Dominate 2

Rare outside clan Tzimisce, this power allows the vampire to demand obedience of their own flesh. Skin, muscles, and even bone can be sculpted or warped out of shape, the end result sometimes unnervingly beautiful but just as often monstrous. Skilled users can craft bizarre characteristics or reshape their entire bodies, though larger transformations exact a heavy toll on their physique. Kindred who use Vicissitude create everything from useful body-tools to... *expressive* ornamentations.

Dice Pools: Resolve + Protean

Cost: One Rouse Check

System: Roll Resolve + Protean. Every success on the roll allows a single Vicissitude change to be made to the user, though the total number of changes cannot exceed the user's Protean rating, no matter the number of applications or successes. Each change causes the loss of a single Physical Attribute dot of the user, as the body mass must come from somewhere. (No Attribute can be taken below 1.) Each use of the power takes one full turn to perform.

Potential Vicissitude changes are listed below:

Redistribution: Add a single dot to any of the user's Physical Attributes. This cannot cause any Attribute to exceed 5 dots. These changes are visible, but not Masquerade-threatening.

Weapons (*Once per subject only*): The user gains the equivalent of a light piercing or heavy impact weapon (+2 Damage) in the form of bone spurs or bludgeons of dense cartilage. (In contrast to *Feral Weapons*, the damage caused by these weapons is mundane, but *Feral Weapons* employed by a vampire proficient in Vicissitude often take the shape of similar osseous spikes and blades.)

Armor: One Attribute point can be turned into two points of armor value (p. 304), with an upper limit of six points of armor. This often takes the form of reinforced sub-dermal reinforced bone or

layers of fat and cartilage, and appears increasingly inhuman as the points so allocated increase.

Appearance: The user can change their appearance, either for the sake of hiding their identity, enhancing their Looks Merit, or to mimic someone else. This is a time-consuming affair, taking an entire scene to perform, and requires a Dexterity + Craft test in order to succeed. Difficulty is 3 to hide one's identity, 4 to increase Looks (each level of the Merit counts as one change) and 5 to mimic a specific person. A failure on the test yields no result (but the Attribute dot is still lost) while a total failure causes the Looks Merit to drop one level, potentially turning into a Flaw if at baseline. Nosferatu are unable to use this aspect of the power for anything but hiding their identity.

Other changes: More creative uses of this power, such as creating a secret pouch somewhere on the body or moving eyes around, are beyond the scope of these mechanics, and the Storyteller needs to decide on the number of changes (and Attribute points lost) required, and the Difficulty and time required for the operation. Dexterity + Craft and Intelligence + Medicine are the most important rolls in these cases.

Changes can be mended as aggravated damage, with each change equivalent to a single level of damage (restoring lost Attribute points accordingly).

Duration: Permanent

Level 3

FLESHCRAFTING

Amalgam: Dominate 2

Prerequisite: Vicissitude

Extending their mastery over flesh, the vampire is now able to inflict their ministrations on the bodies of others. The power is rightly feared, as many of its users have a reputation for inhuman torture, though some employ it to great effect to enhance and adapt their servants and allies.

Dice Pools: Resolve + Protean vs Stamina + Resolve

Cost: One Rouse Check

System: In order to use this power, the user must be able to work undisturbed on the subject, who thus

either needs to be willing or restrained. For a willing subject, follow the same system as Vicissitude (above). An unwilling subject can resist with their Stamina + Resolve, with the user's margin counting as Vicissitude successes. Each use of this power takes a full scene to perform. Again, the total number of changes cannot exceed the user's Protean rating, no matter the number of applications or successes. In case of multiple users working on a single subject, only count the highest Protean rating.

Changes can be mended as aggravated damage, with each change equivalent to a single level of damage. (Mortals will thus require extensive surgery.)

Duration: Permanent

Level 4

HORRID FORM

Amalgam: Dominate 2

Prerequisite: Vicissitude

With a mastery of the body so complete that it surpasses natural limitations, the vampire can take on a truly monstrous form, complete with vicious claws, protruding fangs, ridged features, and corded muscles. Although its exact traits can vary between occasions, the form often has an individual, specific appearance that manifests every time this power is used, a vision of the user's Beast made flesh. Some look like hellishly malformed animals, some look demonic or atavistic, and some defy any sense of worldly familiarity. Many incorporate the traits of other vampires in nature, such as leeches, bats, ticks, and mosquitoes, magnified to grotesque proportions.

Dice Pools: None

Cost: One Rouse Check

System: Horrid Form takes a full turn to activate, during which time the vampire can only defend, using their pre-Horrid Form dice pools. It then grants the vampire a number of free Vicissitude changes (no Attribute dots are lost) equal to their Protean rating. These can be spent on *Redistribution*, *Weapons*, and *Armor*. Generous Storytellers can also consider other changes such as wing-like membranes allowing the vampire to glide, extended limbs for reach, or other creative (but fair) uses. However, with the Beast so close to the surface, *any* criticals

rolled while using *Horrid Form* for any reason are considered messy criticals, and any Frenzy test taken is done at a +2 Difficulty level. The vampire also assumes an unmistakably inhuman appearance and is unable to communicate in anything but grunts, hisses, and roars.

Duration: One scene, unless voluntarily ended sooner.

Level 5

ONE WITH THE LAND

Amalgam: Animalism 2

Prerequisite: Earth Meld

The Kindred possesses such mastery over their own form that they may extend it even into their domain itself. Not only may the vampire sink into the very earth, they maintain a preternatural awareness of events transpiring within the domain.

Cost: Two Rouse Checks

System: As with Earth Meld (see **Vampire: the Masquerade**, p. 270), except the vampire is not limited by the makeup of the surface where they take their rest. Some vampires have been known to suffuse themselves into the walls of their manors while others secrete themselves beneath the warped floorboards of a squat, or even hide beneath a shallow pool of "dead water."

Additionally, in a distance of one mile in any direction from where the vampire's body has become One with the Land, the vampire may elect to experience any sensory stimuli within that area, such as listening to a conversation therein, physically enjoying a lovers' tryst, or catching the scent of a fire that an unruly mob may be stoking. The vampire experiences these senses through the presence of animals, however minute, in the vicinity of the events. If the events are discreet or intentionally hidden, a Wits + Animalism test vs. the relevant opposing dice pool used is required.

Rising from this state before nightfall the day after it has been entered requires a Resolve + Protean test at Difficulty 4, and even then it can take up to an hour for the vampire to fully reemerge. A critical win allows them to rise instantly, however.

Duration: One day or more, or until physically disturbed

Part II:

CLANS AND COTERIES



The term coterie may have originally come into use to designate a small group of vampires who work together with a single goal in mind. By contrast, a sect is a larger faction of vampires who share a common philosophy, while a court, domain, territory, or other terms may define all of the Kindred in a single geographic locality. With that in mind, despite the modern prevalence of the term, many vampires consider “coterie” to be archaic speech.

The term is also not without contention. Some young vampires feel “coterie” is a phrase weighed down by the pretentiousness of the Camarilla, and may have fallen completely out of use in certain Anarch domains. Especially among young Kindred, groups of vampires are often described with a stylistic phrase to which they can relate: a *gang* of Brujah

and Ravnos; a *burrow* of Gangrel and Nosferatu; a *goddammit* of Tremere, Toreador, and Ventrue; and so on.

Coterie sometimes serve as a means of ensuring dependency between members of a greater conspiracy, replacing more holistic interpersonal connections. Modern Kindred may form coterie as an enterprise of common interest, a ritual of camaraderie among like-minded vampires, or even as an expression of affection, insofar as the Kindred can feel it. Coterie persist in the modern nights due to the strong, traditional role that they hold in Kindred society. When groups form, whether as social cliques, familial broods, information networks, or simply as outcasts, mutual protection is the primary expectation.

A Greater Purpose

Vampires are naturally predatory creatures, and fearful of one another's monstrous natures — it is uncommon for them to truly share bonds of trust. As such, coteries usually emerge to facilitate a singular goal or press a specific agenda. Coteries form with a purpose.

Trust, of course, is a rare and elusive emotion among Kindred. Any vampire who has spent time in multiple coteries can attest to one strong similarity that they all share: Belonging to a coterie is less like chilling with friends and more akin to swimming with fellow sharks.

Any number of reasons may propel vampires into a coterie, but no matter those reasons, each member has their own objectives and agendas. All vampires want something, every single one, and at the same time, no coterie has ever existed in which all Kindred have been aware of one another's true intentions. Whether the coterie consists of individual vampires who pursue blood, power, wealth, knowledge or social leverage, those vampires are always in some form of competition with one another. Underneath mutual protection lies personal ambition.

Despite this, only a shortsighted vampire would ever throw their coterie-mate under the bus to pursue a personal goal. Vampires who do so quickly garner infamy and make enemies.

Outside of coteries formed for social reasons, august Kindred of certain domains sometimes mandate coteries with very specific goals in mind. A Camarilla domain might find a Sheriff, Deputies, and Hounds to have formed a coterie, pursuing the objective of safeguarding their territory. A desperate Anarch domain might see a Lupine-hunting pack that reports to the Baron. An Ashirra coterie may find itself forced into particular vigilance against the Sabbat. The circumstances create the justification that keeps a coterie together or the top-down sanction for it.

The Players' Characters

To many Kindred, coteries feel unnatural. Solitary predators don't form harmonious social groups. That said, the players' characters have an advantage in that the relationships among the *players* supersede this. The social unit around the game table helps build a sense of belonging.

That doesn't have to be the case, though. Vampire society is treacherous, and certain troupes may enjoy some amount of suspenseful suspicion of their fellow players.

Take care when players welcome the concept of betrayal. It can be tempting to play a backstabbing vampire, and it can be equally rewarding to play a group who play the long game, realizing their agendas and making something of lasting value. Unlike Storyteller characters, whose actions often serve a crafted narrative, players' characters are more free-willed, making the bonds that emerge between them more valuable.

Coterie Perspectives by Clan

Every Kindred is an individual, but clans represent both prevailing archetypes as well as social functions by which vampires seek progeny of like mind. The following sections describe a generalized outlook for how members of each clan might interact with coteries they join.

Merits of Membership

To this end, each also includes a specific Coterie Merit that a Kindred of that clan can purchase at character creation. The benefits of these Merits can be generally activated or enjoyed by anyone in the coterie, a sort of group resource that can either be called upon collectively or that benefits the entire coterie. After all, coteries exist to offer safety in numbers, despite what insular elders or suspicious ancillae may think — and that safety in numbers sometimes comes in the form of advantage that can

put those vampires a step ahead of a rival. Note that in some cases, only one member of the coterie can use a given Merit in a session, on a who-needs-it-most basis.

Banu Haqim

The external perception of the Banu Haqim often identifies them as driven, sombre, and severe. In general, the children of Haqim have little interest in countering this perception. Clan culture rewards those who are goal-oriented, which emphasizes actions and deeds. Esteem among the Banu Haqim follows what they do, rather than exalting lineage or honoring tradition for its own sake. Clan members, therefore, take a pragmatic approach, making allies where they must in order to pursue their goals and accomplish their agendas.

Among the Banu Haqim, coterie are heavily focused. Every group has a goal, whether that is as judges, enforcers, or exerting influence over a sector of mortal infrastructure.

In more cosmopolitan coterie, Banu Haqim may find themselves the recognized motivational force in a coterie. They gravitate toward roles in which they determine the direction of the group, or interpreting commonly agreed objectives. Banu Haqim Kindred regard this as leadership — other vampires, however, can chafe at what they perceive as being ordered around, especially young Kindred who aren't necessarily seeking a regimented or task-oriented dynamic in their coterie. Interactions with the coterie also vary greatly by the faction to which a given Child of Haqim belongs. Quite simply, the methods and fellows of the clan's conflicting orthodoxies are different, and whether one shares the perspective of a number of influential Banu Haqim high in the clan's ranks also bears weight.

As always, individual motivations vary, but this same focus on specific objectives often means that Banu Haqim membership in a coterie may be a temporary thing. Almost akin to serial entrepreneurship, a Child of Haqim may find common cause with a different coterie that better suits her. Kindred with whom they have shared a coterie with in the past often remain valuable associates. Many

see value in renewing lapsed relations with reliable Kindred to rejoin a coterie or form a new one after departing it.

For the Clan of the Hunt, new prey is ever on the horizon.

●● CALL TO PURPOSE (Clan Coterie Merit):

Once per session, the Banu Haqim motivates a coterie-mate they can see with a rousing statement reminding her of her Convictions or even an intense stare that calls her to action. The coterie-mate gains the effects of a Willpower point that must be used immediately, such as to reroll three dice or to briefly master a frenzy. This "Willpower point" isn't taken from the Banu Haqim, and must be given to a coterie-mate (the Banu Haqim cannot use it on themselves.) See *Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 158, for more information on using Willpower.

Brujah

Brujah sires often Embrace on a whim, in the throes of emotion, or seemingly without the discretion of other clans. Apocryphally, some domains are so rife with Rabble, it's almost impossible to find a coterie without at least one Brujah!

Perhaps that's to be expected given their history. The Brujah are descendants of ancient warrior-philosophers, rebels against oppressive causes, or crusaders against perceived injustices. In such times, Brujah relied on coterie-mates to watch their backs and conspire to bring down those who would wield power against them. Tonight, this premise hasn't changed, whether it now manifests as revolutionary cells dedicated to overthrowing a corrupt social system, or as outlaw biker gangs that kneel to no law.

This might make them come across as hard cases and solitary iconoclasts, but that's rarely true. The emotional call that brought them into the night sustains them. Brujah look to Kindred coterie as comrades in arms or even siblings. A coterie is as close to family as vampires can afford.

Brujah don't necessarily care if you're a Nosferatu or a Malkavian. So long as you're trustworthy and reliable, they're ride-or-die for you. What often matters to a Brujah is that the coterie is pulling in

the same direction (though this might be a lofty goal, given the contrarian tendencies of the Brujah...). That's not to say that some preferential attitudes or power struggles don't exist, whatever form the safe house takes. But the Anarch movement has grown and the Brujah fortunes have risen in the modern nights, and so long as their coterie-mates' attitudes don't cause static with a Brujah colleague, they're willing to kick against the pricks with anyone by their side.

Those who join coteries with Brujah often find the closeness of those bonds to be one of the most memorable and integral factors. The unique familial surrogacy that Brujah may instill (or project...) upon a group is unlike that of any other clan. Yet a coterie for a Brujah is not a transactional "team," it's something more. Earning the trust of a Brujah, especially one who particularly values loyalty, is often enough to inspire these vampires to powerful displays of unity.

● **BOOT AND RALLY (Clan Coterie Merit):**

Sometimes the best way out of a bad situation is to try again, harder, and have a frenzy-prone coterie-mate impress upon you the error of your ways. Once per session, the Brujah inspires a flagging coterie-mate, who may then reroll all regular dice on a failed Physical Skill test.

Gangrel

Kindred have become so disconnected from their roots, from their primal nature, that they can no longer survive without edifices of brick and glass. Kindred have grown so spoiled and dependent upon the luxuries these modern nights have brought them that they have forgotten how to survive without. The Gangrel have not forgotten these things. The Beasts acknowledge their true nature, claiming territory for themselves where they can in the global landscape, whether in perilous urban spaces or the differently dangerous unknown domains between them.

For the Gangrel, a coterie is just a pack by another name, and a pack is a group of individuals working toward a common cause, ensuring that

everyone is kept safe. While not all Gangrel code-switch "packs" for coteries, they can't deny that it suits their purposes and needs. As the adage goes, the lone wolf dies, but the pack survives. Any coterie with a Gangrel among its number has little to fear should a physical threat arise, for few clans are as strong or tenacious as the Gangrel in combat.

In addition to bearing puissant tooth and claw, Gangrel sometimes pull double-duty as pathfinders to those seeking safe passage through known hazardous areas of domains. In the rare instances a coterie deigns to travel outside the gilded cages of cities, its members become acutely aware of the benefits that a Gangrel member gives them.

●●● **PACK TACTICS (Clan Coterie Merit):**

A lone wolf against an enemy risks much, but a pack of wolves working together can take down even the largest and most dangerous prey. When in combat, so long as you have another member of your coterie alongside you, you more effectively harry your common foe: Anyone attacking the same enemy as you adds a single die to their dice pools for Brawl or Melee attacks. This Merit is non-cumulative; no matter how many Gangrel with it gang up on some poor fool, it offers only a single additional die to each of them.

Hecata

The Hecata have managed to carve out a place for themselves in innumerable domains, yet frequently find themselves considered an unwelcome presence. Although the Kindred as a whole might view the Hecata as distasteful, one can always count on them to give an unvarnished opinion, if not an honest one.

It is perhaps their narrow focus that makes the pragmatic Hecata realize how greatly they rely on other Kindred, as a greater society and as individual members of coteries. Their affinity for the dead and ability to speak to spirits means that they have access to information that others may have thought long gone, and that information makes the Hecata valuable to others in return. And since information is such a valuable currency in the world of

the Damned, many coterie are willing to endure the social cost of such unwholesome fellows. The Hecata gain greater facility with the temporal world and the coterie gains access to a shuddersome vein of secrets.

This may seem transactional, and to an extent it is, for which the Hecata bear the responsibility of those assumptions. In both their necromantic acumen and the dealings of the Giovanni family, the Hecata have come to perceive many of their nightly interactions as exchanges — this placation of a spirit, that favor for the Toreador harpy. Such a calculating outlook colors others' perception of them, but that makes coterie in which they are truly accepted and understood as individuals rather than tools all the more meaningful. And those who surround themselves in the remains of the dead take comfort in willing contact with others where they may.

●● **ARS MORIENDI** (Clan Coterie Merit):

Almost all members of the Hecata clan are at least cursorily familiar with death and the dead. Once per session, the Lazarene is able to mask the corpse of someone killed by a member of the coterie. They can disguise foul play in the case of a mortal corpse, or protect the Masquerade by making the remains of a destroyed vampire (usually a brittle skeleton unless the vampire was very young) draw less attention, usually by efficiently disposing of it. These are quick-and-dirty fixes, though, and will not divert someone already on their tail, but they can provide some proverbial breathing space to the coterie.

Lasombra

Few clans are as ruthlessly efficient as the Lasombra when it comes to achieving goals. Whether crushing rivals or consolidating influence, the Lasombra take no half-measures. This drive for success leads them to being the allies everyone wants, but no one wants to admit they need. From a classical economics perspective, the Lasombra see coterie as a tool, a



means to an end to drive their success. Success brings reward, of course, and even failure brings growth through tribulation. Steel is forged in the fires of adversity.

That doesn't mean the Lasombra see the individuals in their coteries as tools, however. With their clan history of exalted rank and ecclesiastical power, elder Lasombra are familiar with intricate webs of obligation, favor, and elective cooperation upon which legacies are built, and these lessons pervade the self-mythology of the Magisters, even unto the ranks of neonates. Although few Kindred tonight receive their peers and lessers in baroque churches floored in black-veined marble, the same proprieties among fellow Damned may be made in a hotel ballroom or even on a nightclub floor. The quality of the relationship is celebrated in the ceremony that acknowledges it.

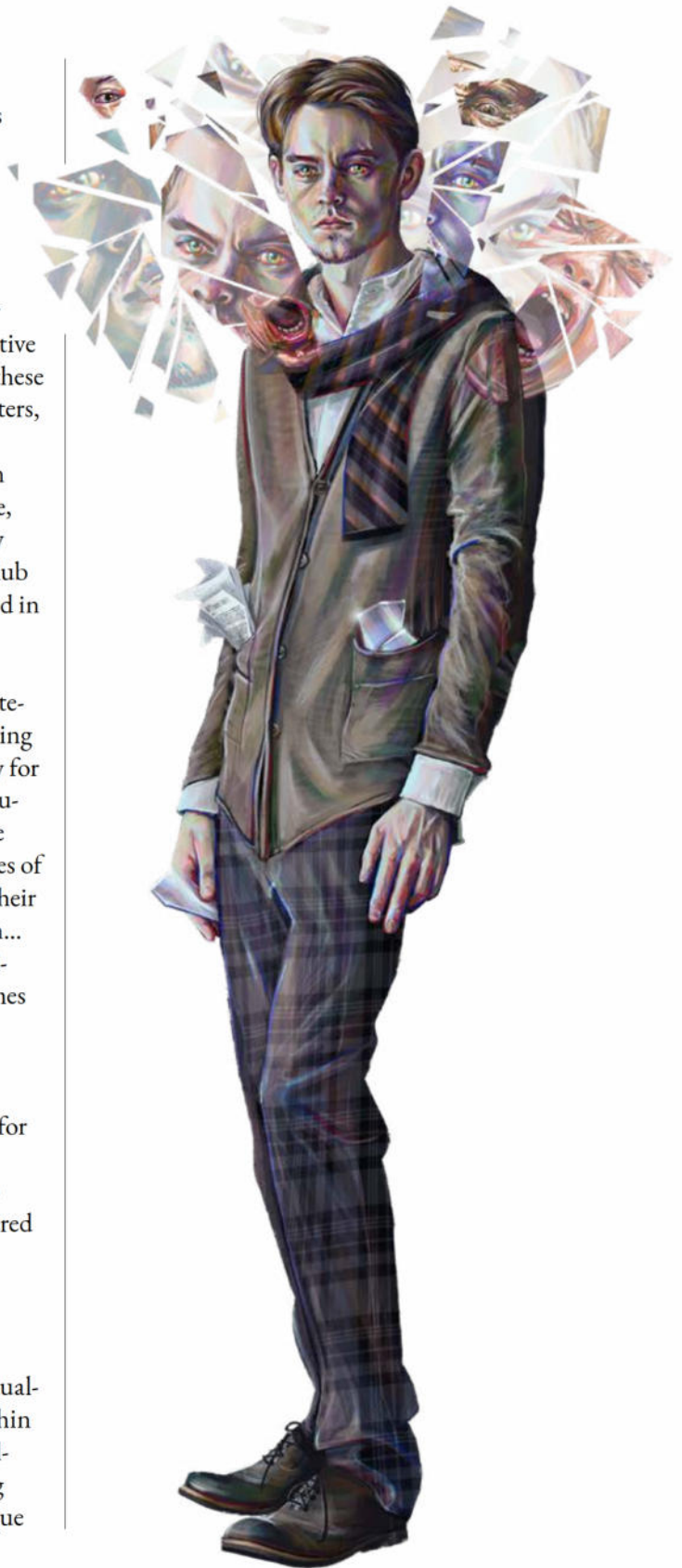
While other Kindred may maintain certain wariness in welcoming a Lasombra into their coterie, it is undeniable that Night Clan vampires bring with them a multitude of benefits. Their affinity for shadows and the use of Oblivion make them valuable to coteries whose preferred methods involve secrecy, espionage, and hidden movement. Stories of Lasombra willing to sacrifice coterie-mates for their own immediate benefits are probably overblown... but dealing with "the sins of the fathers" is ironically a burden many Lasombra bear when it comes to reputation.

●● **AT ANY COST** (Clan Coterie Merit):

The Magister sets a ruthlessly effective example for their coterie-mates. Once per session, a member of the Lasombra's coterie can choose to add two successes to a test made. The test is then considered a messy critical, including appropriate negative consequences.

Malkavian

Each Malkavian's view of the world is so individually misaligned with those around them, even within their own clan, that it can pose a significant challenge for such a vampire to find someone willing to see the world from the Malkavian's own unique



perspective. Those of Clan Malkavian often have an optimistic outlook toward coterie, seeing them as a chance for social interaction they may otherwise struggle to indulge. As a result, the potential to form social bonds with others in a coterie can be both exciting and terrifying. Malkavians want to relate to their Kindred, but their bane makes it difficult to do so.

Occasionally, a Malkavian's senses may propel them into the limelight, yielding the chance to enjoy the adulation of other vampires, while at other times they feel an overwhelming urge to withdraw and shut themselves off from those around them. Social interaction can be particularly demanding for the Malkavians, and trying for the other members of their coterie.

Not all vampires, of course, are interested in taking the time to form an emotional support structure for Malkavian Kindred. For some vampires, their view of the Malkavians' curse is colored by the prejudices that they carried in mortal life — Kindred society is replete with fear of the Malkavians' difficulties relating.

Some Kindred, especially those raised in a less enlightened age, may view a Malkavian's bane as judgement for their sins, a trade-off for their "gifts" of insight, or simply a tool to be exploited. One apocryphal elder sequesters a Malkavian in an iron-lined coffin, staked and sealed in perpetual night. This wretched Malkavian emerges only at the whim of this cruel coterie-mate, thereafter to be sealed away again for God only knows how long. Few Malkavians would choose to be part of such an arrangement, making for quite the cautionary tale.

●●● **EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED (Clan Coterie Merit):** The Malkavian is able to extract secrets from the most unlikely sources, such as discerning the location of an elder's vault from someone's casual exchange about the weather or unearthing an adversary's deepest fears from the way they take a right at an intersection. Once per session, the Malkavian has the ability to let another member of their coterie substitute one Skill pool for another of their choice (that they possess) in a test involving the

gathering of information. The Oracle is then able to interpret the results, gaining the same information as the original pool would have yielded, depending on the margin of success as usual.

The Ministry

To hear a member of the Ministry tell it, they can bring everything to a coterie. *Everything*. The Setites want to be everybody's confidante, and want to stay close to those in their coterie, making sure that the group's needs are met, no matter what those needs might be. Viewing the world as a marketplace, Ministry Kindred strive to ensure that they can offer everything their fellows can, but better. If you need guns, they'll give you a silver Lexus with a trunk full of AR15s. If you need vitae, they'll bring you blood from vessels high on top-shelf heroin. If you need to get out of the country, they know a guy with a private jet. If you need a herd, they'll give you a key to their downtown apartment where a number of unidentified refugees are "couch surfing until they find a permanent place to stay."

Often, this means that the presence of a Setite within a coterie introduces an element of *quid pro quo*. The Ministry can provide for their fellows, but may expect favors and social benefits in return. Such recompense could be a widening of the Tempter's network of connections or even recruitments for their spiritual flock. For the Ministry, this in no way precludes social bonds or represents an exception to forming alliances. The Ministry would rather deal with their local community, starting with their coterie. What better customers than people who know the people one knows, after all?

Those who share a coterie with a member of the Ministry are generally quite aware of this. Canny vampires are quick to take advantage of the benefits of maintaining ties with the Setites, even if they're cautious of the Ministry's ulterior motives. Some vampires may balk at the idea of working with the Ministry, fearful of what scheme the Tempter might be working right under the coterie's nose. In truth, the Ministry Kindred is often entirely upfront and even honest about their intentions. Nobody wants to deal with an oily used-car salesman, after all.



If the Tempter were to double-cross, betray, and scheme their way through their unlife, they would find their reputation catching up with them! It can hardly be their fault if their customer wants something to be true other than what the Setite is offering. Let the buyer beware.

● **DISCERNING (Clan Coterie Merit):** Once per session, the Ministry Kindred may discover something superficial a Storyteller character wants, so long as any member of the coterie has spoken to that character during the session, even if the Setite wasn't present. This may relate to the individual's Desire or Ambition or it could relate to a specific course of action they were undertaking (but should not expose any deep schemes or mysteries, especially if the coterie is unaware of them). The character who interacted with the Storyteller character in question describes the encounter.

Nosferatu

So far as many Nosferatu are concerned, a coterie is a makeshift family unit, and the clan is already a member of one of the largest family units that exist. A Nosferatu's bond with other Sewer Rats is potentially already strong, in no small part due to their nature as outcasts among Kindred society. Whether dwelling in underground warrens or remote hideouts, many Nosferatu come to view the world as a binary: the host of "presentable" Kindred, and themselves.

This pragmatic outlook creates an interesting consequence, in that Nosferatu tend to be fairly open-minded in terms of which coterie they join. A single Nosferatu may even be a member of several coterie at any given time, each without the knowledge of each other. There's probably no attempted duplicity in this; rather, a Nosferatu may simply compartmentalise their social circles, regarding one coterie as valuable for one purpose and another coterie for other goals. One of these might even be an all-Nosferatu coterie that transcends sect allegiance.

Enterprising Nosferatu across the history of the Kindred have acted as information brokers, and many of the clan continue to play this part even tonight. How they use information, though, can

be intensely personal. Nosferatu may freely share information with coterie-mates, simply for the chance to interact with the “beautiful” part of the world. This in itself is a huge benefit for a Nosferatu who belongs to a cosmopolitan coterie: The chance to simply hang out at a nightclub or walk the city streets under starlight may do wonders to abate the Orlok’s sense of alienation.

Of course, not all coterie are quite so accepting of the Nosferatu, and some Sewer Rats simply can’t bring themselves to trust other vampires. Their unique clan curse presents a social barrier that many Kindred must strive to overcome. Whilst every one of the Damned harbors a Beast within, the Nosferatu’s cursed blood exposes theirs for the world to see. (Players interested in exploring these themes should work with their fellow players and Storyteller to ensure that they keep considerate play in mind and respect all involved.)

●● CONTEXTUAL CONTACT (Clan

Coterie Merit): Nosferatu Kindred often know more about their contacts than the contacts themselves, being able to leverage niche skills and hidden talents of their associates and others’. Once per session, a member of a coterie that has a Nosferatu with this Merit can add the highest single Contact rating of another member of the coterie to any one test to recover information (such as recovering deleted data, using social engineering to acquire a login password, or rifling a physical file cabinet). The contact needs to be involved in some way, but the test is allowed to fall outside their usual area of expertise for this test only. A Contact can only be used once per story for this purpose.

Ravnos

The Gangrel’s nomadic nature gets the benefit of the doubt, their Blood being wilder than most. The Ravnos rarely enjoy such benefits, and though the Ravnos can be found almost everywhere, thriving in any environment, the more conservative Kindred social structures often regard them as weeds that need to be plucked from their carefully curated gardens.



A lone Ravnos finds themselves a ready target for clans that look down on their peripatetic tendencies. Although the clan cares little for the opinions of so-called “high clans” who simply don’t understand the realities of Ravnos unlife, many Ravens concede that they may have a point: Some roots are better than no roots. If a Ravnos wants to survive, there need to be some concessions made. What better way to develop those roots than among members of a coterie? Coterie represent safety in numbers, after all.

When it comes to coterie, the Ravnos’ itinerant nature has the potential to make them boon members. They know the best places to lie low in a domain, having discovered them while evading their doom, and are skilled at discerning secrets, whether through subservient animals or inveigled mortals. These secrets can then be used to the advantage of the coterie. Rogues keep their ears to the ground, often hearing of threats long before they garner the

notice of more prominent and therefore powerful. Whatever other clans may think of the Ravnos, they often have the ability to come through in the clutch just as it's needed.

Almost like they planned it that way.

●●● CRYPTOLECT (Clan Coterie Merit):

Being forever on the move means having to find new ways to communicate with allies. Using coded language, onomatopoeia, and gestures, this Merit provides the Ravnos and their coterie with their own pidgin for the express purposes of communicating with each other — practically no one outside the coterie understands it, short of expert surveillance. The coterie's cryptolect is not eloquent or robust, but can be used to convey high-level concepts quickly and securely, and isn't identifiable as any other language. It also requires face-to-face presence to function, as its gestures and signs diminish when observed over phone or video calls. Leaving the coterie or losing its Ravnos member means the Kindred are no longer up-to-date on the cryptolect and can't use it to communicate subsequently.

Toreador

If it's exclusive access to the inner circles of power or the dangerous proximity to fame you seek, look no further than the Toreador. The Divas have the knack for homing in on the desires of others and turning them to their own gain. While the Ventrue like to brag about their successes and pedigree, the Toreador watch from afar with an air of smug satisfaction. Sometimes, it is better to show and not tell.

Few understand the social needs of Kindred more than the self-styled doyennes of Kindred culture. The clan boasts of invite-only salons whose guest list may as well read as a who's who. Connected at every level of society, from the perennially popular to the brightest rising stars among the neonates, they can put you into contact with whomever you desire. Their reach also extends outside of Kindred society, and into the mortal world. Ever want to meet your idol or get a taste of their blood? A Diva can arrange that. All you have to do is model for a sculpture or indulge in a night of passion. Such

a small price to pay for doors to be opened.

For the Toreador, *les petit salons*, as some are fond of calling coteries, are a regular part of their existence. They are tiny but extremely valuable communities in which the Clan of the Rose may gain new artistic insight or reignite a waning inspiration, but also to continue to further their own personal network. Everyone wishes they were a Toreador, but in lieu of having the Blood, having a Toreador in your coterie often does the trick. The more important the Diva is to a domain, the better. It's easier to get things done when one can bend the ear of those with high status and offer the coterie's luster to them in return. If one can handle the slings and arrows of Kindred social fortune and indulge the Divas' fits of pique, one will find a strong ally with all the connections they could ever need.

● **ALL ACCESS (Clan Coterie Merit):** Whether it's the premiere of a film by a budding auteur, a fundraising gala for an aspiring politico, or the dive bar that suddenly has a dress code because it doesn't like the looks of you, you know how to get yourself in — even without an actual invitation. Once per game session, when a coterie is faced with a barrier to enter a mortal event or facility, they can get past the bouncers or security guards by being on the guest list or having a connection to whatever passes for owner or patron. This applies only to situations with some kind of door staff or guest list; it doesn't circumvent security systems, mystical wards, or the like, and the Storyteller is of course free to block entry if this would somehow short-circuit a story (but should then provide the players with a juicy clue instead).

Tremere

It is difficult to say whether a coterie is fortunate or cursed to have a Tremere in its ranks. Many Kindred look upon the Usurpers as being more arrogant than they have any right to be, and the Tremere in return see their cunning and ruthlessness in their pursuit of knowledge as an advantage that the other clans tend to dismiss. The Tremere know what they bring to Kindred society: knowledge and true

mastery of certain mystic secrets.

Blood Sorcery is perhaps the most potent of advantages to which the Tremere have access that lend well to their inclusion in coteries. Second is their ability to quickly adapt to changing situations, using their keen minds to implement solutions to the obstacles they may encounter. There is one thing that is certain: When you have a Tremere in your coterie, you probably have meticulous accounting, planning, and resource management on your side.

The Tremere see the value in having connections to these loose associations of “like-minded” Kindred. One doesn’t think of the Usurpers as especially adept in social matters, but their occult networks offer another way to attain knowledge, whether through mutual exchange or carefully conducted experiments that their peers are unaware of — but that may nonetheless yield a timely edge.

●● **MULTI-LEVEL LOREKEEPING (Clan Coterie Merit):** Despite the Tremere reputation for jealously hoarding occult knowledge, many vestiges of the notorious Pyramid actually facilitate the sharing of such among scholars of the forbidden. Once per game session, a single Kindred in a coterie with a Tremere who has this Merit can use a Loresheet Advantage that someone else in the coterie possess, including clan-specific Loresheets, at the Storyteller’s discretion. This additional Loresheet Advantage is usable only for the game session, and any knowledge supposed by the Loresheet Advantage is not retained thereafter by the borrower.

Tzimisce

The Tzimisce are an intimidating force for any social group, in no small part due to their demeanor. Most Dragons would regard the coterie as *theirs* much as they would consider an estate or household as their own. Whether when claiming six blocks as inviolate domain or executing takeover of a mortal *zaibatsu*, relating to a world outpacing them can pose a significant hindrance. A Tzimisce may, for instance, see little wrong with controlling the minds of a score of mortals and may even believe that this is an act of “subtlety” on account of having left no

bodies in their wake. Of course, the social dynamics of most coteries operate on a far less vertical model, but even so, many Kindred may see a value in feeding the Tzimisce’s ego.

Individual vampires of Tzimisce frequently consider themselves the most important of all Kindred, and though they may observe delicate and fraught hospitalities as a courtesy to their fellows, this is often a somewhat obvious facade. Dragons can nurse grudges against other Tzimisce with enough vitriol to put a Toreador vendetta to shame.

More often, Tzimisce join coteries with members of other clans. Even though the Voivodes may



presume a certain superiority over their colleagues, this does not preclude affection, as peculiar a form as it may take. The Tzimisce perspective is broad, and they may view coterie-mates as fellows, rivals, compatriots, attendants, or even vassals under their care. For some Dragons, coteries are a source of status: something to be hoarded, cultivated, and ultimately used as a badge of honour. This anachronistic perspective affords value to the recognition and prestige of having an entourage and ultimately being responsible for them, as an Old World lord might.

The coterie themselves have every reason to count a Tzimisce among them. After all, being part of a Tzimisce's cadre means that you are under their protection, as the custom of hospitality (or the notion of ownership...) demands. For coterie of an especially strong stomach, the powers that a Tzimisce can wield are often enough to support claims of territory. With their affinity for manipulating corporeal forms, a Tzimisce is often equally capable in the Horrid Form as an aesthetic virtuoso, reshaping coterie-mates into paragons of physical beauty.

●● OLD-WORLD HOSPITALITY (Clan

Coterie Merit): Enter freely and of your own will. At the beginning of a session, any members of the coterie who stayed at the Tzimisce's haven when the previous session concluded restore an additional Superficial Willpower damage.

Ventru

Those who hold the keys to the kingdom seek ever to extend their control, and if the Kindred of the Clan of Kings desire one thing in common, it is the ability to derive more power from their *existing* power capital. Financial, political, governmental — they cultivate a facility in every source of worldly power imaginable, making them the ally everyone wants, but the price of doing business with them is too costly for the Blood of many. It may be difficult for Kindred of other clans to find common ground with the Ventru without feeling that they're competitors or, worse, obstacles.

Coterie that have at least one Blue Blood among them quickly learn what the phrase "proximity

to power" means. The connections an ambitious Ventru cultivates are often their own reward for a Ventru's coterie-mates, whether in the form of talented and ambitious retainers, well-connected allies, or the luxuries of extensive resources. Need to lock down an intersection to occlude a Masquerade breach? Foreclose on a rival's haven? Launder money from a dockside deal? A savvy Ventru can do that, and so much more — all you need to do is ask.

Which isn't to say that the Ventru is a magic wand for the coterie's temporal problem-solving. One does not cultivate a Clan of Kings, carefully building networks spanning centuries with ghouls, willing mortals, and neonates acting as their eyes and ears at every level of world government and aristocracy, by running errands for those less capable than oneself. God created ghouls and mortals to do the scutwork, after all. The premise of a Ventru's participation in a coterie is to occupy a position of value, and if that Blue Blood ends up developing the coterie into a willing subsidiary of Ventru, Inc., well, the coterie should have piped up earlier if it had a problem with the value proposition.

●● KINDRED LEGACIES (Clan Coterie

Merit): The Ventru understand that a vampire's legacy carries with it an accounting of the deeds of their progenitors. For some Blue Bloods, this emerges via written histories while others may have certain sires or scholars among their acquaintances. However it manifests, once per session, a member of the coterie with a Ventru who has this Merit may ask the Storyteller to reveal a piece of relevant information about the history of a single vampire with whom they've come in contact. This could be something specific, such as "the Ministry club owner smuggled fugitive Anarchs out of town after an uprising in LA," or more mysterious such as "the allegations levied against that Kindred's great-grand sire having committed diablerie were untrue, but his childe still carries the shame to this night."

Part III:

AT THE MERCY OF THE DAMNED



Why Play a Mortal?

The world belongs to the living.

Consider what motivates a mortal to interact with vampires. The relationship between mortals and Kindred may be antagonistic, but not exclusively so, though rarely is it equitable. A mortal has inarguable advantages — anything from meeting a genuine friend, tasting a freshly brewed cup of coffee, or watching the sun set and rise with their own eyes. For a player or Storyteller, placing a focus on mortal characters can emphasize the personal horror of **Vampire**.

Mortals have access to the resources of a society built by themselves and for their own use. The modern world isn't designed for vampires, it's designed for mortals (particularly those of considerable wealth), and vampires can at best avail themselves of only certain elements of it. Maintaining the Masquerade has become difficult as society's gov-

ernments and corporations have increased surveillance of the general populace. Any Kindred hoping to evade the *lex talionis* and escape to Melbourne by sleeping in a coffin aboard an airplane is in for a rather unfortunate awakening when airport security notices a mismatch between the cargo scan and the plane's manifest.

The growth of online social media platforms has allowed mortals to connect like never before, with no shortage of anonymous communities where mortals have turned an eye to monitoring undead activity in local areas. In the last two years alone, numerous Kindred have been confirmed destroyed by organized groups of mortals, many operating as vigilante “neighborhood watch” groups, but others as collateral damage for more noxious mortal activities. The cracks in the Masquerade have grown wider in the last decade, and humanity's belligerent alienation from itself has hastened the process.

Imbalance

Unlike with vampires, who spend their nights in a perpetual state of conflict against one another, the struggle of the regular mortal is one of functioning within their own society. Prevailing economics force mortals to compete for enough money to live comfortably. The struggle to make it through a 40-hour week at the local call center in order to earn enough money to pay for rent and medical bills is forgotten by vampires, who can ultimately drag any poor soul off a street and drink from them if desperation strikes.

Kindred tend not to think about how being the victim of the Kiss or being subjected to Dominate may impact a mortal — more than a few former security guards, boardroom executives, medical professionals and accounting clerks have lost their jobs, not to mention their mental health, as a result of a vampire's careless use of their supernatural gifts. The cumulative nature of society's need for people to remain in work can quickly lead to serious repercussions for mortals. Many Americans have unreliable health care, therefore losing their job can lead to potentially fatal results for them or their loved ones. Few managers will accept "I don't remember who those guys who came into the office last night were" as an excuse from their employees.

Dangerous Attraction

Many Kindred, whether through callousness or naiveté, regard mortals as little more than food, innately less than themselves. This pervasive mindset is dangerous, but it is not one-sided. Humanity shares a curious fascination with vampires, particularly in popular culture. For many, vampires represent a certain allure — a deadly supernatural threat equally predatory and seductive.

Some Kindred even forget that the Damned rely on mortals for progeny, and care little for extending grace or civility to the living much as mortals often view farm animals raised for slaughter. Farm animals, however, pose little threat to mortals, though the same cannot be said for the relationship between mortals and vampires. Kindred learned well

during the first Inquisition the dangers that mortals could pose to vampires, a lesson learned so well that it resulted in the Tradition of the Masquerade. A lesson reinforced by the success of the Second Inquisition tonight.... Like a lion that has just found itself impaled on a buffalo's horn, the predator rarely expects the prey to fight back.

Meanwhile, a more insidious compulsion sometimes draws many mortals toward the Kindred. Pop culture is replete with seductive images of vampires, emphasising the sensuality of their bloodlust, the sleekness of their bodies, and the temptation to relinquish one's fears and anxieties to their one-sided intimacies. Former victims of a vampire's hunger may understand that this is a mere honey trap, though they do so with knowledge of just how seductive a vampire's illusion of immortality can be.

When a vampire draws a mortal into a relationship with them, it is often one-sided. A vampire desires things the mortal can provide, from blood to having agents who can operate in daylight hours, to greater complexities like access to political or societal structures that don't function with vampire concerns in mind. Kindred often use this as a means to gain power over others, and it's not uncommon for a vampire to return this loyalty, whether honestly or duplicitously. Such benevolence could be a gift of wealth, providing luxurious lodgings, or even a risky glimpse into the reality of the Kindred's truth.

For many mortals, this flirtation with the Damned is a heady thrill, an excitement intrinsic in being close to danger. The exhilaration of being able to interact with the world where these deathless beings struggle is a high not many mortals will ever know is possible, much less experience, and for those who, it may take on the characteristics of a rewarding relationship, if not genuine love, and a vampire may feel genuine affection for a mortal who moves in their wake.

But in the end, the vampire is almost certainly the one who decides the terms of the relationship.

Archetypes

Suspicious Investigator

You don't remember exactly what happened. One minute you were filing your report at the station, filling out forms on a bizarre assault case, then the next thing you knew you were home. You're pretty sure somebody came into the office and spoke to you. Can't quite remember what it was about, but you think they said to forget about something. The next day, the chief called you into her office and asked about missing files. Now you're on unpaid leave. Whoever did it didn't realize that they were tangling with a department veteran. You're on the trail now. You're certain it's connected to the new nightclub in town, and if you can just speak to the owner, you'll have all the info you need.

Troubled Partner

Your partner hasn't been the same since July. He definitely looks unhealthy, much paler than usual. You've been worried — there's a pandemic happening and he hasn't been eating properly. In fact, you don't know when the last time he ate a full meal was. So, last weekend you told him you want to know what's really going on, he either tells you the truth or you're walking out the door. And he laid it out for you, the whole truth. You still don't quite believe it, and you definitely don't buy that he's... shit, even just thinking the "v-word" sounds outlandish. Even so, ever since he told you, it's like he's vanished off the face of the Earth. But now, every few nights, you're sure you catch sight of someone watching you, and they vanish when you turn your full attention to them.

Lost Hopeful

When you first joined the family, you were amazed how easy it all sounded. Live in a big house, don't worry about money or taxes or anything. All you had to think about was *her*: how to please her, how many ways to love her, how she wanted you to look. You're part of her family now, and that's just fine. On nights when things are fortunate, you might be

chosen to make the offering. The intimacy of her touch, her kiss on your neck, it leaves you eager for the next night. But still, there's more to strive for. You share the house with many of your brothers and sisters, but only one of you can be First. You are ashamed to admit it, but you're envious of the First, the mistress' chosen, for they enjoy the full glory of your mistress' attention. Maybe soon you'll be chosen to be First as well, if you are loyal enough. Or maybe there's another mistress who can see your true worth.

"Pizza" Delivery

You had another phone call last night. Same place as before, Pier 17. Same delivery as before, none of your fucking business. A few wooden crates marked with Cyrillic letters, you make the delivery, and, when the money changes hands, you kick a little up to the guy at the other end of the line. You only know him as Seb, but you know from his accent that he's not from around here. You don't know where he gets the goods. That's his business. All you know is that he sure calls you a lot. Pay's worth it, though. But there's always a way to sweeten the deal. Like tonight. Tonight you're bringing a few friends. When Seb shows up, you're going to have words, see about keeping a little more of the cut for yourself.

The Role of Mortals

The following rules allow players to create mortal characters for participation as part of the troupe (if not the coterie proper...). This set of options allows for a player to explore the relationship that a vampire holds with mortal kin or colleagues and, perhaps, even their own Touchstones.

Portraying a Touchstone

Touchstones represent vampires' immediate connections to Humanity, both as a game trait and as a society. As such, it can be very rewarding to explore what the mortal gets out of this arrangement (if they're even aware of what it represents to the vampire in the first place).

The first question a player who is interested in this form of play should ask is if their player's character is aware of their nature as a Touchstone. (Remember, though, that the character doesn't know about *rules* like Touchstones.) Do they know the vampire for what that vampire is? Some Kindred opt to hide their presence, heeding mortal Touchstones from afar. A scarred Nosferatu, for instance, might lurk outside a window to check in on their former fiancé.

Alternatively, the vampire may choose to try to conceal their supernatural nature: A Ventrue may opt to retain her seat as a board member simply to be close to her aging father. This carries with it an additional challenge, in that the mortal will doubtless come to notice that time refuses to age the vampire.

How does the mortal feel? Has their loved one vanished and been replaced with some monstrous creature that wears their face? Or if they are simply watched from afar, does the Touchstone feel haunted, stripped of their value, or dehumanized? Does the love that the vampire attempts to express come across instead as artificial or disturbing, or even fill their mortal beloved with fear that they are now perceived through the senses of the Beast?

Cultivating the Embrace

One other potent theme suited for playing a mortal character is with an eye toward becoming a vampire. A troupe may establish a few sessions of its chronicle to act as a Prelude to each of the characters' Embrace, or as part of Session Zero (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 135 and 138). Players' characters may be Embraced together, or separately over the duration of the chronicle or Prelude.

Alternatively, a player may wish their character to be the childe of an existing player's character. Doing so allows for the players to establish a relationship organically between their characters. This may be the natural culmination of a Kindred desperately trying to hold onto the vestiges of their days as a mortal, or in a doomed attempt to maintain a lover's affection.

Creating a Mortal Character

The process of creating a mortal character is very similar to that of creating a vampire, with a few significant differences.

Character Concept

Defining your character's core concept is important and takes the same form as it does for vampire characters as described in **Vampire: The Masquerade**. As with Kindred, the core concept is the summary of who the character is, and likely implies motivations and calls to action. Consider if the character is aware of the existence of vampires or not. Some concepts for a mortal character include:

- A son who believes his father was killed by a vampire and is driven by revenge
- A grieving spouse tracking down her missing partner
- A human trafficker who has no idea what he is dealing with
- Former security guard
- Unsuspecting college student
- Adrenaline junkie
- Tech-savvy hacktivist
- Blood doll who gets off on being fed from

Choose your Ambition and Desire as normal.

Clan and Sire

Mortals do not begin play with a clan or sire (though they can gain them if they are Embraced during gameplay or downtime).

Set Your Attributes

Before deciding which dots go where, consider your character concept and what they are best at, what is their weakest aspect, and where they are mostly competent.



Best Attribute	4 Dots
Three Attributes	3 Dots
Four Attributes	2 Dots
Worst Attribute	1 Dot

Now derive two more Traits from your Attributes as follows:

- Add three to your Stamina to derive your Health.
- Add your Resolve to your Composure to derive your Willpower.

Choose Your Skills

Think about your character concept and history to formulate the set of skills that make sense with how your character lives their life. Are they a well-rounded executive? Dabbling student? Street-savvy dilettante?

Mortals use the quick skill assignment method. That is:

JACK OF ALL TRADES: One Skill at 3; eight Skills at 2; ten Skills at 1

BALANCED: Three Skills at 3; five Skills at 2; seven Skills at 1

SPECIALIST: One Skill at 4; three Skills at 3; three Skills at 2; three Skills at 1

Add free specialties to Academics, Craft, Performance, and Science Skills. Take one more free specialty. Specialties can be applied only to skills with at least one level.

Disciplines and Predator Type

Mortals are not able to use Disciplines (but see Ghouls, below), nor does the Predator Type Trait apply to them.

Advantages

Mortals take 7 points of Advantages and 2 points of Flaws. They may not spend any points on Kindred-exclusive or ghoul-exclusive Advantages or Flaws, though some Merits and Flaws are available only to mortals.

Mortals may not spend points in the following Advantages; Archaic, Domain, Feeding, Herd, Mythic, Status, or Thin-Blooded. Mortals surely

view their “Haven” in a manner that’s markedly different from how vampires do, but it does remain available to them.

Players who wish to use Kindred-exclusive Loresheets for their mortal characters may not necessarily gain any mechanical benefits from doing so, and are encouraged to work with their Storyteller to ensure that mortals with vampire-specific Loresheet knowledge suits the chronicle.

Convictions & Touchstones

Select one to three Convictions and the same number of Touchstones (see *Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 172-173). Consider the character’s core concept and personal values when selecting Touchstones.

Mortals do not regard Touchstones in the same manner as vampires do and, because they still live among mortal society, often have more immediate options in who they can designate as Touchstones. Good choices include family and friends, but also professional contacts, aspirational figures, unresolved relationship partners, or even a celebrity — more than one mortal could cite a parasocial relationship with a talented actress, for example.

Mortals start with Humanity at 7.

MORTALS, GHOULS, AND HUMANITY

In a *Vampire: The Masquerade* story, keeping the Beast at bay and the ethical accountability for one’s actions is one of the primary themes of the game. For this reason, mortals and ghouls also keep track of their Humanity scores in this context, even though what Humanity actually represents is the Kindred’s desire to pretend that they remain human, as a coping mechanism for what they’ve become.

In a larger sense, mortals don’t actually have a Humanity score. Since they are human, they don’t have to pretend to be human. In other *World of Darkness* games with different thematic focuses, “normal humans” will have different ethical contexts — you won’t necessarily need to carry over the Humanity Trait into a different game.

Health

Mortals suffer damage with greater severity than vampires, and cannot use their blood to mend injury. Mortals receive Superficial damage from blunt force trauma: punching, falling, and so on. Heavy force trauma, such as being struck with a baton, baseball bat or run over by a car deal Aggravated damage, as does penetrating, cutting, or piercing damage such as that from knives and bullets. Mortals do not sustain Aggravated damage from sunlight, but do receive it from other sources that indicate such (fire, Feral Weapons, etc.).

Recovering Superficial and Aggravated Health damage is detailed on p. 127 of **Vampire: The Masquerade**.

Health damage for mortals also has a few additional considerations.

During a session, one point of Superficial health damage takes four days of rest to recover. (This is in addition to the Health levels recovered at the start of the session.) The rest may occur during downtime, but it is cumulative. For example, healing 3 Superficial health damage takes 12 days. Unless the individual is hospitalized, one Aggravated health damage takes three weeks of rest to recover, using the same method. These are general downtime-elapsing guidelines that the Storyteller can adjust, but remember that mortals are inherently more fragile than vampires.

This method of healing does not account for long-term scarring or life-changing injuries. The Storyteller may declare that any notable injury may leave a scar or other permanent changes to the mortal's body, such as by sustaining great damage from a single source, or withstanding one's last tracker box of health damage. Such injuries could range from a disfigurement to bone or joint damage. In extreme cases, recovering from damage might result in the loss of one point from a Physical Attribute trait of the Storyteller's choice. This should never feel arbitrary or punitive; again, mortals are inherently less resilient than vampires, and Trait loss should come as a result of great danger or sacrifice.

Willpower

Recovering from Superficial and Aggravated Willpower damage is detailed on p. 127 of **Vampire: The Masquerade**.

Mortals may spend one point of Willpower to ignore being Impaired or other Health-related penalties for one turn. This represents the human will to persevere in the face of adversity, tragedy, or ruinous physical trauma. Perhaps best described as "the human spirit," this motivation drives the living to accomplishment. Perhaps in the face of the knowledge of their finite existence, the light that burns half as long burns more brightly.

Humanity

Mortals begin play with a Humanity value of 7.

Loss of Humanity is as perilous for mortals as it is for vampires, but unlike vampires, mortals have no Beast. Without an internal personification of their nature upon which to levy blame for their baser acts, mortals have to reconcile their eroding Humanity with their own choices.

Humanity loss can be expressed in many ways. Mortals who have chosen to undertake actions that lead to Humanity degeneration sometimes blame their actions on external forces. Indeed, blaming others for one's own actions may be what caused Humanity loss in the first place. This may take the form of an outside group that the individual feels derision for; some might blame all people of a certain gender for their own dissatisfaction, hold all people of a certain income bracket as less deserving of anything but disdain, or turn their aggression toward a specific individual as a target for abuse. Or eroding Humanity may lead the individual to become more distant from others, unable (or unwilling...) to empathize with their fellows. Selfishness, cruelty, the inability to relate to others: All of these attitudes represent a dwindling connection to what it means to be human.

When portraying a mortal character who has fallen to Humanity 3 or less, the player and Storyteller should agree upon a Compulsion that represents the character's slide into selfishness. This

Compulsion can be one of the Compulsions from **Vampire: The Masquerade** or can be an original expression, but the result is the same: Whenever the player attempts an action that yields a total failure, the Compulsion comes to the fore. (See **Vampire: The Masquerade** p. 208 for more on Compulsions.) Note, too, that Willpower cannot be used to allay a Compulsion — the aberrant behavior very quickly comes to dominate the personality of the mortal whose Humanity has so significantly degraded.

When a mortal has no Humanity, they do not succumb to the Beast and do not enter wassail in the way that vampires do. Instead, their Compulsion comes to the fore and thereafter dictates their every choice. For a mortal with zero Humanity, they do not even derive pleasure from pursuing these acts; any positive feeling other than satisfying the Compulsion has long since left them. Upon reaching zero Humanity, that character is no longer playable and control of that character falls to the Storyteller as it does with any other character of the same Humanity score.

Storyteller Options: **High Humanity and Corrupting Embrace**

At the Storyteller's discretion, a mortal may begin play with a Humanity score higher than 7, if that's a reasonable conclusion from the character concept or history. Note that, since they have no Beast, high-Humanity mortals don't enjoy the same systemic benefits that high-Humanity vampires do. Rather, mortals with a high Humanity score often feel compelled to maintain that value for its own sake, or because they feel a higher calling. Players portraying mortals with high Humanity scores obviously want to deal with stories about temptation, redemption, or other themes associated with maintaining a high degree of ethics and compassion.

At the Storyteller's discretion, if a mortal is Embraced, reduce their Humanity by 1. The mortal may feel some amount of their soul turning upon itself, growing foul and demanding attention. Most

Kindred would concede that from the moment of the Embrace, the Beast grows. For the fledgling, the feeling of having lost a vital part of themselves and having it replaced with something inexorable and undeniable will doubtless linger, a sensate reminder of having a part of themselves tainted by vampiric blood. Within them now dwells the Beast, lurking in the recesses of a fledgling's consciousness, gnawing, lustful, and hungry to devour more. In many cases, such things would be played out during a scene in which the Embrace occurs, but if the player doesn't want to focus on those details, the systems can stand in.



Ghouls

Why Play a Ghoul?

In the World of Darkness, the focus of the story often lingers on Kindred, with mortals holding a nominal and transactional focus to the intrigues of those bearing the Curse of Caine and haunted by the Beast. Ghouls, however, allow for a distinct niche for storytelling and engagement that makes them compelling as players' characters in their own right. Occupying the strange space between mortal and Kindred, ghouls offer all of the benefits of being a mortal — ability to function and act during the day, interfacing with the full breadth of mortal society, and the like — with some supernatural benefits granted to them by the Blood of their Kindred domitor.

The word “domitor” is believed to be a perversion of the Latin *dominus* meaning “lord” or “master,” describing the vampire to whom a mortal is bound. Vampires who consider themselves cultured or more refined may prefer more affected terms for the relationship, but, semantics aside, it doesn't change the fundamental truth. One is subservient to the other, with vitae being the tie that binds them to one another.

Most mortals go through life without realizing that danger and power coexist in the shadows, blissfully unaware of what lurks beneath the veneer of normality they experience daily. But the nighttime is when the lines between what is perceived to be reality and the world that lies beneath blur.

Maybe you stumbled upon a vampire feeding on a panhandler in an alleyway, or you were mesmerized by a creature of impossible beauty and magnetism in the club. Whatever was the inciting event that opened your eyes, one thing was certain: You caught just a hint, a glance of something darker, something primal, and you've not been able to get it out of your head since.

In the Half-Light

Just as vampires have an interest in mortals to meet their vital needs, there exist mortals aware of

Kindred society who have just as keen an interest in their undead overlords. This can range from casual curiosity from someone with a passing familiarity with the occult to an all-out obsession that threatens their livelihood and personal relationships. It's one thing to experience the stories of vampires fictionalized in the written word or on the silver screen, but it's a whole other thing when you realize that they actually exist, and that maybe, just maybe, they turn others among the still-living to their monstrous ends.

The degree to which these mortals pursue their interest in Kindred society varies, but it usually results in either becoming part of the vampire's sphere of influence or becoming one of their faithful attendants. In doing so, these mortals have opened themselves up to a whole new world, where danger lurks in around every corner if they are not cautious. Rival Kindred, coteries, and sects clash for supremacy in domains. All of these play a role in their new existence, leading to decisions one thought unthinkable. Choice becomes less about what is right or wrong, but what it takes to survive and navigate the world now thrust upon you, safety being but a distant memory.

Fatal Addiction

All relationships involving Kindred are undoubtedly parasitic, and the relationship between mortals and Kindred is no different. Mortals use other mortals, Kindred use mortals. It's cyclical and perhaps more symbiotic than parasitic, but those are just semantics that ghouls use to justify their reliance on their Kindred masters. They can lie to themselves about having things like “ethics” and “morals,” but when it comes down to it, they're willing to cast those aside for a number of things, such as another hit of vitae, the continued support a vampiric patron offers, and the ability to forego aging without losing the ability to exist without the baggage of the Curse.

Being a ghoul causes complications, certainly. Ghouls are more than an average mortal, arguably comparable in might to some thin-bloods, but far less than Kindred in the eyes of most vampires. A

number of vampires associated with the Anarchs may have a more progressive view of ghouls, but the more palatable rhetoric doesn't change the fact that ghouls and Kindred aren't equals.

Are there individuals who deliberately court danger by moving in the same circles as Kindred, if they've somehow learned about them? Of course, though they likely don't remain an "innocent" bystander to the world of the Damned for long. On the other side of the spectrum are those who through either happenstance or misfortune find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. Or they find themselves at death's door, faced with the possibility of death or being inextricably linked to a vampire. Regardless of the circumstances that brought ghoul and domitor together, this relationship will play an important role in the ghoul's life.

Ghouls also must come to grips with their new reality. They're beholden to creatures who prey on mortals; perhaps their friends, their peers, their community, even their loved ones. It is common for ghouls to act as a sort of gateway to these groups, which their domitor can use as a herd to sustain their existence. Kindred need mortal blood to survive, and ghouls need Kindred blood — a continuous cycle of reliance.

The shroud has been pulled back, and reality is changed.

Ghouls, too, are forever changed.

The Role of Ghouls

The place of a ghoul in Kindred society is best described as liminal. They exist on the outermost fringes of the vampires' world of secrets, never truly recognized for what they bring to it, but play a vital role in its upkeep nonetheless. However, without ghouls to act as their eyes and ears during the daylight hours or being their connection to the modern world, the society of the Damned would begin to break down. While ghouls occupy lower rungs of vampire society than their domitors, and are often even considered disposable, they are also necessary.

Needless to say, the vast majority of ghouls labor under an all-consuming vitae addiction, if they're not outright Blood Bonded.

How a ghoul copes with their existence is entirely up to the player. Just how much has the character bought into this society they now find themselves a part of, whether willingly or forcibly? Some ghouls learn to accept their place as less-than, and even those not under the Bond may develop a twisted love for their Kindred masters, owing to their dependency on vitae and the imbalance power dynamic. Some learn to repress the deeds they have done in the name of gaining some diminished praise or approval in a sort of blissful ignorance. Others find a way to make the most of it, perhaps through careful cultivation of relationships within the society, and transform their place into that of a coveted ally.

The Storyteller should make efforts to ensure that this optional character type can thrive under the chronicle's Tenets if they choose to permit player ghouls. These characters are more than just servants to their Kindred masters. They are wholly realized individuals who have been pulled into a world previously hidden from them, a world where ghouls are equally as complicit (and culpable) in perpetuating monstrous acts alongside their domitors.

Like young generations of vampires, ghouls have familial and other relationship ties that have narrative gravity. Ties that can be used to manipulate or blackmail ghouls can make for a darker turn. Playing a ghoul lends itself to emotionally intense roleplaying, especially when balancing the demands of a domitor and the ghoul's own needs, desires, and responsibilities. There will always be difficult choices to be made, decisions that have long-lasting ramifications: Do you obey your domitor or do you follow your conscience? How many times can you tell a domitor "no" before they decide you are too tiresome to deal with?

These are the situations a ghoul will inevitably find themselves grappling with. The place of the ghoul is a perilous one, walking a fine line between maintaining their own Humanity while serving as thrall to creatures of the night.

Archetypes

Unwitting Subject

They told you it was a medical trial, but the place sure wasn't a hospital and they sure didn't look like doctors. Usual suspects showed up, though, and the money was real. Had you sign stuff, but looking at the guy by the door, lawyers weren't the main thing that scared you. Still, the stuff was potent. Had you up all night, like some high-grade research chemical straight off the Dark Web. Probably was, too. The second time had fewer volunteers, and you all got assigned tasks as well. "For metrics," they said. Weird, but the pay was too good to pass up, not to mention the buzz. The third time they handed the four of you who were left a list of names and instructions. You wonder how many will show up next time.

Cleaning Specialist

Kindred needs are a bloody business, and sometimes the pangs of their monstrous hunger means that a more thorough clean-up is necessary. It is not always as easy as dumping a body wrapped in plastic into some dumpster in a back alley. It can be as involved as erasing a person wholesale from the system, and in the most extreme cases, snipping the loose threads so that evidence cannot be traced back to any one person. At any rate, it's a demanding profession. One that requires a strong stomach, but if push comes to shove at least you have the skills to cover up deaths — or fake one, if need be.

Mnemonic Courier

When something needs to be delivered discreetly and prying eyes kept looking elsewhere, your masters call on you. A life-long courier, graduating from drugs to weapons to near-extinct exotics, you now ply your trade transporting the most volatile merchandise of all: information. Their secrets are safe with you. After all, you never learn them. All you ever remember is the masters' eyes and a queasy sense of falling. At your destination, a word sets your cargo free, flowing from your lips while you sink into the river of unmemory. Whether travelling across town or the world, your masters can rely on

your capability, your discretion, and above all, your ability to remember and then forget.

Maverick

Where others are content to go with the flow and follow every order given to them, you buck every expectation and social trend. It's not that you're a contrarian, but rather that you possess a strong sense of self that's difficult to circumvent, and mundane attempts to manipulate you tend to fall flat. There is a give and take in your relationship: While your domitor didn't quite know what they were getting with you, your ardent self-advocacy and frankness has been the talk of the domain ever since. While it is important to you to stay in your domitor's good graces, you also have a life outside of them — wholly separate, and you would prefer it to stay that way.

Creating a Ghoul Character

Character Concept

Like their vampiric counterparts, character concepts for ghouls are limited only by your imagination. Ghouls can come from all walks of life, from medical professionals to social media influencers to runaways living on the fringes of society.

Ghouls also can be chosen for any reason that suits their domitor. Ventrue may create ghouls from those closely aligned with their financial or political goals, but no one too far up the corporate ladder because when the time comes to dispose of them, the Blue Blood probably doesn't want them to be missed.

Some young Kindred detest the practice of creating ghouls but even they understand its utility. These are more likely to work with their ghoul in something approaching an equitable fashion. A few, in their naiveté, find themselves assisting so-called "independent ghouls" (see p. 55), which rarely ends well for an altruistic neonate.



A core character concept for your ghoul should include a basic identity (example: an unassuming librarian or a workers' rights activist), general disposition toward the world (and their domitor), and an ambition that drives them to do what they do. Then spend some time considering the following questions to help further flesh your ghoul out:

- Are you even aware of what you are?
- Did you drink "from the tap," or did you become a ghoul more innocuously?
- What are your feelings toward your new "normal?"
- Did you become a ghoul willingly or was the choice made for you?

Keep in mind that though a ghoul depends upon their domitor (unless circumstances liberate them...), they still have their own drives, goals, thoughts, and motivations. Playing a ghoul whose domitor is a player's character or Storyteller character requires ongoing consideration regarding consent (See p. 57).

Ghouls do not have a Beast in the same sense that vampires do, but they still have Humanity scores, and actions they take, whether it be in service to their domitor or otherwise, can negatively affect their Humanity. The downward spiral for mortals and ghouls is not constrained by being lost to the Beast. And while the Beast is not a personified, inchoate monster for a ghoul, ghouls nonetheless have described the drive for vitae as everything from a dependency to an addiction to a relentless, consuming need that informs everything they do, even if it isn't figuratively whispering in their ear.

Choose your Ambition and Desire as normal.

Set Your Attributes

Before deciding which dots go where, consider your character concept and what the character is best at, what they are moderate at, and what is their weakest aspect.

Best Attribute	4 Dots
Three Attributes	3 Dots
Four Attributes	2 Dots
Worst Attribute	1 Dot

Now derive two more Traits from your Attributes as follows:

- Add three to your Stamina to derive your Health.
- Add your Resolve to your Composure to derive your Willpower.

Choose Your Skills

Skills speak to a character's everyday life, what they know, how they perform certain actions, or even how they react to situations as they arise. A ghoul may have skills that their domitor lacks, such as Streetwise or Technology, or ones they have gained through education, a professional career, or through significant life events. It is wise to consider Skills as part of the reason your domitor chose you, Skills relevant to your current profession, or that display some manner of personal interest. You are (probably) not a mindless drone — you are someone's hand-picked attaché.

As well, consider for a moment what Skills represent in the character's life story. Did they learn about Politics during a summer when they were part of a grassroots canvassing campaign? Are they part of an emergency response team, increasing their knowledge of Medicine along the way? Being a top-notch brawler or expert marksman may help in combat situations, but without a rationale to accompany having those skills, it doesn't offer quite the same vitality into your character. Consider hobbies and after-hours activities they may participate in that manifest as low-level Skills.

You can choose your Skills on your own: Use the Sample Professions Package (see *Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 145), or use the Quick Skills Assignment method (see *Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 147).

Disciplines and Predator Type

Upon becoming a ghoul, the character gains a level-1 Discipline power in a Discipline possessed by their domitor. Ghouls can purchase additional level-1 powers at the cost of 10 experience points each, but they must all belong to Disciplines possessed by their domitor. (The powers themselves do not need to be possessed by the domitor, however.)

Ghouls can never purchase actual dots in Disciplines, but always count as having a single dot for the purpose of using Discipline powers. (In rare cases this rating can increase temporarily, but only from using external augmentation such as Draughts.)

Ghouls are not vampires and do not have a Predator Type.

Advantages

Ghouls take 7 points of Advantages and 2 points of Flaws. They may not spend any points on Kindred-exclusive Advantages or Flaws, though they can generally use the same Merits and Flaws as mortals.

Like mortals, ghouls may not spend points in the following Advantages; Domain, Feeding, Herd, or Thin-Blooded. As with mortals, Haven isn't the same concept for a ghoul as for a vampire, but the Background remains available to them, with some amount of interpretation. Ghouls are not restricted from taking the Status Background, though this Status almost certainly derives at least partially from the esteem of their domitor. In fact, certain ghouls may be notorious or even infamous among the Damned.

Regarding Loresheets, the same considerations apply for ghouls as for mortals, above. See p. 46 for more information, and consult with the Storyteller for what's appropriate to the chronicle.

Convictions & Touchstones

Convictions and Touchstones are treated the same for ghouls as for mortals, and ghouls should choose one to three of each. See p. 46, above, for more information.

Ghouls start play with Humanity at 7.

Health

Ghouls are stronger and more resilient than their mortal counterparts, and depending on their domitor's clan and Disciplines, they can call upon feats of strength, hardiness, and speed that exceed mortal limitations.

In general, treat ghouls the same way as mortals in terms of healing and recovery, with a few notable exceptions.

Ghouls can heal all damage done to them at double the rate of mortals with one exception: fire. Bodies, even those augmented by vitae, still require a certain amount of downtime to heal burns.

It bears repeating that ghouls can use powers above the first level due to other circumstances, such as Draught of Elegance, through Thin-Blood Alchemy, or other means, but in doing so they take 1 point of Aggravated damage as opposed to making a Rouse Check.

Special Situations

Life is unpredictable, and it's no different for a ghoul. Ghouls may find themselves in situations that can change the trajectory of their development and how they interact with other characters.

Changing Domitors

The bond between ghoul and domitor runs deep, with ghouls experiencing a degree of emotional and psychological dependence in addition to their need for vitae. It is this type of relationship that makes the very notion of changing domitors an unwelcome event among ghouls.

Sometimes a change in domitor is a necessity, such as when the domitor goes into torpor. At that time, a domitor might "dismiss" their ghoul from service — which doesn't change the ghoul's dependency on the Blood. Indeed, this may result in the domitor with an increasingly desperate thrall standing vigil over them in their unnatural sleep. Most ghouls would rather not face the rapid onset of age and so they may find themselves placed into the service of a domitor's confidante or even at the general disposal of their domitor's coterie or clan. It's still an emotional event, but it at least allows for an easier transition on part of the ghoul, and small comforts are still comforts, as most ghouls are not so fortunate when they are faced with the predicament of changing domitors.

History has seen ghouls who have been bartered, traded, and lost in gambling wagers. Others have been stolen, seduced, or even taken as spoils of war between the sects. Where once you were the loyal ghoul of a prestigious domitor, you may find

yourself handed over to a social pariah. Worse still is the ghoul who has had to experience the death of a domitor and must choose between following their master into death or continuing in the service of someone else. Keep these thoughts in mind and explore also what this change means and represents to the character — the Blood Bond is powerful and evokes emotions that weigh on such decisions.

What Happens If a Ghoul is Embraced?

So, you decided to get Embraced. Well, actually, the choice may have been made for you by a desperate domitor. Whichever way that cookie crumbled, a few new details now apply to your erstwhile ghoul's situation. (Assuming, of course, that your would-be sire isn't thin-blooded... and if she is, hope that you're one of the thin-blooded Embraces that doesn't fail outright.)

- Ghoul-specific Advantages (both Merits and Flaws) are lost, with the points refunded to buy new Advantages for the character agreed upon by the Storyteller. At the Storyteller's discretion, a former ghoul can maintain ghoul-specific Advantages.
- The fledgling gains Generation dependent on the Generation of your sire. Blood Potency starts at the lowest value of that Generation's bracket. See the Generation and Blood Potency table on p. 214 of **Vampire: The Masquerade**.
- Humanity score remains the same as the ghoul's at the time of the Embrace.

Independent Ghouls

Many ghouls, whether willing or coerced, manage to adapt to whatever relationship exists with their domitor. In most cases, in return for assistance with functions that the Kindred cannot attend to (or be bothered with), ghouls gain some amount of protection, attention, and the blood that sustains their existence.

Such a lifestyle isn't for everyone, and some ghouls acknowledge no domitor, avoid blood bonds, and effectively do favors in return for vitae. Or they just straight-up steal it.

These so-called Independent Ghouls are considered loose cannons proximate to Kindred society,

with more than one unwitting neonate or foolish ancilla learning a hard lesson by dealing with them. Many Camarilla Kindred consider Independent Ghouls to be unacceptable, in that they're a threat to carefully constructed social hierarchies, after all. Many Anarchs, however, see these mercenary individuals as worthy of respect — they managed to hoodwink a lick and turn the power dynamic around. Even an appreciative Anarch probably wouldn't go so far as to *trust* an independent ghoul, though.

It's not an easy existence and the wise independent ghoul cultivates a network of Contacts, Allies, and Influences, not to mention a great deal of Wits and Resolve to stay one step ahead. Independent ghouls must seek out vitae to maintain their state, and the savvy ones know to imbibe inert blood rather than directly from a domitor, lest they risk a Blood Bond to a different "patron." If they become too desperate, they'll find themselves thrall to the very bond they attempted to circumvent.

Of course, this sort of attitude makes these already mistrusted ghouls an even bigger threat: Predators do not like being targeted by what they see as their prey, or those who should be servile instead of independent.

Mortals and Ghoul Characters in Variant Chronicles

While **Vampire: The Masquerade** is a game about vampires, much can be gained from stories in which the players aren't themselves vampires, at least to begin with. It's possible to experience the horrors of undeath from outside, as servants, agents, or potential victims. What follows are examples of the ways mortals or somewhat-mortals can be used to great effect in a chronicle.

The All-Mortal Chronicle

Have every player create a mortal character, with the aim to have them Embraced at some point (turning the chronicle into a one about vampires) or set them



against the undead. Or both. For many new players, diving head-first into the World of Darkness and the Storyteller System is challenging enough without also having to learn the ins and outs of being a conspiratorial nocturnal leech. Likewise, experienced players often relish a change of perspective, allowing them to see the World of Darkness in a new proverbial light.

Ghouls, Ghouls, Ghouls

The misadventures of a retinue of ghouls lends itself extremely well to chronicle play. Unlike many vampires, ghouls are either expected to serve, or (if independent) have a clear objective with which to occupy their day-to-day activities. Whether as specialists set to unsavory purposes by an undead master dangling the carrot of eternity ahead of them, or as a motley group of servitude survivors struggling with a fatal addiction, their days and nights will never be dull.

Mixed Mortalities

Power dynamics is the name of the game when mortals (including ghouls) and vampires share a table. Make sure players understand the lopsided strength disparities and swinging spotlight distribution that can result from this. During the night, the vampires reign supreme, with mortals likely at their beck and call, while daylight sees the vampires' players idle for long periods of time while their unives hinge on the actions of the mortals. Make sure that everyone agrees to this kind of setup before embarking on it and that all participants adhere to the practices of considerate play (see below).

Troupe-Style Play

In this form of chronicle, each player creates at least one mortal or ghoul character in addition to their vampire. These characters represent retainers, allies, or the associates of the other players or the coterie as a whole. When one player takes on the role of their vampire character, the other players assume control of these associates, changing it up on a session-by-session basis. This works best for groups in which the vampire characters are less hands-on and work

toward private agendas — sometimes even against each other — trusting the mortal characters to dirty their hands on the vampires' behalf. It also allows players more license to “play to lose” as they can afford to dramatically sacrifice a character without completely losing their tether to the story.

Mortals, Ghouls, and Player Consent

Consent is paramount when players portray characters with intimate connections to another player's character. Portraying a mortal with an intimate connection to another player's character requires a significant amount of collaboration between both players, and the acknowledgement of the Storyteller. For more information on considerate play, see Appendix III of *Vampire: The Masquerade*.

Mortals

Especially when the Kindred are involved, the nature of relationships between vampires and mortals isn't one that fairly represents both sides' interests. The relationship between such players requires both consent and understanding of one another's emotional boundaries. This implies an intimacy that is best suited for consenting players willing to respect each other's boundaries and know when to back off if the interactions become too intense.

Some of the themes that arise from playing a Touchstone may include betrayal, stalking, obsession, and other potentially traumatic experiences. Characters who are being groomed for the Embrace raise similar questions of trauma and intensity. At no point should a *player* be surprised by an in-game relationship with the potential for an emotional intensity to which they didn't agree beforehand. And even if the player did agree beforehand, they have the right to revoke consent at any time if the experience isn't something they enjoy.

A vampire may inflict her curse upon a mortal for any number of reasons. The psychological impact of suffering the Embrace by a loved one can be staggering. Feelings of resentment, betrayal, or



violation are common among fledglings, and even more so when a substantial prior relationship exists. Because of this, it's important that all players involved be aware of the developments that might arise between their characters. The Embrace itself — the act of draining mortal blood and reinvigorating their body with vampiric Vitae — is exceptionally intimate. Be very careful when depicting violent Embraces, and while a *character* might experience violation and betrayal, the *player* should never have to suffer these feelings themselves. After all, few fledgling Kindred who thought they were being granted glorious immortality were made aware of the full weight of Caine's curse.

Ghouls

A ghoul's existence is rife with difficult choices, necessitating complete dependency on a monstrous being to sustain their survival, and requiring some personal sacrifice in the name of duty. Debasement of the self is common, with many a ghoul watching in silent horror as their lives crumble around them all for the sake of pleasing their domitor. They may be called upon to perform acts that would stain the soul of a Kindred but do little to slow down the ghoul in their pursuit of their domitor's approval — and more vitae. The relationship is unequal, and in many cases, there is little in the need of consent between the involved parties. The same cannot be said about the relationship between the *players* of these types of characters.

Just like when playing a vampire, playing a ghoul can lead to difficult situations where the *character* may be forced to engage in behaviors the *player* may personally find abhorrent, but that fit within the *ghoul's* motivations and development. This is especially true in cases where the domitor is another player's character. When dealing with a ghoul-domitor relationship at the game table, it is vital that the lines of communication between both players — in and outside of the gaming session — remain open and welcoming. It can be easy to get caught up in the dynamic of the ghoul being deferential to their domitor to the point of abuse.

General Consent

The Storyteller should always be prepared to step in and ensure considerate play for their players. Be ready to prevent emotional bleed, and maintain consent practices whatever the format of the game.

It is important to keep the chronicle Tenets in mind when involving mortal and ghoul characters. Much can be gained by having a ghoul (or two!) at the table during a chronicle. Ghouls are subservient, yes, and often defer to their domitor to make decisions. But that's not the case one hundred percent of the time, so some negotiation between players is needed. Make no mistake: Ghouls are often abused by their domitors and other Kindred and may even be treated as little more than property by Kindred society, but *abuse at the table between players is never permissible. Given consent, abusing a character is fine — abusing a player is not.*

Discuss beforehand the line dividing what is acceptable between the players of the ghoul and the domitor as well as the Storyteller, focusing on each player's comfort levels regarding certain themes. Ghoul characters, either of their own volition or at the command of their domitor, may engage in acts redolent of real-world violence, oppression, and physical and psychological traumas that may be triggering or difficult for themselves or other players to handle.

Be sure to check in with your players using a preferred Calibration Technique (p. 423 of *Vampire: The Masquerade*) to ensure they are comfort-

able proceeding or if a session recess is warranted for some decompression. For further information on how to better manage intra-player consent regarding sensitive topics in the World of Darkness, see the "Advice for Considerate Play" section on p. 421 of *Vampire: The Masquerade*.

Advantages

The following Merits and Flaws are especially suited to ghouls and mortals. Unless otherwise specified, Merits and Flaws acquired as mortals continue to apply to ghouls, but mortals may not gain the effects of Advantages marked as relevant to ghouls.

Note also that certain circumstances may further negate the validity of certain Merits and Flaws, such as by becoming a ghoul or receiving the Embrace. In general, the Storyteller will decide whether the player can reallocate the points of invalidated Merits and Flaws, or if they're simply abated. In general, a player should be able to purchase new Advantages for points spent on invalidated Merits (since they're benefits the player pays for), while points from Flaws can be kept by the Storyteller, to be used as they see fit down the road.

BANEFUL BLOOD (Ghoul Flaw): Due to some mysterious property of the Blood, you experience the bane of your first domitor's clan to a degree. Your first domitor, the Kindred whose blood you tasted in order to become a ghoul, must be of Clan Lasombra, Malkavian, Ministry, Nosferatu, Ravnos, Salubri, or Toreador. Even if your domitor changes, the bane you experience does not.

- : You experience the domitor's bane at Bane Severity 1
- : You experience the domitor's bane at Bane Severity 2
- : You experience the domitor's bane at Bane Severity 3

●● BLOOD EMPATHY (Ghoul Merit): You share a closer bond to your domitor than most ghouls, able to sense their emotional and psychological state, even when not physically in their presence. An astute ghoul can "feel" if their current domitor

is in peril or requires their presence immediately, but it does not allow for direct telepathic communication. You feel Blood Empathy at a distance of one mile or less from your domitor, and the domitor to whom you feel Blood Empathy is the one whose blood you have most recently consumed. Note that this does not require a Blood Bond, though the effect feels stronger if one is present.

●●● **CRONE'S CURSE (Ghoul Flaw):** When you partook of your domitor's vitae, you aged rapidly. You appear at least a decade older than you are. In addition, your health has suffered, and you have one fewer box on your health tracker than you otherwise would. This Flaw is negated when you are Embraced. As well, this Flaw may persist even if you are Embraced (in which case, the problem is you, not your domitor's Blood), at the Storyteller's discretion.

●● **DISTRESSING FANGS (Ghoul Flaw):** The Blood, in addition to giving you increased healing, physical prowess, and use of some minor Disciplines, also gave you sharpened teeth. But they're strange, stunted, and unsettling to those who can discern them, causing mortals to think you're part of some questionable subculture (ahem). You lose one die on Social pools involving mortals because your fangs make them uneasy.

●● **LIVING ON THE EDGE (Psychological Flaw):** You're one of those people who feel compelled to take every chance to experience life at its

fullest. When you are confronted with a chance to indulge a risky temptation you haven't done before (such as snorting a new drug, imbibing vampire blood, or taking a Kindred lover), you suffer a two-dice penalty to all actions until you either partake of the new experience or the scene ends. This Flaw won't compel you to undertake suicidal actions... but you may not always be able to accurately predict the consequences of your actions.

●● **UNSEEMLY AURA (Ghoul Merit):** The Blood did something strange to you. Whereas your aura was once vibrant and full of the flush of mortal-adjacent life, it has become muted and indistinguishable from that of a Kindred. While it may lead others to overestimate you, it could also lead to some awkward situations later down the line.

●●● **WEAK-WILLED (Psychological Flaw):** You struggle to assert your own personality when confronted with the will of another. You may not necessarily be submissive; perhaps you feel more confident when following another person's lead. You might be part of a vampire's entourage or Herd, but you aren't necessarily loyal to that vampire. Even when you're aware of an attempt to sway you mentally or emotionally (such as with Dominate or Presence), you may not use the active resistance systems to avoid those effects.



Part IV:

ERRATA AND RULES UPDATE



With **Vampire** out in the wild for a couple of years now, we want to take the chance to address and update some features that in extended play have proved to over- or underperform, and also to clarify a few things that could have been more clearly defined in the core book. Please note that just like all rules, these changes are optional, and Storytellers should not feel required to adopt them if the old ways worked for their troupe. Nobody knows the needs of their table better than those sitting at it, after all. Happy hunting!

Blood Surge Increase

Increase Blood Surge value by one for all Blood Potency values, taking the span from 0-5 to 1-6.

(See attached table on p. 63, to be included in future printings of the core book.)

DESIGNER'S COMMENT: *As the majority of **Vampire** characters have a Blood Potency of 1 or 2, getting a single die for the price of a Rouse Check is a pretty raw deal, and Blood Surge was rarely used to the extent it was intended. We believe players will get more mileage out of it now, especially at the lower Blood Potencies. This also means that thin-bloods gain this ability, but gain only a single die out of it.*

Bane Severity Increase

Increase Bane Severity value by one for all Blood Potency values, taking the span from 0-5

to 1-6. (See attached table, to be included in future printings of the core book.)

DESIGNER'S COMMENT: *As the defining traits of the clans the Banes often fall short, ending up more as nuisances than proper curses at lower Blood Potencies. By increasing them in a similar manner to the Blood Surge, they will be more keenly felt, accentuating these failings inherited from dread ancestors. While this also means that thin-bloods gain Bane Severity, they usually ignore it unless laden with the Clan Curse Flaw (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 183.)*

Compulsions from Messy Criticals

Compulsions can result from Messy Criticals just as they do from Bestial Failures. (Included in future printings.)

DESIGNER'S COMMENT:

Limiting Compulsions to Bestial Failures makes them too rare in play, and allowing them to result from Messy Criticals helps in portraying otherwise tricky-to-explain messes, such as on Awareness tests and other passive actions. (Nothing is really lost by combining the options from Messy Criticals and Bestial Failures into a smörgåsbord of complications applicable to both.)

Expanding on Taking Half as a Player

In addition to handing out Automatic Wins (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 120) where merited, Storytellers are encouraged to let players *Take Half* — counting half the dice pool as regular successes — rather than roll in cases where the player wants to ensure a win on an easy test or doesn't want to risk Hunger complications. To keep things interesting, Storytellers should keep the exact Difficulties of tests secret, though descriptive hints such as “this seems really beneath you” or “you're not sure you can crack this without serious effort” are all fine.

DESIGNER'S COMMENT:

*Keeping the Difficulties of tests secret and letting the players themselves decide when to roll and when to Take Half not only speeds up the game but also hands more control to the player in regard to Hunger and its potentially volatile effect on otherwise mundane situations. This is how **Vampire's** 5th edition was run for most of its playtest cycle, but this exact method was never explicitly detailed in the core rulebook, ending up between the intent of Automatic Wins and Take Half (fixed Difficulties) for Storyteller characters.*

Lingering Kiss Errata

The Kiss of a vampire induces near-ecstasy in the victim, but this power leaves other Kisses in the dust. Victims fed upon by the user are temporarily empowered, but also become addicted to the Kiss, obsessing over it and even seeking the vampire out for repeated feedings. Mortals often become anemic, self-harm, or even die from this addiction. Addicting other vampires is also possible, with the caveat that obsessed vampires demanding to be fed from risk the user becoming Blood Bound. Once under a Blood Bond, a vampire becomes unable to use this power on other vampires, being limited to employing it on mortals.

Cost: Free

System: The vampire can choose to use this power during each feeding where they sate at least one Hunger. The victim gains a bonus equal to half the user's

Presence (round up) to one Social Attribute of their choice. This benefit lasts for a single night. Once it fades, withdrawal strikes and all the victim's actions not spent working toward acquiring a new fix receive a dice penalty equal to the initial bonus. A victim in withdrawal can spend Willpower to ignore the penalties for a scene, and the penalties go away after a number of nights equal to the user's Presence rating.

This power cannot be used on other vampires by a user who is under the thrall of a Blood Bond. Also, vampires with the Unbondable Merit cannot acquire this power.

Duration: A number of nights equal to the user's Presence rating.

DESIGNER'S COMMENT:

We appreciated the revised effect on this power as printed in the latest set of core books, as tempting the player, rather than just the character, is the best form of temptation. However, the benefits of the revised power ended up off the scale, and many have found it far too open for exploits, especially for a Level 2 power. Thus, we wanted to keep the concept in place while reining in the effects and making it more appropriate to its level and parent Discipline.

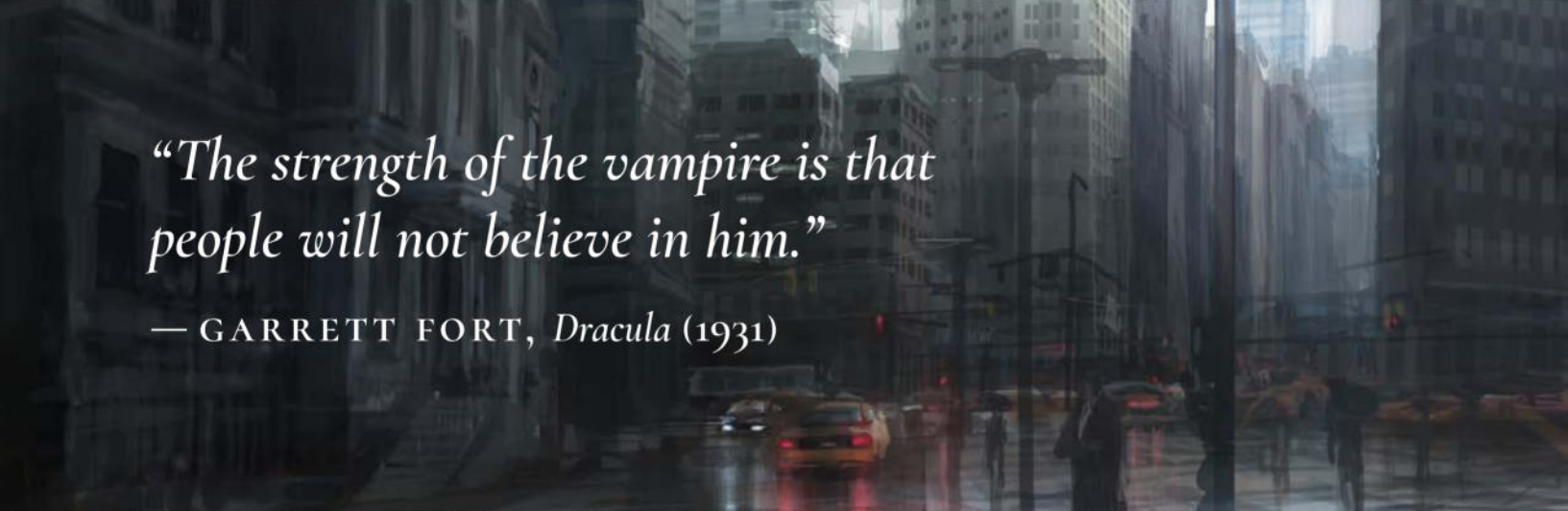
*This latest version of the power is also available in the latest **Vampire** Errata document, as well as future printings.*

BLOOD POTENCY	BLOOD SURGE	DAMAGE MENDED (PER ROUSE CHECK)	DISCIPLINE POWER BONUS	DISCIPLINE ROUSE CHECK RE-ROLL	BANE SEVERITY	FEEDING PENALTY
0	Add 1 die	1 point of Superficial damage	None	None	0	No effect
1	Add 2 die	1 point of Superficial damage	None	Level 1	2	No effect
2	Add 2 die	2 point of Superficial damage	Add 1 die	Level 1	2	Animal and bagged blood slakes half Hunger
3	Add 3 dice	2 point of Superficial damage	Add 1 die	Level 2 and below	3	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger
4	Add 3 dice	3 point of Superficial damage	Add 2 dice	Level 2 and below	3	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger Slake 1 less Hunger per human
5	Add 4 dice	3 point of Superficial damage	Add 2 dice	Level 3 and below	4	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger Slake 1 less Hunger per human Must drain and kill a human to reduce Hunger below 2
6	Add 4 dice	3 point of Superficial damage	Add 3 dice	Level 3 and below	4	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger
7	Add 5 dice	3 point of Superficial damage	Add 3 dice	Level 4 and below	5	Slake 2 less Hunger per human Must drain and kill a human to reduce Hunger below 2
8	Add 5 dice	4 point of Superficial damage	Add 4 dice	Level 4 and below	5	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger
9	Add 6 dice	4 point of Superficial damage	Add 4 dice	Level 5 and below	6	Slake 2 less Hunger per human Must drain and kill a human to reduce Hunger below 3
10	Add 6 dice	5 point of Superficial damage	Add 5 dice	Level 5 and below	6	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger Slake 3 less Hunger per human Must drain and kill a human to reduce Hunger below 3



*“The strength of the vampire is that
people will not believe in him.”*

— GARRETT FORT, *Dracula* (1931)



VAMPIRE

T H E M A S Q U E R A D E

COMPANION

Behold the Burgeoning Darkness

As a thank you to World of Darkness enthusiasts, this book contains:

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- Rules for playing mortals and ghouls
- Extensive new traits to expand your chronicles, from Discipline powers to clan-specific Advantages to Merits and Flaws

WORLD OF
DARKNESS



Mature Advisory: contains graphic and written content of a mature nature, including violence, sexual themes, and strong language. Reader discretion is advised.

