

CLASH OF WILLS



A STORY FOR VAMPIRE: THE DARK AGES

CLASH^oF WILLS

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DEADLY PERSONAL A LIST OF CHARACTERS

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Robby "Young, Thin Elvis" Poore, for teaching the ins and outs of guitar chords to one who should have never learned.

Justin "Fat, Old Elvis" Achilli, for taking his guitar chord knowledge and using it for evil.

Matt "Seung Mina" Milberger, for schooling the uninitiated with modesty in *Soul Blade*.

Ethan "We Could Leave Out the Verbs" Skemp, for making skilled incisions to *Wild West*.

AUTHOR'S SPECIAL THANKS

Special Thanks to Mike Oldfield for *Tubular Bells 2*, to which much of *Clash of Wills* was written.



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PRINTED IN USA.

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Introduction: How to Use this Book

No moral system can rest solely
on authority.

— Ad Ayer, *Humanist Outlook*

This book is intended for Storytellers only. If you are a player in a chronicle, or if you intend to assume the role of a character in this story, put it down, fool! *Vampire: The Dark Ages* is a game of mystery and discovery of the unknown as much as anything else. You should not cheat yourself, the Storyteller or your fellow players of the opportunity to discover the story as it unfolds.

There are many different ways to use this supplement. Individual Storytellers know the needs of their troupes far better than any author ever could. Storytellers need to decide which elements of **Clash of Wills** would be interesting to their troupes, and emphasize those over things that don't fit the play style in question. Storytellers also need to decide whether they want to use the story as written, or scavenge it for ideas and characters to use in a story or chronicle of their own devising. Regardless, it can't be stressed enough that the Storyteller may need to change some things when running **Clash of Wills**. To make this supplement work, Storytellers need to make it their own. At no point should the plot in these pages override the Storyteller's own sense of the dramatic, or his knowledge of the troupe. For this reason, Storytellers are encouraged to read this book from start to finish before actually running it. Possessing an overview of the action will allow the Storyteller to present a more coherent session for the players. The Golden Rule of storytelling games applies here — use what you like and throw out the rest!

FORMAT

Clash of Wills roughly follows the three-act structure prevalent in plays, television programs and movies, and even some novels, and certainly in most novel trilogies. In Act One, we meet all the major characters in the story, though some of them manipulate pawns from behind the scenes. In Act Two, the situation gets about as bad for the protagonists as it possibly could, and in Act Three the characters must rise to various challenges or suffer defeat at the hands of their opponents.

Although storytelling games have much in common with other dramatic media, this genre has the distinction of being an interactive one. The Storyteller and the players are creating the story in collaboration with one another. Each act is a series of scenes that builds to a climax. The scenes themselves, however, are broken into smaller segments that give the Storyteller an overview of what's happening in each scene, thus making the adventure easier to run. The smaller sections are as follows:

Plot: This section outlines the story elements that unfold in the scene.

Setting: This section describes key points of the scene's location, so the Storyteller can better capture the mood of the scene.

Characters: This section gives the basic information about characters and creatures who appear in a scene. Their key personality traits and goals are mentioned here.

Drama: This section illuminates the heart of the scene. It describes potential interactions between players' characters and Storyteller characters or even just the setting, and the likely resolutions of these encounters.

Outcome: This section outlines the consequences of the scene, based on what the author assumes to be the most likely actions of the characters it features. It suggests encounters that the Storyteller must ad-lib, and tells what scene is likely to follow.

When **Clash of Wills** ends, Storytellers and players may notice that several plot threads are left dangling, and certain story elements are nearly undeveloped. This was an intentional move on the part of the designer. The object was to provide Storytellers with enough fuel for the imagination to expand this story beyond the 40 pages you are currently reading. This book can offer a stand-alone story, its plot threads can be tied into the troupe's ongoing chronicle, or it can be used as the starting point for an entirely new chronicle.

SETTING

Clash of Wills takes place entirely in the fictitious County of Galtre, whose adjacent geography is purposefully kept vague in order to make this book useful to the greatest number of Storytellers. The author assumes the lands of Galtre to be located between London and Nottingham in England. However, with a little work on the part of the Storyteller, this story can take place practically anywhere.

The story takes place around 1197. England is still recovering from a long war of succession, during which the nobility became unruly and defiant, and their lands emerged more independent of the king than ever before.

The intricate Norman legal system has disintegrated in the decades leading up to this adventure, but the Church remained neutral in the conflict and thus stands as one of the few remaining stable institutions. As such, the importance of the Church grows, and so does its power.

Behind the scenes, Cainites patiently manipulate the consequences of mortal power hunger. The Ventrue put their support behind the faction striving to put King Henry II on the throne, and they eventually win the day. However, Richard the Lionhearted proves to be a problem, so the Ventrue begin scheming to place his brother, John, on the throne instead. In the meantime, the Toreador continue to arrive on the British Isles, increasing their numbers there. They all but seize control of England's Church. By threatening God-fearing nobles with eternal damnation for their sins and by offering absolution in return for these nobles' lands and worldly possessions when they die, the Toreador increasingly expand the Church's wealth and power base. Other clans, such as the Brujah, control one or more British cities, and they too are hoping to seize a part of Britain for their own during these tumultuous times.

In **Clash of Wills**, immortal plots collide as a corrupt lord lies dying and the Cainites converge to seize what power they can.

THE PEOPLE AND PLACES OF GALTRE

The County of Galtre is a forested land that is bisected by two streams, each flowing from a spring-fed lake at the county's heart. A low, seemingly endless stone wall surrounds the land. It encircles the county and runs along the King's Highway, which cuts through Galtre. The walls mark the territories that are under the complete and total control of the earl and his duly appointed sheriffs, troops and regulators.



The earl's seat of power is Millstone Castle. Built by the current earl's forebears, the walls surrounding the central fortified tower are roughly a decade old. Like many other nobles in this time of uncertainty, Edmund, the Earl of Galtre, is a man who has concerned himself more with his own hold on power than with the welfare of England or with the serfs who tend his lands.

Galtre is dotted with peasant cottages and small fields. The one-room cottages typically house two adults and a number of children, dictated by the whims of the woman's fruitfulness and by how many youngsters survive their first year of life. If serfs are lucky enough to have some livestock, these animals are normally herded into the cottage at night, both to keep the serfs warm, and to keep the animals safe from the "wee folk" reputed to live in the forest.

When peasants are not working their fields, the center of their lives is the village of Redford. The estate's mill, tannery, and smithy are here, as well as the Maiden of the Mist Inn. The village consists of a dozen buildings. All are built from stone, and with the exception of the smithy, all have thatched roofs. A small church stands at the heart of the village, and a tree-lined path winds its way from here to the graveyard at Redford's edge.

The Maiden of the Mist Inn stands at the edge of the road on the outskirts of Redford. A painted sign depicting a golden-haired woman in a red dress hangs above the door. Tendrils of white mist wrap around her as she beckons passersby to step inside. Like most business signs during this time period, there is no name painted on the sign. The vast majority of locals can't read or write, and the picture serves adequately for those trying to locate the inn, even those who have never been to Redford before. It is small inn, with a cozy common room and eight rooms on the second floor. The inn is hardly extravagant, but the food is good, the beds are dry and clean, and it sufficiently serves the needs of the merchants and messengers who avail themselves of its services. Men frequently gather in the common room to gossip and exchange news over mugs of ale during late afternoon and early evening.

Five years ago, the earl began to sense his own mortality, and to fear for his soul. Father Lucien found himself accepting the first confessions from the earl in years. The enormity and variety of the earl's misdeeds shocked Lucien to the very core of his soul. While the earl had not trafficked with demons, there was not one of the Lord's Commandments that he hadn't broken innumerable times in the most despicable fashion. But it was clear that the Earl of Galtre was genuinely repentant and desired to cleanse his

soul. Lucien contacted the diocese, which decreed that the first step toward Galtre's salvation would be for him to fund construction of a monastery on his land.

Craftsmen employed by the earl completed construction of the monastery within a year, at great expense to the county treasury. It was named in honor of St. Christopher, in hopes that the saint of travelers would watch over the earl along the path to eternal salvation. However, as the monks took up residence in the monastery, something sinister joined them: A member of Clan Toreador named Remus secretly took up residence in the monastery. He quietly fed upon the monks, and made many of them his ghoul servants. Remus even ghouled Father Lucien himself.

Remus came to the County of Galtre to ensure that the earl leaves all his lands to the Church, and, through that honored institution, to Clan Toreador — which controls the archbishops as firmly as Clan Ventrue controls the Norman lords in London.

Because the Church remained stable during the war, the Toreador strengthened their power base in England, even as the squabbles among mortal nobles threatened to erode that of the Ventrue. However, Remus knew that he had to act with care. If other clans discovered the Toreador attempt to take control of Galtre, everything he'd built could be lost.

His caution was futile, however. Other powerful Cainites began to suspect that one of their kind was exerting undue influence upon the dying Earl of Galtre (the definition of "undue" being "contrary to the best interests of the clan to which they belong.")

The Prince of London (or some other powerful Cainite, if you choose to set *Clash of Wills* outside England) sends the players' characters to Galtre, in hopes of swaying competitors to his point of view. Should they fail in that mission, the characters' orders are to take stock of the competition, and, if necessary, to destroy it.



INTRODUCTION



LEIF
JONES
1997



Act One

Wherein the characters arrive in the County of Galtre, and become embroiled in the plots and schemes of both local mortals and others who, like the coterie, have come to Galtre with secret agendas.

SCENE ONE: THE COMMISSION

PLOT

Nicholas, a powerful Ventrue who serves as chief lieutenant to Mithras, the Prince of London, summons the characters to chambers hidden at the heart of the city. He charges them with a mission that takes the coterie to the County of Galtre. Nicholas promises a variety of rewards should their mission end in success. If a powerful figure already exists in the Storyteller's campaign, she should not be afraid to replace Nicholas with that character. Likewise, the Storyteller can replace Mithras with another vampire ruler should she choose a different setting.

Obviously, this scene assumes the characters are already together in a coterie, and that they have performed deeds or tasks that attracted the attention of movers and shakers in Cainite society. However, this may not necessarily be the case in individual chronicles. If the players' characters are not already a unified group, the Storyteller can devise an introductory episode that brings the characters together; alternately, she can run a one-on-one scenario with each player in which agents of the powerful Cainite test the characters individually, and then extend the prince's summons. For simplicity, the characters may have also garnered Prince Mithras' attention in their preludes.

Whatever form the introductory adventure takes, it should be remarkable enough to warrant the prince's trust in the characters. Although the outcome of these adventures should be manipulated by the Storyteller to ensure the success of the characters, a deft hand should be used; the players need to be challenged, to feel as though their deeds equal the honor bestowed upon them.

SETTING

Nicholas' haven is within a secret labyrinth beneath the Tower of London. He receives the characters in his audience chamber, a large vaulted room lit by hundreds of flickering candles. The chamber features frescoes and statuary that evoke (for highly educated characters) the ancient cultures of the Adriatic Sea: bull-headed men rampant and bare-bosomed women wearing voluminous skirts and performing rituals with handfuls of snakes. A massive tapestry covers the length and breadth of the wall behind Nicholas. It depicts the final moments of Icarus' fateful flight. The look of terror on the plummeting figure's face is so well portrayed that it might cause even the most callous Cainite to falter and consider his proper place in God's plan.

CHARACTERS

Nicholas is the featured character of this scene (assuming the Storyteller doesn't replace him with someone of her own creation). He is a handsome man who dresses in clothes of the latest fashion, cut from reds and blacks and accented with

tasteful jewelry of gold and silver. He is charming, articulate and the very personification of gentility — when he wants to be. If crossed, Nicholas takes on the raging fury of a hurricane.

Nicholas adopts a cordial manner with the characters. He wants them to serve the prince voluntarily. He is old and wise enough to know that a minion pressed into service is not as effective as one who serves willingly, whose enthusiasm springs from his own free will. He is not above using his mastery of Dominate and Presence to make a character realize she wants to serve the prince. Also, Nicholas never allows a character to forget who is lord and who is vassal. Mithras is the Prince of London, and he is a Ventrue with high status not only among the vampires of his clan but among the other Cainites of Europe. Nicholas, as one of the prince's primary servants, deserves respect as well. He wants to work with the characters, but he abides neither insults nor gross disrespect.

Although Nicholas is apparently meeting the characters unarmed and alone, four ghoul bodyguards lurk behind a tapestry. Should the characters attack Nicholas, the ghouls emerge and join the fray. The prince's seneschal is no weakling himself, however, and if the ghouls attack, one of them throws a short sword to Nicholas.

DRAMA

Ideally, this scene is strictly a roleplaying encounter. The Storyteller can heighten tension as it begins by having the prince's minions speak nothing about why Nicholas wishes to see them. The Storyteller needs to be careful not to overdo it, however. It is easier to guide the characters through this story if they accept Nicholas' charge. Should they get spooked before they even meet with him and thus flee London, things get more complicated. Should events flow this way, or if the characters refuse the prince's offer, the story might still unfold — see the Outcome section for details.

Assuming the characters meet with Nicholas, they spend the first few minutes of the audience in uncomfortable silence. Nicholas sits nearly immobile in his chair, his penetrating gaze sweeping over the characters. The shadows created by hundreds of guttering candles dance all around him, making his expression difficult to read. Although he is at ease and contemplative, the shadows make Nicholas' expression seem to shift from menacing to sad to angry, and whatever other emotions the characters might think they see. (Use of *Auspex* might clear up the situation, if a character wants to risk examining Nicholas as intently as he is examining the coterie.) Finally, Nicholas leans forward and speaks.

"Thank you for coming. Other elders and I have watched your progress from fumbling neonates to ancillae who do your sires proud. We are impressed by your skill and ingenuity. You are here at the request of Mithras, Prince of London, who hereby offers you the opportunity to serve him in a matter most urgent.

"The Earl of Galtre is dying. Normally, this would not be a concern, as he is a minor noble whose lands would either pass to his only son or be seized by the Crown — which is firmly under our control.

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"However, certain events have come to the prince's attention, events that indicate Cainites acting contrary to the interests of London might be attempting to manipulate the earl and others in his service.

"There are members of Clan Toreador who wish to challenge Ventrue authority here in Britain and they are using the Church to do so. It is also said that the Prince of Nottingham wishes to expand his influence and base of power. Rumors have it that one or more Cainites now hunt in Galtre, against the will of our prince.

"This will not do. The lands of Galtre must come under the control of London. Prince Mithras is the strongest ruler in Britain. We would that it remain so.

"Thus, I bid you to go — go forth to Galtre and uncover any Cainite subversion there. You go with the authority of Prince Mithras, and you act in his name. Uphold the Traditions and stop our enemies from gaining the upper hand, and you will be generously rewarded. Should additional news come to our attention, we will send a servant to meet with you in Galtre. Further, while it is our hope that whatever you find in Galtre will be within your capabilities to address, it will not be a stain upon your honor if you return to London for aid, should you discover a foe possesses overwhelming force.

"You will each be granted a fine steed accustomed to serving as a Cainite mount. You should easily reach Galtre by dawn. I shall also supply you with a letter of introduction from a mortal in our thrall. He is an old acquaintance of Galtre, who is aged and frail. This letter should get you past any guardians who might otherwise wish to keep you from the earl."

Unless the characters press the issue, servants appear at the far end of the audience hall to escort the characters from Nicholas' presence. They supply the characters with the letter of introduction and take them through an underground tunnel to stables a few streets away from the Tower of London.

Bold characters may wish to negotiate with Nicholas over the nature of their rewards before leaving for Galtre. Assuming the characters are not offensive, Nicholas reminds them that proper manners dictate they should simply accept the prince's charge and discuss rewards later. Should the charac-

ters persist, Nicholas grows annoyed by their presumptuousness, but says he will entertain any reasonable demands on the prince's behalf. The limits of reasonable, as far as he is concerned, are the following:

- A character may create one ghoul.
- A character may Embrace a favored ghoul.
- A character may Embrace a loved one who is already aware of the existence of Cainites.
- The characters, as a coterie, may govern Galtre in the name of London. If the characters demand this, Nicholas reminds them once again of the Traditions, and of the other

Cainite forces active in Britain. He attempts to dissuade the characters from this course, saying they are not experienced enough to assume such roles in Cainite society. If they insist, he grants their wish.

Additionally, Nicholas points out that the fine horses they will be riding are already gifts from the prince. Further, simply accepting this mission earns the characters the good will of the Prince of London.

Nicholas does not negotiate price with the characters. He either accepts or refuses any rewards they ask for. Should a character try to bargain, Nicholas replies, "This is not a market place, and you are not merchants."

Further dickering causes Nicholas to order the characters from his sight, anger flashing in his eyes. He gives them one last chance to accept the charge in return for the horses and what he considers an adequate reward.

Characters who insist on speaking with Prince Mithras himself receive Nicholas' word of honor that he acts with the full authority of the Prince of London. If they insist, Nicholas informs them that the prince is impressed with the characters, but that he does not have time to see ancillae. Any suggestions that Nicholas is trying to set up the characters or is going behind the prince's back are met with a gale of laughter, followed by the observation that the character will go far in Cainite society — initially. Nicholas gives his word of honor that he is acting with the prince's full authority. Should characters continue to question his honesty or authority, Nicholas grows angry. (Characters who

OOPS...

Should a physical confrontation develop between Nicholas and the characters, the story may still unfold almost exactly as written (with minor modification). If the Storyteller weights the combat so the characters have a chance to escape, they may learn afterward that only one Cainite is powerful enough to even dare extending his protection over the fugitives: Robin Leeland, Prince of Nottingham. In exchange for his protection, Leeland, who is also interested in Galtre, sends the characters on a mission to stop potential Ventrue manipulation of events in the county. If things go this way, Storytellers simply need to make some modifications to Lady Karin, who appears later in the story. As written, she is a Brujah who is trying to secure Galtre for her clan. Should the characters find themselves in the service of Nottingham, the Storyteller can either modify Karin and her contingent to be a party of Ventrue, or he can send the characters to support her efforts there. Wilfred, a Ventrue ghoul who also appears later in the story, becomes a Brujah ghoul assigned to assist both Lady Karin and the player characters.



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have spent any time at all in London know Nicholas to be Mithras' most solid and trusted lieutenant and supporter.) He orders the characters away, or, in the direst of situations, doles out a drubbing. His bodyguards rush out to assist him, should their services be needed.

OUTCOME

The most likely outcome of this scene is that the characters embark on their trip to Galtre. They may delay their departure by a day or two, if they wish, but any longer and they are summoned before Nicholas again, who demands an explanation for the delay.

Refusing the offer to serve the Prince of London does not hurt the characters' status in any way, although they will have passed up a chance to increase it. Such a refusal changes this story drastically.

SCENE TWO: THE ARRIVAL

PLOT

After traveling for most of the night, the characters reach Galtre. A low, never-ending wall separates it from the King's Lands. The characters follow a road branching off the King's Road, and find themselves riding through an ever-thickening forest.

The first structure the characters encounter is a small peasant cottage. Although there is at least an hour before sunrise, there is activity around this cottage. As the characters approach it, six horsemen ride away, following the road deeper into the county, laughing loudly as they go. A young woman, Jill Leftherder, stands at the door. She weeps soundlessly.

If the characters pause to ask Jill what is wrong, she first attempts to downplay the tears. However, the slightest hint of kindness on the part of a character prompts her to reveal that Warden DuBois has been trying to force her to sleep with him and his men. Jill tells the characters that they are an hour's hard ride away from the village of Redford, but she offers shelter to characters who have shown sympathy for her plight.

SETTING

The County of Galtre is sparsely populated and heavily forested near its boundaries. The light of the moon shines through the high treetops, crisscrossing the path before the characters with shadows upon shadows.

Jill's cottage is a simple wattle-and-daub affair. It has a single entrance and no windows. An enclosure where pigs were once kept stands behind it. Farm implements wanting repair lean against one of the cottage's walls, and the thatched roof is in dire need of mending. Inside, the cottage consists of a single room with a floor of packed dirt.

CHARACTERS

The featured character of this scene is Jill Leftherder. She is 19 years old and has brown hair and green eyes. Jill is beautiful both in body and spirit. She is devoutly Christian, and wants desperately to keep her virtue. However, Warden

DuBois' advances are becoming more forceful, and he has hinted that he will harm her young brothers if she does not give herself to him.

Her three brothers — Peter, Paul and Simon — are quiet, dark-haired youngsters ranging in age from five to seven. They have learned that strangers can be dangerous, and that it is important to remain invisible around people who carry weapons.

DRAMA

As the characters follow the road into Galtre, the Storyteller should try to play up the shifting shadows of the forest in such a way that the characters might think they are being paced by something amid the trees. While no specific encounter is planned as part of the scripted adventure, Storytellers whose troupes prefer combat may pit the characters against a pair of young werewolves along this stretch of shadow-haunted road. Perhaps these lupines have plans of their own for Galtre.... (Statistics for young werewolves can be found on page 248 of *Vampire: The Dark Ages*.)

On the night they arrive in Galtre, the characters hear men laughing ahead on the road. The path bends, and they catch sight of a small cottage. Five men sit on horseback in front of it, their lanterns on long staves. They laugh loudly as one of their number — a balding man whose physique has started to slip with the onset of middle age — makes an exaggerated gesture of farewell to a dark-haired woman standing at the cottage door. She has a blanket wrapped tightly around herself. He says, "Consider my offer, Jill. You will learn that we can make you hear the angels sing."

The other riders laugh uproariously, and the group spurs its horses and gallops down the road. The young woman leans against the door frame and slips to the ground, drawing her knees up under the blanket and resting her forehead on them.

The riders are Warden DuBois and his men. If the characters call out to DuBois and his men, they are ignored.

The characters may approach Jill to discover the meaning of what they've just witnessed. She remains motionless, with her head down, until the characters either stop in front of her cottage or walk up and address her (merely riding by does not garner a reaction).

LOVE IN BLOOM

It is quite possible that a Toreador may fall in love with Jill's beauty. The Storyteller may wish to open this possibility to a player portraying such a vampire, or to any player who has established his character as a romantic or an individual with a love for beauty. While this can be reduced to dice rolls — the Storyteller may ask Toreador characters to make Willpower checks, for which botches cause the Cainite to fall in love with Jill — it serves the story and the characters better if the Storyteller simply lays the groundwork for potential roleplaying situations. The players can then follow such leads (or not).



ACT ONE

"Forgive me," she says, blushing deeply as she pulls the blanket tighter than ever around her. "I was lost in my thoughts and didn't hear you approach. Can I assist your lordships and ladyships in some manner?"

If the characters ask Jill what is wrong without any ceremony or preamble, her response is, "Nothing of concern to folks such as yourself, milord. Nothing but the problems of a peasant."

However, should a character start the conversation with some obviously sympathetic comment or observation, Jill quickly opens up to her. She has suffered silently under great burdens for the last few months and needs nothing more than a sympathetic ear.

"My parents died of the fever this spring," she says. "It was horrible. One day, they were healthy, and then they just got weaker and paler with each passing night until they died. I prayed to the good Lord for the sickness to take me instead, but my prayers were for naught. Their deaths must have been part of His great plan."

"So, I was left to bring up my three brothers. We've been doing our best to tend our field so we could feed ourselves and give the earl his due. All the while, Warden DuBois has been making unsavory proposals and lustful advances toward me. Of late, he has threatened not only me, but my brothers. He wants that I should give myself to him, and maybe even to his men. Yet, none of them have any desire to wed me. They only want to rob me of one of the few things I have left to cherish in this world, my virtue. And if I don't surrender it, they intend to rob me of the three other things I cherish in the world, my brothers."

Jill begins to cry again, the tears rolling down her cheeks and falling from her jaw. "I pray to God for deliverance every night, but I am beginning to lose hope. And Warden DuBois is beginning to lose patience. I'm at my wits end. I have nowhere to turn."

DuBois is the earl's top man. Jill is certain no assistance will come from the Church, since the earl recently built the Monastery of St. Christopher in a distant corner of the county. However, as she tells sympathetic characters of her plight, an idea forms in her head. She finally asks, "Would you be willing to speak with the earl on my behalf? Perhaps you can convince him to allow you to take my brothers, and possibly me, with you to your own holdings? Please, I need help, milords."

The characters might be startled by Jill's assumption they are of the nobility, which she makes regardless of their appearance. Her assumption stems from their horses, as she has never seen commoners with horses as fine as theirs. (If the characters do not approach her home, she assumes them to be nobles only if they are indeed dressed accordingly.)

If questioned about the "fever" that claimed her parents, Jill knows only that roughly a dozen peasants died from it earlier this year. None of those stricken responded to any of the usual remedies. As she describes the symptoms, players may make Perception + Occult rolls (difficulty 3) to recognize that she is describing the results of successive Cainite feedings on the same vessels.

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While conversing with Jill, the characters can also get a basic feel for where the important landmarks of the county are located in relation to each other, particularly if they try to steer the conversation in that direction. More importantly, the characters learn that they are still at least an hour away from the village of Redford...and there is roughly an hour till sunrise.

This situation might be a source of anxiety for the characters. However, Jill is more than happy to allow all who have offered her help in dealing with DuBois to rest in her cottage, as long as they understand she can offer them no meal greater than some dry bread and berries.

OUTCOME

This scene sets the stage for future developments in the story. At the very least, the characters know they must hurry if they wish to take shelter in the village before the sun rises.

If the characters choose to take shelter in Jill's cottage for the day, they may do so undisturbed. Jill rigs a partition using a pair of rakes and a blanket, ensuring privacy for the characters. Her young brothers, who share Jill's good looks, sleep through the entire scene.

An extreme turn of events during this scene is one in which a character feeds upon Jill or her brothers. Characters who do so are inflicting themselves upon the family just as Warden DuBois would. Characters on the Roads of Heaven or Humanity might risk losing Via. Storytellers should also remember Jill's True Faith rating of 2, which wise Cainites recognize if they scrutinize her with Soulsight. She is immune to the effects of the Dominate Discipline due to her Faith. Should a character feed upon her, she remembers exactly what happened to her, and she enters the village the next day, half-crazed and ranting about how a demon forced himself upon her in the night. The smith and Father Lucien realize that Jill was attacked by a vampire. Jill's future appearances in this story are also affected if she is fed upon — this addressed in later scenes.

In any case, the story continues in Act Two (though if the characters are crass enough to feed on Jill, have them meet with Samuel Smith in Act One, Scene Three). Jill may reappear in Act Two or Act Three, and the characters have their first encounter with Warden DuBois in Scene Four of Act One. Future scenes may well be affected by whatever relationship the characters establish with Jill.

SCENE THREE: THE SMITH (OPTIONAL)

PLOT

Another encounter in or around Redford occurs if one or more characters fail miserably while attempting to feed in the village; if Jill shows up ranting about a blood-drinking, lust-filled demon that took her virtue in the night; if some event in the village related to the characters attracts Samuel the Smith's attention; or if the Storyteller just wants to mix things up a bit for the characters.

Samuel either witnesses a feeding or some other suspicious activity and alerts Father Lucien to the characters' vampiric nature, or Jill comes to his attention before one of DuBois' men takes the girl to Millstone Castle. In either case, Father Lucien informs Remus, his Toreador master, that other Cainites are in Galtre, while Samuel stalks the character who either attempted to feed or fed upon Jill.

SETTING

The location can vary greatly, but the smith's attack will take place somewhere in or around the village of Redford.

CHARACTERS

Samuel is a large, muscular man. He always looks tired and haggard, as though he is not getting enough sleep. Samuel witnessed a vampire feeding on his son several months ago. Together with Father Lucien, he destroyed the creature as it fled into the night. Sadly, his son died.

Samuel has been watching for other such foul creatures of the night ever since, despite the vigilance of Redford's priest, Father Lucien. Samuel has collected much lore on the walking dead, and might actually be a serious threat to a Cainite should he catch her unawares.

People around the county know Samuel as a fair and levelheaded man, even though everyone recognizes his brooding streak since the death of his son.

DRAMA

Samuel attempts to catch Jill's attacker alone. If he or she has taken a room at the inn, the smith tries to attack during the day. This is a loosely formatted encounter that can take place at virtually any time or place.

OUTCOME

Should the smith stake a character, the Storyteller can decide whether Samuel has the know-how to destroy that character permanently. A character's loss can have serious impact on a troupe, both in and out of the game, so Storytellers should think carefully before permitting a character to be destroyed.

At the very least, the Storyteller should give other members of the coterie a chance to save the defeated character. It may be dramatically appropriate for a character to be destroyed if his comrades fail to save him.

Once Samuel believes he has destroyed one character, he may turn his attention to the rest of the coterie. He isn't sure whether they are vampires or not, but he will be watching from the shadows.

Should a character kill the smith and fail to dispose of the body, the village and county are thrown into an uproar. Hunting will become impossible anywhere but in the castle — which holds dangers of its own. If the smith simply vanishes, a search will be conducted and hunting difficulties increase by one as Samuel's wife, Mary, insists something foul happened to him.



ACT ONE



LEIF
JONES
1997



Act Two

Wherein the characters reach the
Earl of Galtres' castle, speak with a
dying man, meet a foe posing as a
friend and find both their loyalties
and their persons under assault

MILLSTONE CASTLE

Millstone Castle consists of a three-story stone tower surrounded by a stone wall. There is a chimney at each compass point of the roof. The castle's main keep is a drafty building with arrow slits for windows. Although glass is becoming increasingly common, the earl has yet to use any of it in his ancestral home. A wooden structure is built into the main exterior wall: the stable for Warden DuBois and his mounted assessors. It also houses the earl's aging warhorse. A young stable boy is always on hand.

Guards do not patrol the wall, but the gate is closed at night. Heavy knocking and loud shouts will bring someone from the tower to open it.

Ground Floor: This level houses servants and contains the dining facilities for the entire castle. A narrow wooden door leads into a small foyer, which permits access to the first floor and descent to the dungeon and crypt area. A door on the eastern wall leads to the mess hall where the servants take their meals, while a door on the western wall leads to the dining hall reserved for the castle's noble visitors and residents. The ground floor also holds a kitchen. Beyond it is a small room that serves as servants' quarters. There are three adults and two children — menials and castle domestics — who live in this cramped room.

First Floor: This level contains the quarters of Warden DuBois and his men. He lives in the northeastern room, while the assessors live two to a room in a pair of the remaining chambers. Each man keeps his weapons with him in his room. If Jill is brought to the castle, she is kept in one of these three rooms. The northwest room serves as the living quarters for the four monks who, under Lucien's guidance, attend the Earl of Galtre's soul. Each room has a fireplace. A staircase connects the ground floor to levels above and below it.

Second Floor: This level holds the chambers of the Earl of Galtre, as well as rooms for visiting noble guests. Father Lucien is presently staying in one of the guest rooms, while Lord Alfred and Lady Karin share another one. The third chamber is empty, and it might be offered to a Cainite (or Cainites, if they pass themselves off as a married couple, or otherwise "involved") who claims to be the highest ranking character of the group. These rooms are all lavishly furnished, but are as drafty as any others in the castle. Each room has a fireplace.

Roof: A trap door opens from the lower level onto this steeply pitched slate roof. A narrow ledge runs around all four sides of the tower. A chimney stands at each corner. They are quite hot, as all the castle's fireplaces are stoked almost 24 hours a day so that the ailing earl may be kept warm.

In addition, there is a dungeon and a family crypt under the castle. No prisoners are currently being held in the dungeon, and the family crypt contains only three corpses: the earl's parents and his wife. Seven other tombs lie open.

SCENE ONE: REACHING MILLSTONE CASTLE

PLOT

The characters reach Millstone Castle, where they must deal with the Earl of Galtre's unsavory right-hand man, Warden DuBois. They also encounter Wilfred, a ghoul sent by the Prince of London. Finally, the characters catch their first glimpse of Lady Karin, the Brujah emissary to Galtre.

SETTING

This scene takes place in the small courtyard of Millstone Castle.

Millstone Castle is a cramped, ugly structure. It squats on a hilltop like a broken tree stump. The courtyard is packed earth, but it turns into a mudbath during heavy rains. It is fairly solid at present.

CHARACTERS

Featured characters in this scene are Warden DuBois and his key men. They have employed Wilfred, a man they believe to be a wanderingsell-sword. They met him in Redford earlier in the day, and DuBois took an immediate liking to him.

Warden DuBois dominates this scene. He is a large man of middle years. His face bears the scars of many battles, and his muscular physique is slipping away, settling into a paunch that strains against his leather hauberk. His dark hair is thinning and

shot through with gray. His eyes always hold a hint of barely retrained violence, and his smile can chill most God-fearing people. DuBois has been the earl's chief assessor and right-hand man for the past 12 years. With the decline of the earl's health, the warden's dark side has become pronounced. He and his men were once brutal yet fair; now they are just brutal. Lately, they have taken to forcing the county's young women into sleeping with one or more of their number. This lechery is tainted heavily with violence, and at least one young woman did not survive their attentions. Fathers who have dared to complain have likewise ended up maimed or worse. DuBois is the cruelest and crudest of them all.

While the players' characters deal with the warden and his men, another important character observes them quietly and unobtrusively. He is Wilfred, a short man with stringy, reddish-blond hair. He is not an attractive fellow, but he makes up for it with a charming and witty personality. Wilfred tries to get by on his wits instead of his brawn, even though he is a skilled warrior.

Wilfred is an agent of the Prince of London. Mithras sends him to aid the characters, and to warn them of his certainty that other rival Cainites are active in Galtre. He uses his Auspex Discipline to be certain the characters are Cainites, and then introduces himself as an agent of the prince toward the end of this scene.

CLASH OF WILLS

DRAMA

Millstone Castle's closed gates greet the characters. However, the Cainites hear raucous laughter beyond the walls. Characters with Alertness ratings of 4 or higher recognize the laughter as belonging to one or more of the men they saw upon their arrival in Galtre.

If they pound on the gate or otherwise make noise outside, one of the assessors opens it. He snarls at the characters to identify themselves. Whatever explanation they offer, they are admitted, but the scruffy-looking man says, "You'll have to clear it with Warden DuBois."

He admits the characters to the small courtyard of the dismal castle. By the light of a small campfire and several torches they can see several figures gathered before the weather-beaten door that leads into the keep. Four men sit on barrels and stools around the fire, while a fifth sits farther away. Two young women, both partially naked, wander from man to man. Each man cuts away a little more of their clothing with a dagger, or runs his hands over the women's exposed skin and laughs loudly. One woman looks frightened, while the other has a blank expression on her face. Both women have tiny cuts on their arms and chests and legs, and both are haphazardly smeared with blood.

The man who admitted the characters sits heavily on a barrel as he says, "DuBois, we got some late night visitors here."

One of the men rises slowly. It is Warden DuBois, and he regards the characters through narrow eyes, grimacing. He offers his dagger to Wilfred and says, "Would you like to take my turn, Wilfred?"

Wilfred shakes his head and takes a deep drink from the flagon he is holding. "No thanks, Warden. I gave it up for Lent."

DuBois laughs, and the man seated to his right pulls one of the woman toward him. "Let's see what we can do about the rest of the skirt, dear," he says.

Meanwhile, DuBois approaches the characters, his grimace becoming a scowl. He snarls, "Who are you people, and how dare you disturb our fun?" Alcohol taints his breath.

If the characters show DuBois the letter from the Prince of London (who is known by the kine to be a powerful noble), the warden says the earl is currently speaking with his son. However, the young lord will surely step aside, DuBois says, for such important visitors, as the earl's time in this world is growing short. He orders one of his men to escort the characters upstairs, but Wilfred — the red-headed man seated outside the circle — leaps to his feet, swiftly offering to take the characters up to see the earl.

Turning to the characters, he speaks in a quiet voice: "Soon after you left London, word reached the prince that there are indeed other Cainites in Galtre. They may cause problems. I have been sent to help you address them."

Wilfred opens the door, revealing a torchlit hall. Stairs rise steeply to the left. He gestures toward them and follows the characters in. The ghoul introduces himself to the characters and says Nicholas sent him with instructions to help them in any way he can. If the characters are suspicious, Wilfred produces a signet ring bearing the personal seal of the Prince of London.

Wilfred explains how he posed as a brutal ruffian like the scum in the courtyard to get their assistance in exploring the county for suitable Cainite lairs. He intends to continue his search the following day, whether the characters trust him or not.

As the characters reach the earl's door, have the players make Perception + Alertness rolls (difficulty 4). If they are successful, they catch sight of a beautiful woman gazing at them from the room across the hall. If the characters look in her direction, she lowers her eyes and swiftly closes the door. If asked, Wilfred says that he thinks the woman is the wife of Lord Alfred, the earl's son.

OUTCOME

At the end of this scene, the characters should have a taste for just how reprehensible DuBois and his men are. Characters who had even the slightest inclination toward helping Jill Leftherder by dealing with DuBois should now feel as though doing so would be a good deed.

If any character takes offense to the display they witness in the courtyard, he or she probably berates DuBois and the other men. Allow the player to roleplay the chiding. If you deem the reprimand effective, DuBois apologizes profusely and becomes far more subdued. He orders the women from the keep, assigning one of his men to escort them home only if a character insists on it.

SCENE TWO: THE EARL

PLOT

In this scene the characters meet the Earl of Galtre, his son, and Father Lucien. Observant Cainites with Soulsight may recognize Lord Alfred as a Cainite.

SETTING

This scene takes place inside the cramped and unpleasant Millstone Castle. The hallways are narrow, most rooms are small with low ceilings, and most windows are no more than arrow slits. A constant draft moves through all chambers and hallways, causing the tapestries on the walls to stir gently.

As the characters spend time in the castle, the Storyteller should make it feel claustrophobic. They encounter a servant, a monk or one of the earl's other subjects everywhere they go. They cannot find privacy, and the only remaining guest room will hold no more than two characters comfortably. The characters will have to split their group at sunrise, stay at the Maiden of the Mists Inn, or sneak down into the dungeon and family crypt area to shelter there for the day.

CHARACTERS

The featured characters in this scene are the Earl of Galtre, Father Lucien, and Lord Alfred, the earl's son. Aside from these three major characters, the castle is populated with servants and menials. The players' characters always meet one or more of these people, even in the dead of night; Millstone Castle, much like its dying master, never fully sleeps.

The Earl of Galtre is an evil man, his life steeped in debauchery and violence. Once physically powerful, he has all but wasted away under the weight of old age and disease. The smell of death



is thick in his room. His skin is as white as the sheets of his bed, and wisps of thin, white hair cling to his bony pate.

Although the earl permits the characters to see him, virtually nothing they say is of any real interest to him. He knows he is dying, and he is convinced his soul will go to Hell. Unless the characters have something to offer him that may prevent that from happening or return him to his "lusty youth", he quickly orders them from his presence.

The earl is attended primarily by Father Lucien, a small man with handsome features. He is well-fed and healthy, neither too thin nor overweight. He rarely smiles and the wrinkles on his face and the many gray streaks in his hair mark him as a man who has grown old before his time.

Father Lucien was assigned the unenviable task of trying to find a way for a man as evil as the Earl of Galtre to gain absolution. His efforts prompted him to urge the construction of the St. Christopher's Monastery. In doing so, he brought Galtre to the attention of Clan Toreador and Remus, a Toreador elder who has come to Galtre intending to seize the county for himself.

In this scene, Lucien behaves like a simple, devout village priest. He or one of his monks, however, will be in the vicinity of the characters at all times, eavesdropping on their conversations. If at any time it becomes clear they are Cainites, he sends word to Remus. Lucien is not too concerned about the characters' presence at this point. He knows that he and his master have already won. The earl has agreed

to will his lands to the Church, and the scribes have just completed the document. Now Lucien requires only the earl's signature.

The third major character appearing in this scene is Lord Alfred, a darkly handsome man with an easy smile. The young noble treats the characters with warm civility. He seems genuinely saddened that his father is about to pass on. If a conversation is struck up with him, at some point he expresses relief that he and his wife are able to be with his beloved father during the old man's final days.

The fact of the matter is that Lord Alfred has hated his father from childhood. He has come to Galtre in an attempt to secure his inheritance of the land.

DRAMA

A knock on the door of the earl's chamber prompts a muffled, "Enter." Beyond the door is an opulent bedchamber. Fine animal skins cover the floor. A large fireplace blazes in one corner of the room, casting dancing shadows across the people and furniture within. Over the mantle hangs a shield that displays no coat of arms, but has a pair of long swords crossed over it. An exceptional tapestry showing Norman knights in combat with their Saxon foes covers the entire eastern wall.

A writing desk and a chair stand near an arrow slit, and a tall lacquered cabinet stands in one corner, but the dominating feature of the room is a large four-poster bed. The earl rests on the bed, looking pallid and discomfited. Three other men — a young

CLASH OF WILLS

monk with dark circles around his eyes, Lucien, and Lord Alfred — stand around the bed. Lucien and the monk wear the brown robes of the clergy while Alfred's dress clearly marks him as nobility. All three look solemnly at the characters as they enter.

"Who is that?" the old man in the bed says. "Is that the Devil, coming to take me away?"

"No, father," the nobleman says, turning his attention back to the old man. "It appears you have some late-night visitors. And they are not devils."

Once the characters introduce themselves, the earl becomes very excited. He remembers his "old friend" from London, and wants to hear how Mithras is doing. As the characters speak with the earl, the sound of DuBois' men laughing in the courtyard drifts through the arrow slit. It mingles with the sobbing cries of a woman (even if the characters spoiled the "fun" before).

The Brujah Lord Alfred introduces himself to a character who is not speaking with the earl. He says that he hopes the character will do him the personal favor of extending his best wishes to the character's master. Alfred says that he would like to continue the relationship between the two families that his father had. Alfred is certain his father is going to will the lands to him.

Lucien and the monk do not approach the characters, but hover in the background until they are addressed. Both are humble and whisper short, frank answers to any questions they are posed. Lucien quietly makes it clear to the characters that he believes the lands of Galtre will be left to the Church, should the topic be raised.

If the characters hint at any time that they wish to speak with the earl alone, Alfred and Lucien leave the room immediately. As he departs, the young lord says he understands that many of his father's powerful friends wish to avail themselves of the earl's sound advice in delicate matters one last time. Alfred assures his father that they will be right outside. Lucien goes to the next room, saying that he intends to retire for a time and pray for the earl's soul, but he actually eavesdrops on the conversation through a secret opening behind the tapestry. Alfred remains in the hallway and listens at the door, unless a character joins him outside and engages him in conversation.

Very little the characters say piques the earl's interest. His excitement over news of his friend in London quickly wanes, and it becomes clear that he fears death more than anything. He tells the characters openly that he intends to will all his properties to the Church so that his immortal soul won't burn in Hell. He does not fear death as much as he fears what may follow if he doesn't take steps to undo all the evil deeds he perpetrated during his lifetime.

OUTCOME

If the characters converse with the earl at all, it may occur to them that if one of them should Embrace the old man, he will not die. This is the major bargaining chip at their disposal. If they promise him eternal life and reveal some of their vampiric abilities to him, the earl will happily swear

fidelity to the characters, or to whatever powerful patron they may serve. They need to be careful in their approach with this offer, however: It is likely that there will be ramifications from making it, regardless of whether the earl accepts the offer or not, and what steps the characters take afterward.

The characters need to lie to the earl if they wish him to be a willing recipient of the Embrace. He would love to have eternal life, but unless the characters tell him that he will have eternal youth as well, he will not accept their offers, nor will he sign a decree that grants them control of Galtre. He'd rather take his chances with Heaven and Hell — and rely on the word of Lucien that giving his holdings to the Church will indeed save his soul from damnation — than live forever as a frail, old man.

The Storyteller needs to watch any deeds performed by the characters in relation to the earl and any notion of Embracing him. It is possible that one or more characters will slip on their chosen Road with regard to this course of action. Embracing the earl is the easiest solution here, but it is also a moral quandary for Cainites.

Characters who come up with the idea of Embracing the earl may decide to return to London to ask permission. If they do, such permission is granted, but they will lose two nights in Galtre, and the situation will be different when they return — the Toreador Remus will have seized the castle and lands of Galtre.

Any offers by the characters to Embrace the earl will most likely be overheard by Father Lucien, Lord Alfred or both. If Lucien overhears, he makes no effort to stop the characters but does send word to Remus. Lucien has an imperfect understanding of the Embrace. What he knows is colored by a wide variety of superstitions and hearth lore. He believes a victim must be fed on for three nights in a row, so he does not think there is any urgency. Remus knows better, however. As soon as he gets word that other Cainites are in Galtre, he sets a plan in motion to destroy them: the optional ambush in Scene Four of Act Two.

If Alfred overhears the characters offering to Embrace the earl, he becomes frightened and flustered and rushes to Karin for guidance. He has secretly been considering the very same action. He has no love for his father, but he does not wish to see Galtre go to the Church. Alfred has no reservations about lying to his father, and tells the old man whatever he wants to hear in order to get a signature on the document that gives Alfred control of the county. Further, Alfred has an imperfect understanding of the Embrace, and how Blood Oaths are created, based on assumptions he has made about the relationship that exists between Karin and her Cainite handmaiden, Lucille. If an opening presents itself (either while the characters meet with Karin in Scene Three, or when they leave the castle, and while Father Lucien is dispatching a message to Remus), Alfred will seize it and approach his father with an offer of his own.

Once Karin becomes aware of the characters' natures, she approaches them in an attempt to forge an alliance. She always tries to make friends rather than enemies, and she hopes she can settle their differences.



SCENE THREE: SUDDEN REVERSALS

PLOT

This scene takes place soon after the characters converse with the Earl of Galtre, or after Lady Karin or Lord Alfred finds out the characters are Cainites (following a poorly executed hunt, for example). If the characters return to London for permission to Embrace the earl, it takes place upon their return to Galtre.

A young woman who says she is Lady Karin's handmaiden approaches the characters. She says her mistress wishes to speak with them immediately on a matter of great importance. If the characters refuse to see Lady Karin, she seeks them out instead. Lord Alfred and Lucille accompany her in this instance.

Karin wants to negotiate with the characters before her coterie and theirs end up at each other's throats, both figuratively and literally. She barely has a chance to outline her intentions before Lucien arrives with the news of the earl's death. Depending on character actions, either they or Alfred holds a signed will that gives control of Galtre. This turn of events ruins Lucien and Remus' plan to take over the county, as the earl will have been Embraced by one of the priest's rivals — Alfred or one of the characters — before he could sign Lucien's will. The priest becomes furious and storms out of the castle.

Regardless of the outcome, Karin still wishes to negotiate with the characters. She has no desire to see Galtre and its kine torn apart in a territorial war between the Princes of Nottingham and London.

CLASH OF WILLS

She asks the characters to meet her again the following night.

SETTING

The setting of this scene is Millstone Castle, primarily Lord Alfred and Lady Karin's chamber. It is a finely appointed room, with a large four-poster bed, a desk that currently serves as a lady's dressing table, and a lacquered cabinet that features expensive mirrors on the inside of its doors.

CHARACTERS

The featured character of this scene is Lady Karin. An 11th Generation Brujah who serves her under a Blood Oath also plays a minor role, as do Alfred and Lucien.

DRAMA

When Lucille escorts the characters into Lady Karin's chamber, the elder Brujah is in front of the cabinet mirror. Depending on the time of night, she is either preparing her rich, red hair for the day's rest, or fixing it for the night's activities. (The Storyteller needs to be sure to mention this mirror to the characters. It may become important in Act Three.) She initially speaks with the characters while observing them in the mirror and finishing her hair.

"I am glad you have come to see me," she says. "I believe we might be about to walk a path from which there is no turning back. I want to stop the journey before it begins, for it will lead us all to ruin."

And I do mean us in every sense." She turns toward the characters, drawing back her lips in a smile that reveals the sharp fangs of a fellow Cainite. "If you have not already discerned the true nature of myself and Lord Alfred, I stand revealed before you as a child of Caine."

She goes on to explain that she is here to secure Galtre for the Prince of Nottingham. She is of the opinion that there is little the characters can do to stop her and Lord Alfred, unless they intend to start a brutal fight, which no one wants. "Let us settle this like reasonable beings," she suggests. "I have no animosity toward any of you, and I would hope that you have none toward me."

Karin is as earnest in her belief that she and Alfred have the upper hand as she is in her desire to avoid conflict with the characters. She is not insulted by distrust on their part, and remains calm in the face of even the worst threats.

Before any real conversation can begin, or before the characters can reject her outright, there is a knock at the door. Father Lucien enters without waiting for a welcome. If Alfred is not already in the room, the young noble is with him. Both are stone-faced.

"The earl," says Lucien, "has passed on. I am afraid I have been remiss in my duties...I was not there to give him his final blessing."

Karin's face slides into a sympathetic mask as she opens her arms to console Alfred.

"It was his time," Lucien continues, "his God-appointed hour. At least his soul was given absolution, even if no priest was with him at the end. He granted all his lands to the Church, and God will reward his generosity."

At this point, either the characters or Alfred should step forward to correct the priest in his error. While the priest carries a document promising Galtre's holdings to the Church, it is unsigned. Depending on who actually Embraced the earl, and thus caused his death, another character is carrying a signed will.

If Alfred did the deed, he looks at the priest with a cocked eyebrow. "I believe you are mistaken, holy father."

"No mistake, my son," Lucien replies. "Your father wished for his entire estate to go to the Church. He had a will drawn up, and although he never had a chance to sign it, I trust you will—"

"You are certainly mistaken," Alfred interrupts, pulling a rolled up piece of parchment from inside his tunic. "My father willed his lands and titles to me, his only son. And this will he signed."

"Let me see that," the priest demands. He pales as he reads the document. "Your father has condemned himself to eternal torment."

"He must have seen it differently in his final hours, holy father," Alfred says solemnly.

Anger flashes across Lucien's face. "You don't understand what you've done, boy!"

Alfred bristles in return. "You forget yourself, priest. Whatever you had intended, I am now the ruler of Galtre. Go and see to it that my father is properly placed in the family crypt. And be sure to pray over the body!"

The anger on the priest's face intensifies, but concedes, "Yes, my lord," and rushes from the room.

If a character has a signed will giving him control of Galtre, Lucien's reactions will be the same — piety that shifts to disbelief and then becomes anger. Regardless of what the actual exchange is, Lucien rushes from the room upon uttering a closing line that is a heavy hint the character will regret taking Galtre. The line should not be a threat exactly, but it should be something the players could construe as such.

Karin's reaction to this turn of events depends on who holds the signed will. If it is Alfred, she runs a hand through his hair while purring, "I don't know what you did, but I love you for it. You have served your clan and the lord of Nottingham well. Allow me to introduce you to another group of Cainites. They, too, came here to secure your father's lands for their master."

Alfred eyes the characters suspiciously, but Karin tells him he has nothing to worry about. She says she is confident they are civilized beings and that they can all arrive at a mutually satisfactory arrangement. "I need to discuss this unexpected turn of events privately with my beloved Alfred," she says, "just so I am sure I understand the exact situation we find ourselves in. Can we resume our conversation tomorrow, a few hours after sundown? I give you my word, we wish you no harm, and the castle stands as a safe haven for you, should you choose to use it. Consider yourselves our guests."

If a character holds a signed will, Karin still wishes to negotiate with them. She tries to make it clear to them the conflict that would arise between Mithras and Leeland would needlessly harm the citizens of Galtre. Wouldn't this rural county be much better suited to the Prince of Nottingham than the sophisticated Prince of London? Lady Karin again wishes to resume talks on the next evening.

OUTCOME

If Lady Karin must, she uses Disciplines that force the characters to leave her and Alfred alone to discuss this turn of fortune. If Alfred has Embraced the earl, he does not tell Karin. Although he loves her, he wants to have a life separate from her, and he hopes his father offers a new beginning. (Alfred mistakenly believes that the earl will be his thrall, just as Lucille is Karin's thrall.)

Although the characters may not trust Lady Karin, her offer is genuine. They will be safe in Millstone Castle, and all of Galtre for that matter — at least from the Brujah vampires. Remus' minions are a different matter entirely.

If the characters choose to remain in the castle, any who venture into the crypt below will find a monk praying over Galtre's body, but Lucien is nowhere in sight. Any characters who think to look at the monk's hand notice he is wearing a silver ring that bears an inscription ("I:IV:XV") on his right hand. He is missing the ring finger on his left hand, as well. Each player may roll his character's Intelligence + Academics (difficulty 4) to know that the inscription is associated with the Cainite heresy.

Whether the characters trust Karin and Alfred or not, it is too late in the night for them to flee Galtre. They can reach Redford, or possibly Jill Leftherder's cottage, but that is as far as they will get before sunrise.

ACT TWO

SCENE FOUR: THE MONASTERY(OPTIONAL)

PLOT

In this scene, the characters go to St. Christopher Monastery in a distant corner of Galtre. They either follow Father Lucien there, or come with Wilfred, who determines it is likely that a Cainite makes his haven there. The characters walk into an ambush, however. They might also encounter Remus, the Toreador vampire who dwells in the monastery.

SETTING

The characters travel through the dark woods of Galtre until they reach the location of St. Christopher Monastery. A light fog hangs over the nearby lake, and tendrils drift around the tombstones in the nearby cemetery.

The monastery is only a few years old. It stands on the site of a church built several centuries ago that was sacked during the civil war that took place during the previous Earl of Galtre's reign. The ruins and the cemetery lay untended for decades, until the current earl funded the reconstruction of the monastery on the ancient site. The workers used stones from the ruined church as part of the new structure. The monks have put some effort into cleaning the wild vegetation from the old cemetery, but there is still much work to be done, and the leaning, weathered headstones give the impression that the place might still be abandoned. Lights in the monastery's windows indicate otherwise.

CHARACTERS

Wilfred, the ghoul sent to assist the characters, may appear in this scene. He has a tense air about him, as it is part of his goal turn the characters on each other, so he can attack them with the Brujah he believes to be waiting at the ambush site. Those Brujah are a ruse created by Lady Karin, who wishes the turncoat Wilfred to lead the players' characters into fatal conflict with Remus and his heretic monks.

If Wilfred does not lead the characters into this scene, Father Lucien is present, as the characters follow him to the monastery.

In addition, the characters face members of Remus' cult devoted to the Cainite heresy. There are two cultists for each character.

Finally, should the cultists manage to defeat the characters, they meet Remus himself. Such a defeat may prove disastrous for the characters' free will (and the story), at the least, and their very existence, at the worst.

CLASH OF WILLS

DRAMA

One of two paths leads the characters to St. Christopher's Monastery. They may be suspicious of Lucien following his outburst in Scene Three, and they may follow him there. (Rather than tend the earl's body himself, Lucien orders a monk to do so, and then heads into the night.)

If the characters follow Lucien to the monastery, they can do so without any difficulty. The priest makes no effort to be stealthy about his travels, and unless the characters are sloppy he does not seem to notice he is being followed.

Alternately, Wilfred, the ghoul originally sent from London to help the characters, may approach them. Wilfred takes the characters aside before they have a chance to meet with Karin on the following night, and reveals that he has found the location of a Cainite's haven. If informed that Karin and Alfred are Cainites, he reacts with surprise and says that the haven may belong to another ally of theirs. He shows the characters a silver ring that one of the monks dropped while washing in the castle courtyard. It is inscribed with a symbol the ghoul knows to be the sign of the Cainite heresy, a perversion of Christianity based upon the worship of vampires. He finds it disturbing that there may be a vampire in Galtre who has a horde of fanatically devoted monks at his disposal.

If Wilfred brings the characters to the monastery, the ghoul seems tense during the trip. He is very concerned about the monks now, and explains that he had a confrontation with a group of such religious fanatics in France. They are impossible to reason with, and lay down their lives willingly for the vampire they worship. They are often spurred on, he says, by something far more powerful than the status of ghouldom or the power of a Blood Oath: Many believe death in the service of their "divine" masters earns them an automatic place

in Heaven. The ghoul fears that any Cainite who might be lurking in the monastery represents a serious problem, even more serious than the Brujah.

The trip lasts a few hours. The characters follow a path that is barely distinguishable from the thick forest around them. The woods eventually give way to the ancient graveyard. The monastery looms beyond, lights blazing behind its windows.

Heretic monks lurk in the woods, waiting in ambush. If the characters follow Lucien here, the monks are present because of a message the priest sent earlier. In this case, the attack is staged without warning.

GIVE THEM A CHANCE

Storytellers must take the actions of their players into serious account during this scene. Characters should always be left the option of escape, even if they have to drag their fallen comrades with them. It should become painfully obvious that an assault on the monastery would be pure folly — sheer numbers and Remus' power make this option unsavory.

Only through a characters' monumental stupidity or unwavering bull-headedness should the wholesale capture of the players' coterie be allowed. After all, the story would draw to a close at that point....

If Wilfred brings the characters here, the ambushers await; his scouting mission earlier in the day did not go undetected. In this case, the characters hear a cry as they sneak across the graveyard. Wilfred jerks backward and falls to the ground. A crossbow bolt juts from his forehead, and he dies twitching like a fish out of water.

There are two monks per character, and they all fire their crossbows immediately. As soon as the shots have been taken, the ambushers emerge from the mist-shrouded woods to finish off the characters in melee combat. The attackers are all dark-robed figures.

If the characters are victorious in this battle, and if they search their ambushers, they discover that each has his head shaved in the fashion common to monks. Further, each is wearing a narrow silver ring on his right hand with the inscription "I:IV:XV." Their left hands are all missing ring fingers. If Wilfred did not explain the meaning of these rings to the characters, each player may roll his character's Intelligence + Academics (difficulty 4) to know that the inscription is a symbol of the Cainite heresy.

If the monks defeat the characters, they are not destroyed, but fall into torpor instead. They recover eventually, wracked with a thirst for blood and chained to the walls of a small cell. Remus and Father Lucien are there with them. Remus explains that the Brujah who would snatch Galtre from his grasp have already been destroyed, but since the characters now have his blood in their veins (which roused them from torpor), he can't bring himself to destroy them. He offers them a chance to serve him under Blood Oaths.

OUTCOME

If the characters triumph at the ambush, they should be able to figure out that there are other Cainites besides themselves and the Brujah coterie abroad in Galtre. Some characters may decide they have had enough at this point. They make ready to return to London and inform the prince of events in the county. The characters must still spend one night in Galtre, because the farthest they'll be able to travel before dawn is the village of Redford. Other characters may return to Millstone Castle and inform the Brujah of the situation.

Many characters, however, may take the opposite approach. Rather than retreat from the ambush site, they might try to target those who were most likely responsible. If the characters know that either Lord Alfred or Lady Karin is a Cainite, they may assume that the nobles were behind the attack. If they return to Millstone Castle to engage in a little payback, Act Three unfolds. (The Storyteller should see to it that dawn is upon the characters before they have a chance to act, forcing them to take shelter and delay their revenge until the following night.) Other characters, however, may wish to investigate the monastery, to determine if any more enemies lurk within, or if the Cainite behind the assault makes his haven inside. If they do, they find themselves facing a superior number of heretic monks. If the characters don't flee, they are defeated and captured as described above.



ACT TWO





ct Three

Wherein the characters learn
that reports of the death of Galtre
were greatly exaggerated, and
manykine and Cairites go to their
final rewards.



SCENE ONE: THE NEGOTIATIONS

PLOT

In this scene, the characters meet with Karin in an attempt either to settle their differences or possibly accuse her of arranging the ambush they suffered at the end of Act Two. As they are about to begin, they learn that Father Lucien has organized a memorial service at the village church, and that DuBois ordered all the servants to attend, leaving the castle almost deserted. (Alfred agrees to the memorial service, and orders the servants to attend so he can Embrace his father without risk of discovery.)

Lord Alfred says that he will leave the negotiations to Karin and the player characters, claiming that he chooses to tend to his father instead. This may be cause for concern among characters who have Embraced the earl, and one or more of them may wish to join him in the crypt.

Storytellers should be aware that if the characters have been using the inn in Redford or Jill's home as their haven, Act Three, Scene Two probably unfolds instead of this one, or at least before this one.

SETTING

This scene takes place inside Millstone Castle. However, there are visibly fewer people there than there were the night before. Karin meets with the characters in her chamber.

CHARACTERS

The primary character in this scene is Lady Karin. Lord Alfred and Karin's vampire handmaiden appear, as does one of Warden DuBois' assessors, and possibly Warden DuBois himself. The characters' interaction with Karin is the focal point, however.

DRAMA

The details of this scene depend primarily on how the players' characters approach the other characters. There are few scripted lines, and very few events that must take place. It is roleplaying that determines the course of this scene.

As they exit their temporary havens in the castle, the characters can't help noticing that there are fewer people in the castle. In fact, the whole place is as still as the grave. The first person the characters see is one of DuBois' henchmen, a callous fellow by the name of James. He is either in the entrance hall on the ground level, or poking through the "deceased" earl's belongings in the bedchamber on the top floor. If the characters ask him where the servants and monks are, he answers that Father Lucien wanted to

perform a memorial service for the old earl. The new earl ordered all the servants to attend. James says that his horse threw a shoe, so he decided to remain behind. A lurid grin appears on his face, and he adds, "So did Warden DuBois. The poor warden was so grief-stricken that a few of the men went and got him a little something special. He's cheering himself up with her right now."

If the coterie decides to investigate, they can first listen at DuBois' door. They can hear the sounds of a creaking bed frame, DuBois grunting and an occasional sob in a distinctly feminine voice. Any character with high Perception who has spoken with Jill during the course of this adventure will recognize the voice as hers.

If the characters have any decency in them, they may attempt to subdue or even kill Jill's despoiler. The young woman shows signs of a severe beating. She alternately sobs and mutters prayers under her breath. She is deeply in shock and barely aware of her surroundings.

If the characters do not check on DuBois, they probably go straight to see Karin. They find her with Lord Alfred. She has plainly just risen, and Lucille is fixing her hair for the night. (Storytellers may wish to emphasize the mirrors in the cabinet again at this point.) Karin engages the characters in small talk until Lucille finishes doing her hair and firmly insists that impatient characters slow down. They have all of eternity before them, after all.

Once Karin is done, she bids Lucille to leave them. Alfred likewise excuses himself, saying that he wants to see his father one last time before interring him tomorrow.

As soon as the younger Brujah are out of the room, Karin immediately starts trying to settle any differences between herself and the characters. Her main points are:

- She swears she had nothing to do with the ambush. They may have a common enemy, she says, a third group of Cainites lurking in Galtre. (And if she learns the castle has been all but vacated by the kine, she becomes concerned over the possibility of another attack, saying she'll order Lord Alfred to Redford as soon as he returns from the crypt. She wants the kine here, either as protection or as buffers.)
- She doesn't want Galtre destroyed due to Cainite conflicts, nor does she want to attract the attention of inquisitors over the same.
- If Alfred and Karin control Galtre, the Prince of Nottingham controls it through them. She is relatively certain the characters won't be able to stand against the Brujah should it come to battle. Nottingham has won, she claims.
- If the characters control Galtre, she tries to share her idealism with them and her belief in a better world where the children of Caine live together in peace among themselves and the kine. She paints the county as a place where they can begin to build a better future, as a place where London and Nottingham can begin to patch their differences, and the destructive conflict between Brujah and Ventrue can be brought to a close. Although her remarks may appear self-

WHAT IF THE PLAYERS' CHARACTERS EMBRACED THE EARL?

If the earl was Embraced by a member of the players' coterie, he will flee their company as soon as the opportunity presents itself, though he will not leave the castle. Alfred will claim that he is truly the earl's sire, still hoping to gain control of Galtre by establishing himself as the Earl's master.

serving, Karin wishes in her heart for these words to be true. (She explains to the characters how the Ventrue destroyed the perfect society the Brujah had built in Carthage, a society in which Cainites and kine lived together in harmony.)

- She states the characters appear to be intelligent and cunning. If they weren't, they would have initiated combat immediately, or would have fled back to London and reported to the prince already. She is curious about how strongly tied they are to London and its prince. If they are free agents who serve him because he asked them to, or because of geographical happenstance, she encourages them to join her and the Prince of Nottingham. She says the Prince of Nottingham will offer the characters a better deal. (Karin has no intention of insulting the characters or calling their honor into question. If they give initial answers that show they are unerringly loyal to the Prince of London, she pursues this matter no further.)

Meanwhile, characters who followed Alfred to the crypt find themselves in a lot of trouble.

If the characters are not the ones who Embraced the earl, all who follow Alfred now learn of the earl's undead state. As they watch from the shadows, Alfred stands before his father's tomb and says, "I have given you eternal unlife, father, but it is unlife in eternal servitude! Come forth and get on your knees! Bow to your new master!"

A growl issues from the tomb, and the old earl launches forth suddenly, using his bony fingers and newly acquired fangs to tear at his disrespectful offspring. Alfred screams in pain and horror as his blood splatters across the dusty floor and stone walls. The old earl diablerizes his son before the characters' eyes.

Before the characters can intervene, a group of armed monks rushes down the stairs into the crypt. These ghouls are part of an attack force that Remus sends into the castle to destroy the Cainites who are threatening his efforts to take control of Galtre. There is one for each character present (including the earl).

As the characters battle the ghouls, Alfred dies with an unearthly wail. The old earl flees up the stairs, cackling insanely.

OUTCOME

Karin genuinely wants to head off a conflict with the characters. However, she may answer belligerence with belligerence after a while. Particularly grievous insults may send her into a frenzy. (She is not goaded by insults directed at her clan,



CLASH OF WILLS

her husband or her womanhood, though she does take great affront at repeated assertions that she is lying or trying to betray the characters.) Should things start to get nasty, the Storyteller should begin Scene Three immediately.

Likewise, should characters witness the death of Alfred in the crypt and defeat the attacking monks, they know that a frenzied vampire is loose in the castle. The story continues in Scene Three for this group as well.

SCENE TWO: THE MEMORIAL SERVICE

PLOT

Cainites who return to havens at the Maiden of the Mist Inn or Jill's cottage learn of Father Lucien's memorial service from the citizens of Redford. Some may choose to attend, just to keep an eye on the priest. Characters who do so find themselves in grave danger.

Upon learning that his plan to take control of Galtre is threatened by outside Cainite interference, Remus decides to take Galtre by force. His first step is to make sure that his opponents have no kine at their disposal. Once the assessors, servants and assorted villagers are in the church, Remus' ghouls bar all its doors and windows and set the place afire. If they are inside, the players' characters have a chance to save themselves. If they are not, they might simply save a building full of innocents.

This event unfolds whether any players' characters are present or not.

SETTING

This scene takes place in the village of Redford.

CHARACTERS

Characters likely to appear are Father Lucien and Samuel the Smith, assuming they are still alive. In addition, some of Remus' cultists will be present, sealing the church doors and lighting it on fire.

DRAMA

Should the characters decide to attend the memorial service, they can hear the droning chants coming from the church as they approach, and they can see monks moving around outside it. A successful Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 6) reveals that the monks are sealing the church doors and preparing pitch and torches. It is clear they intend to burn the church and everyone in it. There are two monks for each character.

If the characters move to stop this monstrous act, a perfect opportunity for the Storyteller to have Samuel attack the coterie is at hand, assuming the characters have botched hunting rolls, or otherwise revealed themselves as Cainites.

During the battle, Father Lucien comes to make sure everything proceeds according to plan — he leaves the church just as it is being sealed. If the monks clearly have the

upper hand, he joins the fray, shouting his delight that he is smiting the enemies of the Lord! If the characters are winning, he flees to Millstone Castle to await Remus.

OUTCOME

Characters on the Road of Heaven or the Road of Humanity should certainly wish to stop the horrible event that is about to unfold. Other characters may wish to become involved as well, if they have any decency. The Storyteller may require degeneration checks for characters who allow all the innocents within the church to burn to death. If the characters choose to be heroic they should be able to save some of the kine, even if the church catches fire (assuming the characters are not defeated by the monks and thrown into the fire themselves).

SCENE THREE: THE ASSAULT

PLOT

This scene continues the roleplaying in Scene One. The characters may be speaking with Karin, fighting Remus' minions in the crypt under the castle, or both if the group is divided. The characters may also arrive from Redford to become embroiled in Remus' strike at the castle. In this instance, they have likely just witnessed the burning of the church, and may be in pursuit of Father Lucien.

As negotiations with Karin unfold, a loud, wailing shriek echoes through Millstone Castle. If the heroes investigate, they find Lucien, brutally slain. Mad cackling comes from DuBois' room. Before they have a chance to investigate, Remus and several ghouls come rushing up the stairs at them. Remus engages Karin, while the characters are left to fight the ghouls.

SETTING

This scene of carnage and violence takes place within the shadow-filled hallways of Millstone Castle.

CHARACTERS

This scene is primarily a combat encounter. Remus, Karin and a number of ghouls are present.

DRAMA

This scene should be played in a fast-paced fashion. Hit the characters with event after event, and allow them barely enough time to think about what they are seeing. Make them react, rather than act. If the Storyteller is running this story as a stand-alone story, she should have no compunction about killing several of the characters should the opposition get the upper hand. However, if this is part of a chronicle, the Storyteller may consider fudging a roll or two.

Whether the characters are discussing their differences with Karin in a rational fashion, or whether things are about to come to blows, an unearthly shriek suddenly echoes through Millstone Castle. (This is actually Alfred's death scream from Scene One.)

Karin suggests the characters should investigate. She goes with them, if they insist.



ACT THREE

Whether the scene preceding this one is Scene One or Scene Two, the characters find Father Lucien's body, horribly mutilated (assuming he wasn't killed by anyone in Scene Two; if he was, the victim is one of DuBois' assessors). The man's entrails are tied around his neck in a twisted parody of a hangman's noose. If the characters move the entrails, they find tears in his neck that resemble those of a Cainite bite mark that has not been licked.

As they make this discovery, a wild, insane cackling issues from DuBois' chamber. Before they can investigate, however, there is a commotion downstairs. As they look down, they see a priest with angelic facial features who wears a necklace of human fingers. He leads a group of equally handsome, robed monks up the stairs toward them. (Players who think to look at Remus' hand see that he bears a familiar silver band on his left and right ring fingers) The priest bares his lips, revealing fangs, and says, "I am Remus. You would stand in the way of the Church claiming Galtre as its own, and thus you trespass against the Lord. That transgression will be punished with Final Death."

Lady Karin replies, "I did not come here seeking conflict, but I meet your challenge willingly, weakling. Make peace with the God your very existence shames!"

Karin lunges at the priest as he reaches the top of the stairs, while the monks move to engage the players' characters. There is one heretic monk ghoul for each character.

Characters who explore the ground floor of the keep before heading upstairs hear Karin and Remus' exchange echoing down the staircase. They also make a shocking discovery in the dining room: Lucille laid out with a stake through her heart and her head severed from her body. They are attacked by the opponents described above, as Remus' minions return to the ground floor in search of more victims.

If the characters are split into two groups, then so are the ghouls and monks.

The battle should unfold in such a way that as soon as one character defeats his or her opponents, another nearby character requires assistance.

The battle between the two elder vampires is not one the Storyteller should waste time on by actually rolling dice. He should just assume that Remus has the upper hand, and that without character intervention, Karin will surely be destroyed. As soon as the characters defeat the ghouls, Remus rips Karin's throat open with his claws in a savage blow that sends her flying across the landing. He moves in to finish her, and will destroy her if the characters don't intervene.

Assume Remus spends five Blood Points in his battle with Karin. Then turn him loose on whatever characters are trying to stop him.

OUTCOME

If the characters do not stop Remus from destroying Karin, he drains two Blood Points from her, then beats her to Final Death with his fists. He then turns to the characters, ready to destroy them, too. Just as this battle is about to start, Scene Four begins.

Should the characters defeat Remus, Scene Four begins immediately after that conflict ends.

CLASH OF WILLS

SCENE FOUR: THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

PLOT

This scene sees the Final Death of either some or all of the remaining characters, or destruction of the monster that was once the Earl of Galtre.

As the characters either face Remus or decide what to do next, there is a mad cackle behind them. The earl enters, covered in gore, and carrying DuBois' head and an unconscious Jill. The earl's rantings mark him as dangerously insane. If the characters wish to live, they must destroy him. Some of them may die in the fight, but if they pay attention to the earl's ravings, smart characters realize that the earl believes himself to be young again. The shock of seeing himself in a mirror, of realizing that he still appears old and frail, would give them the advantage they need to get a few unopposed attacks on him.

WHAT IF THE PLAYERS' CHARACTERS RECCED JILL EARLIER?

The coterie may have rescued Jill and dealt with Warden DuBois in another scene. This will not curb the earl's rapaciousness, however. He will have assailed another peasant girl, and carry the head of one of Remus' heretic monks.

With luck and skill, they should be able to defeat him. And with quick thinking, they have the opportunity to ensure Galtre falls under control of the Crown, and thus the Prince of London, if they have retained their original loyalties.

SETTING

Inside Millstone Castle.

CHARACTERS

The featured character in this scene is the Earl of Galtre. All other Storyteller characters are little more than parts of the background. If Remus is still alive, he fights one of the characters, ignoring the presence of the earl. Remember that Remus' current Blood Pool is reduced by three, and possibly more if the characters have moved against him.

DRAMA

Insane laughter emanates from DuBois' room. When the characters turn toward it, they see a terrible sight: The Earl of Galtre steps out of the room, still wearing his white nightshirt, still pale and withered from age and disease. However, he is also spattered with gore. He stares at the characters with a mad hunger in his eyes, and bits of flesh between his teeth and hanging from his lower fangs. He carries the severed head of DuBois, a final look of startled horror etched on the warden's face, in one hand. In the other, he drags an unconscious Jill by her brown hair. She is naked and covered in blood, but she appears to be alive.

"Only I may deflower my peasant women," the earl says firmly, in a regal tone of voice. "It is my right as master of this domain! And now that I have my youth restored, I shall deflower them all and drink their virgin blood even as my seed corrupts it!"

He lets out another gout of mad laughter. "My foolish son thought he could rule me. I punished him for his presumption, and now his youth has been added to mine. You, messengers from my good friend in London, you are clearly creatures of the night, as am I. I would that you serve me. Here, you may have this maiden, and I will claim the wife of my foolish son. Her blood shall be mine. By God, it's good to be young again — young again, and filled with more power than I have ever dreamed of!"

Finally, he bids the characters stand aside, or he will destroy them. If the characters obey, he drops Jill at their feet and turns to Karin's corpse. As he does so, Karin disintegrates into dust. The earl then rides the waves of frenzy and attacks the characters. Hopefully, however, they will not knuckle under to him — the Storyteller should portray the earl in such a way that everything about him horrifies and disgusts the characters.

Of course, after the battle they have just completed, the players' characters may be too weak to take him on. They can still defeat him, however. The key lies in his repeated references to being young. He believes his body has been restored to peak physical condition. By showing him the truth with a

mirror (perhaps from one of the cabinets), they will shock him into inaction for two turns. During this time, they can stake him, take free attacks or simply flee the area.

OUTCOME

The Earl of Galtre is a monster. There should be no doubt among the characters that he must be destroyed. Otherwise, he would roam the hills of Galtre like a mad beast, destroying kine and Cainites alike. There can be no coexistence with the earl.

AFTERMATH

Galtre is in chaos. As Alfred and Karin are both destroyed, the lands pass to the Crown of England. Since the Ventrue are secretly involved with the king, the characters will thus succeed in the mission they were assigned by Nicholas and the Prince of London. Although their success is not as clean and orderly as the elder Cainites would like, the players' characters are successful nonetheless, and whatever rewards they ask for are granted. Furthermore, Nicholas comes to consider them Cainites of great resourcefulness. He may call upon them again in the future, and the characters might find themselves embroiled in Cainite politics of the dirtiest kind.

Karin was a close friend and ally of Robin Leeland, the Prince of Nottingham. He is keenly interested in the events that caused her death, and he may have the characters



ACT THREE

summoned before him to hear the story of what happened — forcefully if need be. Leeland may alternately send his top lieutenant, the savage and cunning Patricia of Bollingbroke, to investigate the circumstances of Karin's disappearance. Should Patricia become aware of the characters' involvement, they find themselves in danger of the gravest kind as they are stalked by a brutal killer with centuries of experience. They may seek protection among their Ventrue allies, but the only guarantees of their safety are to destroy Patricia — who will be followed by other hunters — or to seek the forgiveness of Leeland. The Prince of Nottingham may extract many dangerous services from them before he feels they have paid for the death of Karin.

It is likely that the characters have a thoroughly traumatized Jill in their care. Any character on the Road of Heaven or Road of Humanity should feel a desire to help her and her young brothers, who have lost their guardian. Jill's road to recovery will be long, and she is never quite the same — she never again sleeps a full night without waking up screaming, and her faith in God is destroyed completely — but by involving themselves with her and her brothers, the characters may earn the gratitude of these kine. If they approach the

situation correctly, the characters may cultivate this gratitude into a relationship with the Leftherder family that might last for centuries, as parents pass their loyalty to the characters on to their sons and daughters.

If Samuel the Smith survives the events in *Clash of Wills*, he travels to Canterbury where the archbishop listens to his tale of blood-drinking demons with great alarm. The archbishop, bucking the will of the Toreador trying to manipulate the English Church from behind the scenes, sends teams of inquisitors and vampire hunters to Galtre. What remains of the sect devoted to the Cainite heresy (including Remus, if he survives) is destroyed, and the St. Christopher Monastery is rededicated to the true service of God. All Cainites who remain in the County of Galtre must be very careful for the next few months. Church inquisitors, as well as the king's investigators, will be very curious to locate the source of the carnage that unfolded here. If Samuel knows the players' characters are Cainites, he can point them out to either group of hunters, and the characters may find themselves stalked and harried if they remain in Galtre.

There are many stories that can arise in the wake of *Clash of Wills*. It is up to the Storyteller to make them come to life.



Dramatis Personae:

A Cast of Characters

THE CAINITES

NICHOLAS, SENESCHAL TO THE PRINCE OF LONDON

Background: Nicholas was a minor knight in the court of an English Ventrue whose ranks were decimated during a Viking raid in the seventh century. Although his early unlife was painful, he has now outlived several masters and currently stands as one of the Prince of London's most trusted advisors and allies.

Image: Nicholas is a darkly handsome man with deep brown eyes and long black hair. He typically wears it tied back in a ponytail. He was Embraced at the peak of his physical health and still has the appearance of a young, striking warrior. He dresses in the latest fashions, except that his clothes are always cut from reds and blacks and accented with tasteful jewelry of gold and silver.

Roleplaying Tips: You are in control and you know it. You have no particular need to prove your power or your authority to others, so long as they serve you and your master, Prince Mithras. You lord over lessers and insist on formalities only if you believe that not doing so will cause them to mistake themselves for anything but servants.

Haven: Tunnels under the Tower of London. Nicholas' haven lies adjacent to that of Mithras, the Prince of London.

Secrets: Nicholas is a natural diplomat who has contacts in Cainite communities throughout Europe. It is this wide net of friendships and contacts that has allowed him to survive even while his masters have fallen to their enemies. On more than one occasion, Nicholas even provided minor assistance to enemies as his masters' stars waned.

Influence: Nicholas has the ear of the Prince of London and is respected by a number of Cainites across Europe.

Destiny: Nicholas gets involved with the Tudor family at his master's request. It proves fatal for him — Nicholas dies in the Battle of Tewkesbury.

Clan: Ventrue

Sire: Malthias

Nature: Survivor

Demeanor: Judge

Generation: 7th

Embrace: A.D. 832

Apparent Age: mid-20s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 5, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Archery 3, Etiquette 6, Melee 6, Ride 3

Knowledges: Academics 2, Investigation 4, Law 5, Linguistics 3, Occult 2, Politics 5, Seneschal 4

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 6, Fortitude 3, Potence 2, Presence 5

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 5, Influence 5, Resources 4, Retainers 5, Status 5



Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 6, Courage 4
Road: Road of Chivalry 6
Willpower: 9

NICHOLAS' BODYGUARDS (FOUR GHOULS)

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 2
Talents: Alertness 4, Brawl 2, Dodge 3
Skills: Etiquette 2, Melee 4, Ride 3
Disciplines: Fortitude 3, Potence 2
Willpower: 7

WILFRED (VENTRUE GHOUL)

Wilfred is at first a loyal servant of Nicholas. The seneschal sends him to Galtre to provide the characters with assistance, should they need it. He is a stocky man with a round face and carrot-colored hair.

Wilfred gets in over his head as the events in **Clash of Wills** unfold. He believes that Nottingham will emerge victorious and scurrilously changes sides to support Karin and Alfred's bid for power. He meets his demise in an ambush set by Remus.

Nature: Autocrat
Demeanor: Judge
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3
Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 1, Brawling 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 2, Subterfuge 4
Skills: Archery 2, Etiquette 2, Melee 3, Ride 2, Stealth 2
Knowledges: Academics 1, Occult 3, Politics 3
Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 1, Potence 1
Willpower: 7
Equipment: Signet ring bearing the personal seal of the Prince of London

THE EARL OF GALTRE

Background: The Earl of Galtre led a life of self-indulgent brutality, satisfying his evil passions freely. He swept enemies and competitors aside with unrestrained violence, exploited friends and allies without a second thought, and callously disposed of lovers and wives who had grown uninteresting.

As Galtre felt old age and illness steal his vitality, fear for his immortal soul grew in him. Although he gave generously to the Church, he feared that not even all his earthly belongings would cleanse his soul.

Image: Galtre's body appears frail and disease-ravaged. His skin clings to his bones, and is sickly white even before his Embrace.

Roleplaying Tips: Your frail body holds a soul that is thoroughly corrupt and saturated with depraved evil. You are a violent, brutal man, and you follow your basest instincts.

CLASH OF WILLS

Haven: Millstone Castle

Secrets: A lifetime of foul, evil deeds.

Influence: None

Destiny: If there's any justice at all, the earl dies by the end of the story.

Clan: Brujah

Sire: Alfred (or possibly a player's character)

Nature: Monster

Demeanor: Autocrat (Monster, post-Embrace)

Generation: 10th (this may vary, based on his sire and his diablerie)

Embrace: A.D. 1197

Apparent Age: late 60s

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Stamina 1

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 3

Skills: Archery 3, Etiquette 3, Melee 3, Ride 3

Knowledges: Academics 1, Law 1, Occult 2, Politics 5

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Dominate 2, Potence 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Influence 3, Resources 4

Virtues: Conviction 3, Instinct 4, Courage 3

Road: Road of the Beast 5

Willpower: 6





LADY KARIN

Background: Karin was the daughter of a Scottish noble who was never happy with his own possessions. Disappointed that his only child was female, he nonetheless made the best of a bad situation, training his daughter in the subtle nuances of courtly life. By the time Karin reached marriageable age, she was attractive enough to be considered a prize by the Saxon nobility of England.

Her beauty hid an ugly cunning, however, and she positioned herself to assume the mantle of ruler immediately after she married, denying her dumbfounded father any possible benefit he may have gleaned. Though she suffered some pangs of guilt and remorse at her father's betrayal, Karin knew that her own desires must come first, and she took to political life with remarkable ease.

When her Embrace came, she saw it as a gift (although the long years have colored her vision differently), giving Karin ever greater skill and acumen.

Image: Lady Karin carries herself with a nobility that most queens would envy. She typically wears gowns of sapphire blue or emerald green, which accent her red hair and green eyes. Her body is trim and willowy.

Roleplaying Tips: You possess great poise and dignity. You project an air of nobility even when you are sad, angry or in the heat of combat. You are deeply in love with Alfred, and cannot imagine treating him as you did your long-dead father.

Haven: Small estate north of Nottingham, or Millstone Castle.

Secrets: Karin yearns to be alive again. Even after her centuries of unlife, she misses the feeling of the sun on her face and the taste of food in her mouth. Karin also turns Wilfred from the service of Nicholas, though she doesn't truly trust him — which becomes moot after his death.

Influence: Karin is a favored companion and trusted advisor of Robin Leeland, Prince of Nottingham. They have stood side by side for several centuries. Another prominent friend of Karin is the deadly Patricia of Bollingbroke. Both would do their utmost to avenge any wrongs visited upon Karin.

Destiny: Could be better.

Clan: Brujah

Sire: Verias

Nature: Judge

Demeanor: Gallant

Generation: 8th

Embrace: A.D. 563

Apparent Age: early 20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 3

Skills: Crafts 4, Etiquette 4, Melee 3, Music 2, Ride 2

Knowledges: Academics 3, Occult 5, Science 2, Seneschal 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 3, Chimerstry 4, Potence 3, Presence 4

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Retainers 1, Resources 3

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 2, Courage 5

Road: Road of Humanity 5

Willpower: 4

LUCILLE

11th Generation, childe of Jackdaw

Nature: Penitent

Demeanor: Defender

Embrace: A.D. 1165

Apparent Age: early 20s

Lady Karin saved Lucille from destruction. The inexperienced vampire's sire, a prolific yet irresponsible young Brujah in Nottingham, refused to acknowledge Lucille as his childe, so Karin took her in. A bright young woman in life, Lucille serves Karin willingly and devotedly, and she would do so even if a Blood Oath didn't exist between them.

Lucille has a fine-featured face and mouse-brown hair. She dresses in gowns not unlike those worn by her mistress, and rests on the floor in Alfred and Karin's chamber during the day.

LORD ALFRED, SON OF GALTRE

Background: Alfred grew disgusted with this father's violent, twisted excesses at a young age. At 15, he left Galtre behind for the life of a sell-sword. After nearly a decade of violence and carnage, he came into the employ of Lady Karin, a minor noble with lands north of Nottingham.

Her graceful manners, slim body and attractive features captivated him immediately. Karin admired the young man's spirit and his vocal disgust with nobles who mistreated their subjects. After a year of courtship, Karin revealed to Alfred her true nature and the Brujah vision for a better world. His love for her did not falter, and he shared the vision for a better tomorrow, so he traded his life for eternity at her side.

Two years later, word reached Alfred that his father was dying. He saw this as an opportunity for Clan Brujah to spread its influence beyond the Nottingham area.

Image: Alfred has noble features and an easy smile. He is a powerfully built man in his prime. He carries himself like a warrior, and his arms bear the scars that evidence his life as a sell-sword.

Roleplaying Tips: You treat servants with brusqueness and women with condescension (even, to some degree, your sire Karin). You were raised to be a ruler. Although you have nothing but contempt for lords who mistreat their subjects, you are still keenly aware that you are a lord, that peasants are subjects and that women are second to men.

Haven: Small estate north of Nottingham, or Millstone Castle.

Secrets: Despite his love for Karin, or perhaps because of it, Alfred has grown increasingly uncomfortable with the fact that he is subservient to her. He is a man after all. Alfred intends to Embrace his father, believing that the old man will feel the kind of devotion to him that Lucille feels to Karin. He has a flawed understanding of the nature of the Embrace, and an inflated opinion of himself. He believes that he still retains total free will because his will is stronger than Karin's.

Influence: Alfred has little influence among Cainites, but he is well-connected among kine warriors and lesser nobles.

Destiny: Grim, at best.

Clan: Brujah

Sire: Karin

Nature: Rebel

Demeanor: Defender

Generation: 9th

Embrace: A.D. 1195

Apparent Age: mid 20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Talents: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3

CLASH OF WILLS



Skills: Archery 1, Etiquette 2, Melee 4, Ride 3

Knowledges: Academics 1, Hearth Wisdom 1, Law 2, Occult 1, Politics 3

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Potence 3, Presence 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Influence 1, Mentor 2

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 4, Courage 3

Road: Road of Humanity 6

Willpower: 6

REMUS

Background: Remus was a monk in Germany who excelled at calligraphy and sculpture. He belonged to a minor sect devoted to the Cainite heresy. The Toreador vampire on whom the sect's services focused was so taken with Remus' work that he Embraced the talented monk.

Since that time, Remus has managed to improve his art, something very rare among Cainites, many of whom lose the genuine creative spark upon their Becoming. Remus is also unusual in that he managed to befriend one of the Fiends and learn the art of Vicissitude from her. Now, Remus crafts beauty from stone and mortal flesh alike.

Clan Toreador wishes to repeat in Britain its successes with the Roman and Eastern Churches. Toreador have manipulated successive Archbishops of Canterbury. The Cainites hope to expand their influence further, seizing control of land by convincing the rulers to will it to the Church. Remus has dwelt in the



Monastery of St. Christopher since its founding five years ago, and personally overseen the creation of the structure's beautiful stone ornamentation. He has swayed all the monastery's monks to the wisdom of the Cainite heresy and used Vicissitude to give them the likenesses of angels. Of course, this wisdom comes with a price — Remus ritually removes the ring fingers of his monks' left hands to symbolize the sacrifice of service to God through the Blood.

Image: Remus bears all the trappings of a priest, with the exception of the necklace of fingers he wears. His face is almost angelic in appearance, but not unnaturally so, and his hair consists of golden curls.

Roleplaying Tips: You seek to strengthen Clan Toreador and the Cainite heresy. These are not always compatible goals, and you become angry and frustrated when you must sacrifice one to advance the other.

Haven: St. Christopher Monastery in the County of Galtre.

Secrets: If other powerful Toreador were to learn of Remus' adherence to and open practice of the Cainite heresy, he would find himself hounded from Britain. Many of the Toreador involved with the English Church do not want their efforts jeopardized by such self-aggrandizement among Cainites.

Influence: Remus is a leading practitioner of the Cainite heresy. While he commands respect among those who know of him, however, it does not necessarily mean he has access to any allies (due to the secretive and fragmented nature of the sect). He has some influence among the Toreador who wish to strengthen their position in the British Isles.

Destiny: Remus is likely to be thwarted, either by character intervention or by happenstance as the events of *Clash of Wills* unfold. Remus is killed by either the players' characters or in the Church's purge of the Cainite heresy after the close of the story.

Clan: Toreador

Sire: Talios, the Black Patriarch

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Caretaker

Generation: 8th

Embrace: A.D. 982

Apparent Age: late 30s

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 1, Leadership 4, Sculpture 3

Skills: Crafts (Stoneworking and calligraphy) 5, Herbalism 2, Melee 2, Music 5

Knowledges: Academics 4, Linguistics 2, Politics 2, Seneschal 2

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 4, Dominate 3, Potence 3, Presence 3, Vicissitude 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Herd 3, Resources 2, Retainers 4

Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 2, Courage 4

Road: Road of Heaven 5

Willpower: 7

FATHER LUCIEN (TOREADOR GHOUL)

Background: Father Lucien was once a devoted parish priest. He grew old before his time trying to protect his flock from the Earl of Galtre's worst excesses. As the earl's life waned, Lucien was drawn closer to the old man, as the nobleman tried to salvage his eternal soul by making offerings to the Church. Lucien was as repulsed as ever, but his superiors wanted him to work with Galtre.

This association brought Lucien into the clutches of Remus. The Toreador needed a servant in Galtre, someone who was close to both the Church and the earl. The elderly priest was the perfect choice.

Father Lucien has been a ghoul for almost four years now. During that time, his grasp on sanity has slipped somewhat; He has become a devout follower of the Cainite heresy, and sees Remus as his lord and savior.

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Penitent

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Empathy 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Etiquette 2, Melee 1, Oration 2, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Academics 2, Hearth Wisdom 1, Medicine 1, Politics 1, Science 3

Disciplines: Potence 2, Presence 2

Willpower: 7

Equipment: Unsigned will that leaves Galtre to the Church, silver ring inscribed with "I:IV:XV."

HERETIC MONK GHOULS

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Varies

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Brawling 1, Dodge 2

Skills: Archery 3, Melee 3, Ride 1

Disciplines: Potence 1

Willpower: 7

Equipment: Crossbow, short sword, silver ring with the inscription "I:IV:XV"

KINE

JILL LEFTHERDER

Nature: Child

Demeanor: Survivor

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 1, Empathy 2, Leadership 2

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Cooking 2, Etiquette 1, Farming 1, Herbalism 2, Weaving 1

Knowledges: Hearth Wisdom 2

Willpower: 7

Merits/Flaws: True Faith 2

SAMUEL THE SMITH

Nature: Defender

Demeanor: Survivor

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Animal Ken 2, Brawl 2, Empathy 1, Intimidation 1, Leadership 1

Skills: Crafts (Blacksmithing) 3, Etiquette 1, Farming 1

Knowledges: Hearth Wisdom 5, Occult 2, Science 2

Willpower: 7

Equipment: Four stakes carved from ash trees, crucifix

WARDEN DuBOIS

Nature: Monster

Demeanor: Tyrant



Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 1, Brawling 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Archery 2, Etiquette 1, Melee 3, Ride 3, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Seneschal 2

Willpower: 6

Equipment: Personal seal of the Earl of Galtre, short sword, dagger

COUNTY ASSESSORS (DuBOIS' FOUR HENCHMEN)

Nature: Varies

Demeanor: Tyrant

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2


Talents: Brawling 2, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3

Skills: Archery 1, Melee 2, Ride 3

Willpower: 4

Equipment: Dagger, club

CLASH OF WILLS



The Earl of Galtre lies on his deathbed and his lands hang in the balance. Fearing for his immortal soul, the earl wills his lands to the Church in exchange for absolution — or does he? His son produces what appears to be a valid will that designates him as heir to his father's lands. Add the players' characters under the direction of Mithras, Prince of London, and what becomes of the situation? An unforgettable journey through the darker side of Cainite politics and morality!

CLASH OF WILLS

includes:

- An easy-to-run adventure, ready to pick up and play;
- A versatile setting: Drop the story into an existing chronicle or play it as a one-shot;
- Tips for launching a chronicle using this story as a springboard.

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ISBN 1-56504-289-1

WW2810 \$8.00 US

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PRINTED IN USA



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