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to dig beneath the sands of Guadalupe, I hope that they will not rush
into print with the amazing news that Egyptian civilization,
far from being confined to the valley of the Nile,
extended all the way to the Pacific Coast of North America.
– Cecil B DeMille



City in the Sand

*An adventure for Mind's Eye Theatre: the Requiem
using the Storytelling Adventure System*

Written by Kelley Barnes, Jess Hartley and Eddy Webb
Based on a scenario developed by the Camarilla Fan Club for GenCon SoCal 2004
Developed by Eddy Webb Edited by Genevieve Podleski
Layout: Jessica Mullins Art: J S Rossbach, Doug Stambaugh, Cathy Wilkins
Special thanks to a number of people from CCP Iceland and CCP North America for helping
to playtest this scenario.

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BLVD SUITE C
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA 30087

STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

MENTAL	●●●●●
PHYSICAL	●●●●●
SOCIAL	●●●●●

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STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

SCENES

3

MENTAL
PHYSICAL
SOCIAL

●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

XP LEVEL

0-34



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California, 1923. The debris of the film's wrap party decorated the sand — empty wine bottles leaned against false sphinxes while napkins, plates and glasses lined the stretch between the temple facades of DeMille's Egypt. The silence of a late morning gave way to the orders of the crew foreman. Stout ropes pulled the 35-foot tall Pharaoh statues down with muffled thumps as they landed on the sandy cushions of the dune.

It was the beginning of the end. In the space of three days, a set was buried that was constructed by 1,600 workers in the span of months. This was done to protect the film from cheap production companies poaching the set and releasing inferior films before DeMille's masterpiece was ready to be shown.

At least, that was the reason given to public and the press.

No mention was made of inexplicable deaths that took place in the one month of filming on the Nipomo Dunes, or the rumor among the crowds of extras that the artifact-decorated set was cursed. Some Kindred had reason to suspect otherwise. But all of that passed into whispered reminiscences and myth, and in the span of three generations was forgotten. Memories of the tent city that once populated a remote part of southern California appear to be safely buried. The Masquerade and other secrets are kept intact, as it should be.

And then comes the press release. "The City of Ramses" has been found, and a group of movie archeologists have started to excavate the site as an important find in film preservation. There is an exclusive party being held to help raise funds and increase awareness of this unique site. Rumor has it that the archeologists have found something interesting, and they intend to reveal it at this event. That may explain why so many Kindred of diverse interests have secured an invitation to be present.

Dangerous secrets were hidden in the sand over eighty years ago. It's a blink in time for the vampires of Los Angeles. But discovery is not always a good thing.

Introduction

City in the Sand is a Storytelling Adventure System kit for **Mind's Eye Theatre: The Requiem**. What makes this different from other SAS products currently available? Along with a handful of scenes and Storyteller advice, we also provide an entire cast of pre-generated characters and the tools to help make the best possible match between what a player wants to portray and what has been created for use.

This kit is presented as a single session experience, but you can take the scene cards, story elements or character from **City in the Sand** and use them as additional pieces for your Storyteller toolkit, or even insert this scenario into your ongoing chronicle. The elements included with this kit can also be used when running a tabletop **Vampire: The Requiem** session for your players.



ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you've chosen a fine place to start. To keep this story kit lean and focused, though, we haven't included a lot of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. Whether you're a new Storyteller or an old hand, be sure to read the **free SAS Guide**, found at the SAS website:

www.white-wolf.com/sas

One thing to keep in mind is that **City in the Sand** crafted for a game of 10 to 50 players and a small team of Storytellers, not a small group of players and a single Storyteller at a table. It's unique in our SAS offerings thus far, so some elements may be different from what's detailed in the **SAS Guide**, or what you might be used to in other SAS products.



WHAT'S INSIDE

This kit is broken down into the following sections:

In this **Introduction** you will get the background of the scenario setting, the full write-ups of the Storyteller characters and general notes.

The **scenes** are the framework for the action in this kit. These have been crafted with a suggested order of progression, but they can be used as the basis for an improvised structure to the unfolding plot.

Scene cards, which are included at the end of this scenario, are a quick-reference resource for the Storyteller. You will find reminders about the main goal for each scene and information about modifying factors which can affect the outcome for the players. If you don't want to print out the entire kit, just having these cards at hand can help you keep track of the overarching elements of the story.

The **new player booklet** is a tool created for you to print and distribute to your players along with their character sheets. It's a simple reference guide that explains the dots and numbers on the sheets, and how to use basic levels of the vampiric Disciplines.

Over fifty **character sheets** — ready for immediate play — have been created for this kit. In addition to the mechanics, each character has background information to help flesh out the concept. Most also have pre-established coteries with suggested goals for the session, along with personal tasks they are striving to accomplish. In the LARP environment, this provides needed hooks to help players jump in and start getting involved in conflicts. Specific characters (such as Prisci or Primogen) will have additional information sheets as well.

TREATMENT

City in the Sand presents the idea that there are supernatural dangers in the world that not even Kindred are prepared to fight, and that some secrets are better left buried. Cecil B. DeMille filmed *The Ten Commandments* in 1923. He destroyed the set, burying it under the dunes rather than trying to salvage it for parts. Recently, a determined group of film buffs located the remains of his set and began to dig it up.

Given the large number of characters, there are numerous challenges available for exploration in the course of the session. Some obstacles are coterie-versus-coterie conflicts, covenants striving to alter the order of power and clans agitating for more recognition. Individuals have goals to accomplish along with aiding their various allies to complete group tasks. Collectively, the characters will encounter a malevolent spirit, Suten Anu, who is intimately connected to the excavated film set and to selected artifacts on display at the fundraiser. What starts as an evening of social interaction in the Danse Macabre will slowly change with the involvement of the intangible supernatural, involving forces that even a vampire can not readily affect.

The story begins with characters arriving at a party being held at the Café Bohème, a fashionable Los Angeles club owned by the coterie of the same name. The motivations to be present differ for each individual: Some are here because they seek power, while others are here to make sure their part in questionable activities decades past remains hidden. Some arrive to broker deals, some to gather information and some just to be seen.

When tours of the excavation site are extended to the attendees, the artifacts that have been uncovered will be introduced into play. Some of these items are of no import; others could potentially reveal secrets powerful Kindred wish to keep hidden. One, an amulet, is special – the anchor and power object for Suten Anu. When this is triggered, the spirit wakes and becomes active. Contact with the outside world will become constricted after the spirit wakes and grows active, forcing the Kindred present to rely only on those present to resolve the problem, ignore it or be defeated by it. Another artifact, the golden tablet of Ra, is a counter to the powers of Suten Anu and offers protection to the one who holds it in his possession.

There is not a pre-determined end to this kit, other than the fact that the party will be over before sunrise. The struggle against Suten Anu may end up being set aside as players choose instead to concentrate on overturning the Prince or securing new positions in the established court for their covenant or coterie.

THEME: DANGEROUS SECRETS

This story focuses on the idea that no matter the passage of time, there is always a chance that the skeletons in the closet can be uncovered at the worst possible time. Trust is rare in Kindred society, and everyone has something in their past they want to remain hidden. Enemies who start poking into sensitive backgrounds can initiate vendettas that last for decades, frequently ending only when one of the two opposing individuals or an entire vampiric lineage has been removed from the Danse Macabre permanently.

Each night of existence as a vampire has a measure of risk attached to it. Kindred must constantly be measuring their choices. What is good for a player character's covenant may be at odds with the best interests of their clan and keeping a secret from one group that claims a vampire's loyalty for the benefit of another is a risky proposition – one that can end in final death.


MOOD: ANACHRONISM

The Fog of Eternity is a blessing, even if some of the Kindred dispute that fact. No one can cope with centuries of memories, no matter if they are mortal or vampire. But there are drawbacks as well. Upon waking from torpor, no Kindred can be certain what they recall is a true piece of their past and not the fevered images of vitae-touched dreams. So what Kindred could anticipate that a threat from Ancient Egypt would surface in 1923, and that the crossed threads of time would bring that danger into the modern day?

Age ends up being a kind of insanity in the Danse Macabre. Kindred who don't adapt, wearing top hats or hoop skirts instead of suits and jeans, will draw unwanted attention. Being out of step with the times means placing your continued existence at risk. This is a major reason to investigate and contain anything at this expedition that will place Kindred society at risk.

A CHAPTER IN YOUR CHRONICLE

City in the Sand is written specifically to provide an introductory session for LARP suitable for one night of play, something that could be run at a local convention or with a large group of friends. If you choose to expand upon the setting and events of this kit, incorporating it into your on-going chronicle, you may want to spend time customizing the backgrounds of some characters and other elements prior to play. Instead of the Café Bohème, select a site already familiar to your players. Change it to a touring exhibition, with a stop in your local town looking to raise funds for the ongoing work back in California. (Keep in mind that you may have to cut some sections of the new player booklet if you go this route.)



You can also modify this for a tabletop **Vampire: The Requiem** chronicle as well. If you can't find a way to substitute the presented characters, consider sending the coterie as representatives of your Prince or another influential Kindred who has a background tie with one of the leader characters in this kit. This can become a road trip adventure where the characters of your chronicle become caught up in the machinations of a city of volatile Kindred and an angry ghost.

Background and Set-Up

BACKGROUND

In ancient Egypt, Suten Anu was a priest of Set that went insane and slaughtered people to drink their blood. The priest was killed, and a strange mystic banished his ghost to an amulet. His spirit was cursed never to walk the earth again unless one who has tasted blood touches the amulet. The amulet was buried in a forgotten tomb and believed to be lost.

Before filming *The Ten Commandments*, a number of Egyptian artifacts were acquired by DeMille's producers to give authenticity to the set, including the recently uncovered amulet. When shooting began in Guadalupe, California, an unknown ghoul touched the amulet and set Suten Anu free. The insane spirit started to kill people on the set, starting with the ghoul who unwittingly freed him.

The director and his production crew were able to keep most of the gruesome details from getting out to the crew and actors, but not all of them. Of the eight documented people who perished, three bodies were found, and word spread through the cast and crew. Eventually, someone made sure the goings on were brought to attention of the local police. However, the law was too late to make any headway in their investigations, as principal photography wrapped up before the police arrived on set and most of the extras had cleared out as soon as the studio released them.

With no idea who or what was stalking his people, DeMille did the only thing he could – ordered the destruction of his set and, he hoped, all the evidence or reason for this unknown killer to act. His act of desperation succeeded, because the Amulet of Suten Anu was buried along with all the other structures and props. The spirit of Suten Anu could not recover the amulet, and eventually fell back into its power.

In recent years, seizing upon a clue found in DeMille's autobiography (published after his death), a group of determined film students started the search for the buried set, looking for their own place in film history as its discoverers. This project was brought to the attention of a few Kindred who had had ties to Hollywood in the 1920s, and they became sponsors of the excavation, providing the much-needed funds for the lengthy project.

Meanwhile, Kindred society in nearby Los Angeles has undergone changes in the intervening years. The Prince, Danton, has become increasingly temperamental and capricious. During the last two decades, a few brave (or foolish) Kindred have suggested she is no longer sane, especially since the disappearance the Sherriff, Takashi. Regardless of the truth of that assertion, those who Danton allowed to live after having her rule questioned were, at best, banished. More than a few met their end at the hands of her Hound. Now, behind closed doors and only with their most trusted allies in the Danse Macabre, some Kindred are considering if tonight might be the best moment to overthrow Danton.

SET-UP

One of the most important differences between **Mind's Eye Theatre** and tabletop Storytelling games is the use of physical space. For the most part, you and the players will have to exercise your imagination in a willing suspension of disbelief, but providing elements that create sensory immersion for your players in the play space you've decided on will enhance everyone's enjoyment.

An ideal location for **City in the Sand** will have one central meeting area large enough to contain all the players at one time, and then one or two smaller rooms or private areas where characters can hold meetings away from the crowd. A private residence can sometimes accommodate this need, but more frequently LARP sessions take place at a convention or university student center. When this happens, there will frequently be non-gamers about, so take that into consideration when discussing costuming or settings with your group.

The main room will be a static location for **City in the Sand**. Once everything is set in place, it can remain like that for the evening's session. Dressing this area will help create the atmosphere

needed to give the players focus. A number of tables and chairs that will comfortably seat everyone is ideal. With inexpensive cloth, you can cover furniture as well as drape it along the walls to create alcoves. If the site lets you use candles, try centerpieces at the tables and illumination in the corners. Turn down the overhead lights if possible, but make sure the space isn't so dark that people can't read their character sheets or end up bumping into each other. Bring a CD or MP3 player and have music playing at low levels in the background, changing out tracks for the various scenes can help to ratchet up the tension in a cinematic fashion for your players. Instrumental movie scores work best for this, but make sure you don't choose songs that the players are overly familiar with – nothing breaks the mood faster than the players starting to hum along to the theme of their favorite summer blockbuster.

We suggest that one of the smaller spaces be designated as the outdoors, representing the patio of the café and surrounding sand dunes, but both alternate spaces are dynamic in nature and can be changed as needed to accommodate the actions of the players. If they want to have a meeting in the kitchen or walk to the tents of the excavation and see active site in the dunes, then use the dynamic space for that. It becomes the task of the Storyteller to evoke the imagination through description, giving the players a mental image of their play space.

Props also play a big part in establishing the atmosphere of the game site. Included are some printable artifact cards (p. I). If you place these before game start next to some appropriate props (concealed under cloth), this will help create an element of surprise and give the players opportunity to uncover plot elements at their own pace. Using just the cards is possible, but doesn't evoke the same sense of immersion as having physical props to touch, hold and carry away.

Helping players to establish the hierarchy of position and power at the onset of the game can be done through the use of setting and props as well. Designating a table or highly visible area of the main room as for the Prince and court members gives those players an area of focus they can use in interacting with the game as whole. Selecting a chair with a unique appearance, or covering one with a special cloth can create a "throne" for the player of Prince Danton.

Distributing the player characters from this SAS is another pre-game task for the Storytellers to consider. Creating a simple questionnaire for players to fill out can be helpful, but it is no substitute for talking with the players, getting a sense of their comfort level and gauging their interest in different roles available. A novice to gaming may not be the best choice for a Sheriff, but someone new to LARP who has background in theatre could enjoy having the spotlight of a Primogen or court officer role.



PRINCE DANTON, STORYTELLER CHARACTER

It's recommended that Prince Danton is portrayed by a Narrator for the entire duration of **City in the Sand**. There are two main reasons for this. First, the Prince has her fingers in a lot of pies in this city, and it's a lot of information to give to a player. It's more comprehensive to allow a Narrator to read the entire kit and pick out any details involving Danton that make sense for the story. Secondly, there are a lot of subplots that involve the Prince, and having a Narrator involved means that she can kick-start some of those plots into play, such as calling for a new Sheriff or suddenly deciding that the artifacts need to be returned to her immediately. The fact that the Prince is believed to be insane helps with this – any sudden changes or decisions can be easily explained as part of her growing eccentricity.

Although the advice presented in this kit assumes the Prince is portrayed by a Narrator, we have provided handouts and a character sheet for Danton, in case you would prefer a player to portray her (perhaps after she has recently awoken from a short torpor, leading her to forget and confuse some details of her previous interactions with the city).



ARTIFACTS

There are two artifacts of note from the expedition – the golden tablet of Ra and the amulet of Suten Anu. Each artifact comes with a card with information detailing what happens when you touch the artifact with Spirit's Touch. We've provided a blank card as well so you can introduce more artifacts from the expedition – pieces of the set that look authentic, pictures of the cast and crew from the time or even additional mystical artifacts that might become relevant in future stories in your chronicle. Below you will find information about the artifacts that characters might uncover with appropriate Intelligence + Academics or Occult draws.

AMULET OF SUTEN ANU

ACADEMICS OR OCCULT INFORMATION

The amulet of Suten Anu was an artifact brought to California by DeMille's team in Egypt. It was uncovered in a different tomb than the golden tablet. The amulet is a simple gold medallion in the shape of a bird, similar to the one on the tablet. However, there are mars and scorches on the surface of the amulet. To all appearances, it is an amulet of a priest of the sun god Ra that has been defaced, although it's hard to tell whether the defacing was contemporary to the amulet or more recent.

STORYTELLER INFORMATION

The amulet actually belongs to the ghost of Suten Anu, a priest of Set that was corrupted by madness to become a murderer that drank the blood of his victims (see Suten Anu, right, for more). When one who has tasted blood touches the amulet (i.e., any vampire or ghoul), they awaken the spirit of Suten Anu, who wants to reclaim the amulet and pass to his judgment in the underworld.

THE GOLDEN TABLET OF RA

ACADEMICS OR OCCULT INFORMATION

This tablet was one of the artifacts acquired by Cecil B. DeMille and his production team while they were in Egypt, and was originally uncovered set into the door leading to an unnamed pharaoh's tomb. The symbols on the tablet are discernable to someone who understands Egyptian hieroglyphs. The three main glyphs are a bird, a sun and a bull. The bird is a *bennu* bird, a symbol of fire and rebirth. The sun glyph symbolizes the life given by the sun as well as the authority of the sun god Ra. The *apis* bull is the only Egyptian deity represented solely as an animal. This is because, in the earliest of Egyptian religious practices, they were animals sacrificed to the cow goddess and represented the resurrected, renewal of life. Taken in whole, the tablet here would seem to indicate it was a symbol of a pharaoh, embodying the qualities of kingship and everlasting life.

STORYTELLER INFORMATION

Unbeknownst to the characters, the tablet also repels death. It is uncomfortable to vampires with unusual senses (i.e., Auspex) because of its connections with life and the sun, but it is particularly loathsome to creatures of pure darkness and death, such as Suten Anu. Suten Anu cannot come within ten paces of anyone that holds the tablet, or anything that is in contact with it. If the tablet is placed in contact with an outside wall, for example, Suten Anu cannot come within ten paces of that wall.

SUTEN ANU

Quote: [Hissing, gurgling sound]

Virtue: Temperance. He has waited a very long time to reclaim the amulet and break his curse.

Vice: Wrath. He is furious at his imprisonment, and will do anything it takes to break free of it.

Background: In ancient Egypt, Suten Anu was a respected priest of Set. Part of his respect came from a vampire that watched over his career and removed obstacles from his path. One night the vampire gave Suten Anu some of her blood, claiming that it would elevate him among the gods. Suten Anu relished in the power the blood gave him, and he went insane. He started to murder others and drink their blood, believing it brought him even more power. His vampire guardian left Suten Anu to his fate, and soon he was killed. Another priest, this one of Ra, felt that his soul was so corrupt that it could not be allowed to pass on, so he bound Suten Anu's ghost to an amulet. He was cursed to never walk the earth again unless someone who has repeated his crime touched the amulet...

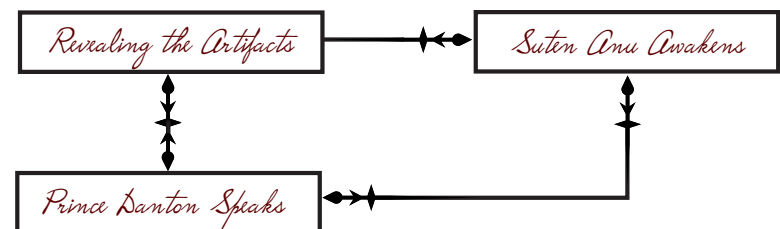
Someone like a vampire or a ghoul.

Description: Suten Anu, in his ghostly form, looks like a corpse dressed in rotting Egyptian clothing taken from the original set. His throat is torn out, only allowing him to make strained hissing and soft gurgling sounds. Parts of his body have decayed, including some of his face. When possessing a human, he looks like the person he's claimed.

Storytelling Hints: Suten Anu walks only to reclaim the amulet so that he can put his soul at rest. However, he has no means of communicating, and only understands ancient Egyptian, so most of his attempts will be various attempts to take the amulet from the owner. Suten Anu doesn't have any special knowledge of where the amulet is, but can detect a fake when he is able to touch it.



SCENE FLOWCHART



Revealing the Artifacts

MENTAL ...

PHYSICAL -

SOCIAL ..

OVERVIEW

Once the guests have arrived and things are ready to get started, the Café Bohème coterie welcomes everyone to the party and reveals the artifacts their mortal contacts have brought for display. A couple of the artifacts may attract particular attention from the Kindred present.

Before the game, pick one of the characters in Café Bohème to reveal the artifacts (Doran is the most logical choice, but any character from that coterie will do). The coterie only knows that they're some artifacts from the recent film archeology dig – their mortal co-workers set up the display before the party started.

STORYTELLER GOALS

The first (and most obvious) goal is to introduce the artifacts into the story. There are a number of characters with a particular interest in these artifacts, but Kindred are generally curious creatures, so there will likely be a lot of initial interest in the artifacts.

The second goal is to get one of the vampires to touch the amulet, so that you can introduce the scene “Suten Anu Awakens” at a later point. This shouldn't be a problem, especially as the Auspex power Spirit's Touch requires physical contact. Further, it's likely that at least one Kindred will try to steal one or all of the artifacts, thus neatly circulating them in play. If for some reason none of the characters are interested in touching or taking the artifacts, remind the player of Quinn (or another character in the Starlight coterie, if Quinn is unavailable) that this could be an ideal chance to reclaim the artifacts.

CHARACTER GOALS

Find out more about the artifacts, and find out who has a particular interest in the artifacts.

ACTIONS

LEARNING ABOUT THE ARTIFACTS

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Academics or Occult (whichever is higher)

Action: Instant

This is a draw to see if the character remembers anything about any of the artifacts. If the character has access to a library somehow, the action becomes a normal research test (**Mind's Eye Theatre**, p. 61, though you can substitute Occult for Academics). Vampires using the Auspex power Spirit's Touch should reference the artifact cards on p. II.

Hindrances: Fairly obscure artifacts (-2)

Help: Library or Internet access (+2)

Roll Results

Failure: Nothing is learned about the artifact in question.

Success: Each success reveals one fact about the artifact. Information on the artifacts can be found on p. II and 5.

CONSEQUENCES

One thing to keep in mind is that you won't be able to keep your eye on the artifacts once the players start moving them around. Make it clear to the players once the artifacts are revealed that whomever has the actual artifact card is the character who has the artifact at any particular time. You might also assign a Narrator (perhaps the one portraying Suten Anu) to log where the artifacts are at any particular time.

Once an artifact has been touched, you can introduce “Suten Anu Awakens” at any dramatically appropriate time. If you want to slow the pace down a bit, you can also move to “Prince Danton Speaks.”

Suten Anu Awakens

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL –

OVERVIEW

After a vampire has touched the amulet, the ghost of Suten Anu comes back to try and reclaim the amulet.

STORYTELLER GOALS

The main object of this scene is to add some occult mystery to the story (as well as the potential for physical conflict through the humans he possesses). While Suten Anu's goal is to regain the amulet, it shouldn't be that easy, either for the ghost or for the player characters.

Ideally, Suten Anu should be a subtle presence at the gathering, growing in intensity and overt action as the story progresses. Possessing mortal characters at or around the gathering is a good opening tactic – even one police officer can make a group of Kindred nervous, and a beloved ghoul or retainer suddenly walking off and asking strange questions will draw at least a few characters to investigate. From there, Suten Anu can make a lot of (unsubstantiated) threats, using his Phantasm Numina to create illusions of fire, sunlight and the like to cow vampires into doing his bidding. Summoning beetles and insects and using his Terrify power is a last resort, if no other tactics are working or (more importantly) if only a couple of characters are showing interest in the story.

If the characters hand over the amulet to Suten Anu early in the story, you can claim that the spirit won't be freed until the sunrise ("when Ra can look down and see that his plan has finally failed"), thus allowing other characters to interact and possibly disrupt the plan. Suten Anu may decide to take the opportunity to destroy the tablet, work with another character to secure a more permanent hiding place for the amulet or simply attempt to take vengeance on any characters that attempted to thwart him earlier. Again, he shouldn't end up attached to any one character for too long if at all possible.

CHARACTER GOALS

Find out what all the unusual events around the party are, and see if they are connected. Once Suten Anu is discovered, find out what he wants and decide if you can (or want to) give it to him.

ACTIONS

DEALING WITH SUTEN ANU

Vampire don't have any inherent abilities to deal with ghosts, so a lot of possibilities depend on the circumstances of the story and whether you need Suten Anu to stick around for a while or if you're happy wrapping up his subplot. Below are a few suggestions.

Destroying the artifacts: Both artifacts act as anchors for Suten Anu (see *Mind's Eye Theatre*, p. 334). Destroying both artifacts may set Suten Anu to rest, or send him to oblivion.

Giving him the amulet: Giving Suten Anu the amulet and allowing him to destroy it will also resolve his torment. It might also turn him back into a living man, or make his ghost more powerful, if your players are interested in the subplot and you have some time left.

Abjuration and exorcism: Characters with faith, such as the Lancea Sanctum characters, might try to perform an abjuration or exorcism, as per the rules in *Mind's Eye Theatre*, p. 340. It's up to you if you consider a particular character to have enough faith to be able to perform either rite.

McGuffin: If all else fails, you can use the Tablet of Ra as a plot device to get rid of the ghost. Let the players come up with an appropriately cool (and roleplayed) ritual, and if you think it adds to the game, let them succeed.

One thing to be careful of is endless frustration. If the players are bound and determined to get rid of the ghost and you keep shooting down their ideas, they're going to get frustrated and just do whatever they can to ignore the plot. Keep an eye out for what players seem to be interested in. If there's a group that really wants to sit down and explore the mystery of the artifacts and the ghost, then spend some time stretching out and making the final resolution meaningful. If it just seems to be getting in the way of all of the political machinations, let any attempt to get rid of the ghost succeed and focus on the subplots the players are more interested in.

CONSEQUENCES

Since Suten Anu can't instinctively tell where the amulet is, a wily Kindred can trick the vengeful spirit into doing things against her rivals, thus turning the ghost into an ally in their personal agendas. This is certainly an acceptable outcome, but don't let Suten Anu turn into a minion for one player – at the earliest opportunity, he should move on to another character to look for the amulet.

If Prince Danton hasn't addressed the vampires yet (or needs to do so again), move to "Prince Danton Speaks."

Prince Danton Speaks

MENTAL •• PHYSICAL • SOCIAL •••

OVERVIEW

Prince Danton holds court to set a number of political distractions into motion. But has she finally overplayed her hand?



HOW DANTON RULES

Prince Danton has a slightly unusual style of rulership, due to her covenant – she allows the covenant leaders to submit petitions for city business to her, which she considers. She also allows them to overrule her decisions with a unanimous vote (which rarely happens, given various rivalries in her city which she tries very hard to cultivate). The Prisci primarily act as mentors to newer Kindred in their clan, but Danton sometimes holds them accountable on larger clan issues (such as if the Pack start getting out of control). Overall, though, Danton is treating her own system more and more like a kangaroo court and simply doing whatever she thinks is best.



STORYTELLER GOALS

If Prince Danton is a player, this scene is very simple – just allow some time for the Prince to speak formally to her assembled court.

If Prince Danton is portrayed by a Narrator, however (see the sidebar on p. 4), this scene is intended to kick-start or progress a number of political plotlines in the story, whether by her own decree or via various covenant leader petitions (see sidebar above). Some examples include:

- **Finding a new Sherriff to replace Takashi.** This will motivate L.A. Confidential (though whether to claim the position or show the inadequacies of the candidates is up to the players involved), as well as those who know or suspect that Takashi was murdered. The Prince might come up with any number of challenges to test the abilities of the candidates, but mostly she's looking for a Kindred that will be loyal to her and won't look too closely into her dealings.

- **Meet the Kindred new to Los Angeles.** Calling characters forward that are new to the city gives those characters with weaker in-game ties a chance to stand up in front of everyone. Further, it helps to promote the Lancea Sanctum subplot.
- **Allow petitions for other new positions.** Specifically, the positions of Prisci's Harpy and a Bishop for the Lancea Sanctum are open. While the Prince can't technically appoint either position, she can allow the Kindred present to petition her for formal recognition of the Prisci's Harpy, and allowing any Bishop to submit petitions and vote like the other covenant leaders do. However, either position can erode her power base (a new Harpy that she can't control can start affecting her Status, and a new covenant leader might be able to convince the other leaders to cooperate), so mostly this is put forward as a vain hope.

This is a repeatable scene if needed. If certain storylines are stalling, the Prince can reconvene court and make some new proclamations. More likely, though, this scene will have to be repeated due to larger events – Kindred being accused of various crimes against the Traditions, calling for a blood hunt or dealing with a significant power base of Kindred making an attempt to overthrow Danton (such as via the “Too Many Or Too Few Princes” rules in *Mind's Eye Theatre: The Requiem*, p. 287).

CHARACTER GOALS

See what the Prince has to say, and try to turn it to your advantage if possible.

ACTIONS

CHECKING FOR DIABLERISTS

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Empathy + Auspex – subject's Composure (Aura Perception)

Action: Instant

A Kindred with Auspex •• can attempt to read another Kindred's aura and see if they've committed diablerie. To perceive Danton's aura, the reading Kindred must first beat her Obfuscate in a clash of wills (*Mind's Eye Theatre: The Requiem*, p. 159) before they can attempt this test – if Danton is a Storyteller character, assume she has one success for her Mask of Tranquility power.

Hindrances: Obfuscate (see “Clash of Wills,” *MET:R* p. 159)

Help: None.

Roll Results

Failure: The character learns nothing from the subject's aura.

Success: If the subject has committed diablerie during the game (or is Prince Danton), the character sees the telltale black streaks that indicate the foul act in her aura.

CONSEQUENCES

Finding out Danton is a diablerist isn't hard – she's primarily survived by just being above suspicion. It's harder, however, to *prove* it and make it stick. Either way, if Danton or her coterie get wind of the information, it's going to have some consequences for the character.

If the artifacts haven't been introduced yet, introduce "Revealing The Artifacts" later. If they have already been revealed, introduce (or repeat) "Suten Anu Awakens."

Aftermath

There are a number of things that can happen in **City in the Sand** that can affect future stories.

Suten Anu: If Suten Anu is dealt with, there's still a chance that more curses and problems might result from the set of *The Ten Commandments*, including the ghosts of the cast and crew lost during shooting. However, if the ghost makes away with the amulet or is thwarted but otherwise not destroyed or banished, he may become a recurring problem for the Kindred of L.A.

Prince Danton: Prince Danton might not be in power by the end of this story. If she is, any Kindred who were involved in any attempts against her are going to have some serious problems going forward. If she's deposed, however, any new Prince or government will have to solidify their powerbase from the Danton's allies and other potential usurpers.

Individual Goals: There are over a hundred goals possible for characters within this kit. Any of them can be followed up on in future stories, as it's very unlikely that all (or even most) of them will be resolved within the scope of **City in the Sand**.

EXPERIENCE

You can award from 1-9 experience points for wrapping up a chapter and a story, as per the guidelines on **Mind's Eye Theatre**, p. 308-309. If the group is small, you might want to consider incremental awards as presented there, such as Learning Curve, Roleplaying, Success, Danger, and so on. One good way to do that is to let players tell (very short) stories of their experiences as they nominate someone else for such an award. Another possibility instead of awarding "After A Story" awards is to give each player one experience point for each goal they completed, both personal and coterie, up to a maximum of four. Finally, if the group is particularly large, you might want to consider a flat rate of points, such as five or six, for everyone who participated.

SCENE: *Revealing the Artifacts*

6

MENTAL ●●● PHYSICAL — SOCIAL ●●

HINDRANCES

Fairly obscure artifacts (-2)

HELP

Library or
Internet access (+2)

OTHER

Use the artifact cards
(p. 11) as props

STs

Introduce the artifacts into the story; get a vampire to touch the amulet

PCs

Find out more about the artifacts, and find out
who has a particular interest in the artifacts.

SCENE: *Suten Anu Awakens*

7

MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL ●●● SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

None

OTHER

There are at least five ways
to deal with Suten Anu:

- destroy the artifacts
- give him the amulet
- abjuration
- exorcism
- using the tablet as a plot device.

STs

Add some occult mystery to the story.

PCs

Uncover the unusual events, and see if they are connected.
Find out what Suten Anu wants.

SCENE: *Prince Danton Speaks*

8

MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL ● SOCIAL ●●●

HINDRANCES

Obfuscate
(see "Clash of Wills,"
MET:R p. 159)

HELP

None

OTHER

Some potential plots that
Danton can introduce
include finding a new
Sherriff to replace Takashi,
meeting the Kindred new
to Los Angeles and
allowing petitions for
other new positions.

STs

Let the Prince speak, and maybe introduce or push along some political plots.

PCs

See what the Prince has to say, and try to turn it to your advantage if possible.

SCENE:

MENTAL PHYSICAL SOCIAL

HINDRANCES

HELP

OTHER

STs

PCs

Amulet of Suten Anu

If you want to use the Auspex power **Spirit's Touch** on this object, follow the instructions below. If you succeed, flip the card over and read only up to the successes you have gained. To use Academics or Occult to learn information about the artifact, please see a Storyteller.

Cost: — **Action:** Instant

Test Pool: Wits + Occult + Auspex

Roleplaying Hint: Light trance state. You are dimly aware of your surroundings, but you cannot move or speak about anything other than visions being received, or use other Disciplines without breaking the trance.

Draw Results

Failure: Failure indicates that no impressions come through.

Success: Flip card over for results

Golden Tablet

If you want to use the Auspex power **Spirit's Touch** on this object, follow the instructions below. If you succeed, flip the card over and read only up to the successes you have gained. To use Academics or Occult to learn information about the artifact, please see a Storyteller.

Cost: — **Action:** Instant

Test Pool: Wits + Occult + Auspex

Roleplaying Hint: Light trance state. You are dimly aware of your surroundings, but you cannot move or speak about anything other than visions being received, or use other Disciplines without breaking the trance.

Draw Results

Failure: Failure indicates that no impressions come through.

Success: Flip card over for results

Successes:

1. **success:** There is an immediate vision of blood dripping. There is an emotional residue of surprise, pain and death.

2. **successes:** As above, plus you see a face, one which pops out of the posters from the restoration of the film: Charles De Roche, the actor portraying Ramses, the pharaoh. He is cradling someone in his arms, the person wearing the amulet. He is shocked and surprised. You get the impression he sees the murderer, or thinks he does, before the vision fades out.

3. **successes:** As above, plus the visions shimmer before your eyes. You can see the night sky overhead, clear and cloudless, with all the stars shining. There are sounds of a loud party in the distance and the smell of cooking fires. There is a brush of a cold hand along your back. You shudder before pain fills your mind. Your heartbeat hammers in your head as you try desperately to push blood to your heart. You feel light-headed, and then you feel nothing but the fluttering of death at the edge of your senses.

4. **successes:** As above, plus as your eyes start to lose their focus, and you see a face leaning down. It is skeletal, like a jackal's head. It wears the regalia of an ancient Egyptian priest. It opens its mouth, and blood drips from its fangs before it lunges forward. You can feel every inch of you exploding into a million pieces, and your last sight is of your own body turning to sand.

Successes:

1. **success:** Even before you touch the tablet, you feel incredibly uncomfortable, as if the tablet will burn your fingers to touch it. As soon as your fingers brush the warm metal, you get a vision of holding the tablet above your head while the bright California sky beams down on it. You know the light can be seen across the crowd gathered before you. The director is yelling at the extras as they move forward, dressed in the garb of the Egyptian guards and royal attendants. All eyes are on you in the role of temple priest of Ra.

2. **successes:** As above, and your senses strain to make a connection. There is something distant and powerful that seems to linger out of reach—just the faintest whisper of power, the warmth of the sun, the warmth of faith.

3. **or more successes:** As above, and this is not just a movie prop. The tablet in your hand is far older than that. It is real, authentic. You can feel the age of it, feel it burning your hands, gold melting through the skin, resting against the bone. When you let go or pull away, your hands remain unharmed, but the residual memory lingers for a few seconds.

4.