MIND'S EYE THEATRE

VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE

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Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade Fiction

"Release Party"
by Jason Andrew

"A Night at the Museum"
by Jason Andrew

"Shadowed Reflections"
by Ree Soesbee

"Old Habits"
by Ree Soesbee

Benedictions, Dedications, and Appreciations

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Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

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Release Party

Sophie strained to understand the muffled whispers in the foyer through the thick door painted with ornate golden flourishes. Individual words blurred together, but the sheer intensity of the eager murmurs surprised her. She blinked, mostly by habit, and tilted her head towards her sire. Sophie was young enough that her delicate features expressed wide-eyed innocence by accident rather than design. "I've only met three vampires, including you. How is it possible that all of those voices belong to vampires here just to meet me?"

Vivek pulled her away from the door and into his arms. Her sire was beautiful like a Renaissance painting from one of the masters. If she still breathed, she would have forgotten how in that moment.

"This isn't a mere cotillion to introduce you to society. Make no mistake that the Kindred on the other side of that door are the most savage predators this social ecosystem can support. To my allies, you represent potential aid for their own concerns. To my enemies, you are a weakness through which to strike at me." He cupped her chin in his hand, lifted it as though to examine her, and then wiped a droplet of blood away from her lip with his thumb. "This moment is important for both of us, and if you are not properly prepared, the consequences will not be pleasant. I will lose face, perhaps for years. If Prince Morgan judges you unfit, then the last two years together will have been for nothing."

She brushed her lips against her sire's thumb, letting him feel the point of her fang. "I won't disappoint you."

Vivek smiled proudly and kissed her gently upon her forehead. "Your continued existence and my reputation greatly depend upon it."

The thought that this Prince had the power to judge her worth as a vampire frightened her. It was worse than the anxiety of presenting her dissertation. If she failed to impress this vampire, she would be murdered with but a word.

A firm, but short, burst of knocks at the door preceded the egress of a tall, stern woman in an expensive, grey suit. Vivek greeted her with a simple nod. "Primogen Wilkerson. Thank you for attending my childer's release party."

Her sire had once joked that Darla Wilkerson was the epitome of all Ventrue, and that she was as tightly wound as her signature hair bun. "It is a pleasure to meet you, Primogen."

Primogen Wilkerson did not acknowledge the fledgling's greeting. "Elder Vivek, Prince Morgan instructed me to inform you that he is ready to proceed at your convenience."

Sophie kept her hands folded behind her back to hide the clenching of her fists. She glanced toward her sire and then back at the Primogen, feeling the urge to grab Wilkerson's golden bun and shake some politeness into the Ventrue.

"Thank you, Primogen Wilkerson. Please inform the good Prince that we will be there promptly."

Primogen Wilkerson nodded demurely and returned to the foyer without looking at Sophie.

Sophie growled bitterly. Her fangs were erect from anger at being ignored. "You weren't kidding about her."

"Remember that without the Prince's acknowledgement, you are nothing in the eyes of the Camarilla. Unreleased childer are considered better seen and never heard." Vivek kissed away the pout on her lips. "And she was once my paramour. It cannot be pleasant for her to see this night arrive at last. Resist the temptation to give them a reason to hate you."

If she were still human, Sophie would have blushed. "Forgive me."

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"Remember, this night is a test. We will both be judged on your poise and ability to control yourself. If you should fail to control your Beast…."

"I'll make you proud of me."

Her sire simply nodded, as though he expected no less from her. "Do not speak until Prince Morgan bids you otherwise. Should he grace you with acknowledgement, keep your words brief to avoid giving others an imperfection to attack."

"Yes, sire."

He opened the door and gestured for Sophie to cross the threshold into the room beyond: a luxurious Louis XVI-style ballroom framed with bouquets of jasmine. Her dissertation had focused on the influence of Rococo and neoclassism on French courts in the late 18th century. Renting this room at the MGM Grand must have cost Vivek a fortune, more wealth than she could fathom.

The guests turned their attention towards Sofie and her sire, and the other vampires subtly parted to create a path to the center of the room. There, sitting on a throne, was a grim-faced, gaunt man. He was almost as white as his formal tuxedo, and his intense steely blue eyes cut right through her. She tried to take a step and failed until Vivek offered his arm to escort her across the room. Sophie glanced around at the cold, hungry faces staring at her. It felt like she was being walked down the aisle by her father on her wedding day.

A large, bestial vampire, clad in gentlemen's clothing from centuries ago, stepped forward, halting their progress: Seneschal Antar of the Nosferatu. He had interviewed Sophie once, and she had daymares for a week afterwards. Antar tapped his staff twice upon the floor. "Attend the words of Prince Morgan."

Prince Morgan spoke and the entire court listened with rapt attention. "On this night, Elder Vivek of the Toreador brings forth a fledgling to release before this court. The Embrace brings forth terrible changes to the body and soul. Those who survive it must learn to temper their new hunger and to embrace the night. What is your name, child?"

"Sophie Rourke." It wasn't her real last name; it was Gaelic for "famous ruler." If she had to change her name, she wanted it to impress.

"What is the Fourth Tradition?" Prince Morgan asked.

If she failed to answer properly or displeased him, this stern vampire could simply have her destroyed with a word. "The Accounting."

"Define the Accounting."

Sophie found herself struggling to breathe, which was odd since her body had died two years ago. Fear was just a reflection of an undisciplined mind. This was just another test like her dissertation. She studied history for years, memorizing names and events that some of the creatures in this room might have actually met or attended. The words came slowly, but she willed her mind to focus. "Those thou create are thine own children. Until thy progeny shall be released, thou shall command them in all things. Their sins are thine to endure."

"What is the most important Tradition?"

Whispers echoed around her, but Sophie kept her concentration on the Prince. She resisted the urge to smile. Vivek taught her the dogmatically correct answer to this question on the very first night of her Embrace. Her historian training rebelled against the truth of this statement, but the empirical evidence of the last two years made this truth undeniable. "The Masquerade. Thou shalt not reveal thy true nature to those not of the Blood. Doing so shall renounce thy claims of Blood. Keeping hidden from humans keeps both sides safe and happy."

Prince Morgan gestured to her sire. "Elder Vivek, you have taught her well."

Vivek bowed with appreciation. "Thank you, my Prince. She is an apt pupil. I hereby release Sophie Rourke from my custody and my care. I present her for acknowledgement by the Ivory Tower."

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The Prince leaned back on his throne. "Sophie Rourke, do you swear that you will obey the Traditions and serve the domain of Detroit and the Ivory Tower?"

"I do, my Prince."

"Then by my word and will, I acknowledge you as a member of the Camarilla."

The crowd of monsters wearing kind, humane faces clapped enthusiastically. Seneschal Antar tapped his staff twice to quiet the room once more. "Prince Morgan wishes to thank Elder Vivek for his generous hospitality by surrounding us all in elegance that reminds us all of a more civilized age. One of the oldest Courtesies of the domain of Detroit is that each clan shall give a token to a new fledgling to start her off in the night."

Sophie turned away from Vivek. Custom required that she walk alone in Kindred society to brave the best and worst that the Ivory Tower had to offer.

First to approach Sophie was a pale woman with tangled wet hair, festooned with seaweed-colored ribbons. She moved across the room as though she was swimming through water. Her eyes were wide, bright blue, and unblinking. She smelled faintly of brine. "I am the Murmur of Lorelei. I bring a small token to the childe of a dear ally." She pressed a small seashell into Sophie's hand. "You may call upon me in the future for a trivial boon. The sound of the sea is everywhere."

Primogen Wilkerson addressed Sophie next. She fished an eggshell-white business card from her jacket and presented it to her. "Welcome to Detroit, Ms. Rourke. In the name of friendship with your sire, I offer you a trivial boon to assist in your adjustment to society."

The remainder of the evening blurred with pleasant conversations, well-wishes, and gifts. Vivek beamed with pride until the hour grew late and he retired to a private location with the Prince for domain business. The entirety of the guests had made a point to greet Sophie, save for a quiet, handsome couple who sat in the corner. They caught Sophie's eye.

The seductive African woman had tight cornrows, dazzling golden eyes and a form-fitting black and gold lace dress. She whispered mischievously into the ear of a handsome man in an expensive suit with the most kissable lips Sophie had ever seen aside from Vivek's. The pair of vampires seemed to live with passion and strength. She wanted to be like them. She wanted to be either of them. Or be with them.

A nervous ghoul coughed, trying to gain her attention.

"Yes?"

He handed her a pristine white box with a black and gold ribbon. "This is from the couple in the corner."

"Who are they?" Sophie asked.

"Wadjet Abdullah and Lorenzo Giovanni," the ghoul answered. "Representatives of the Independent Alliance."

Vivek had taught her about the two outsider clans that had banded together to form an alliance: the Followers of Set and the Giovanni. Neither were strictly enemies of the Camarilla, but they weren't exactly considered the crème of society either.

Sophie untied the ribbon and lifted the lid, surprised to discover bundles of crisp cash, tens of thousands of dollars. She found a brief note written in an elegant hand, *"This is to get you started. Call if you want more."*

She glanced over towards the door that led to Vivek, Prince Morgan, and the remainder of court's officers. She couldn't always count upon Vivek's generosity. The night work she did for the museum wouldn't keep her in the style to which she had quickly become accustomed while living with Vivek.

If it didn't break the Traditions, what could it hurt?

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Chapter One: Introduction

"The universe is made of stories, not of atoms."

— Muriel Rukeyser

Human existence is created from the merging of thousands of stories. Tales, ranging from the mythical to the mundane, follow the course of our lives through an interweaving and tangled skein of life. The human consciousness is wired to share stories, learning from the experiences of others. We invented language and culture, and we tell and retell the stories of Hercules, Kintaro, El Cid, Qin Shi Huang, and Robin Hood to teach the lessons of survival and morality. Today, we continue this tradition through playing video games, watching movies, and reading novels, investing ourselves in thousands of stories.

Mind's Eye Theatre is a narrative game of vampires and mortals, a story of darkness and light that provides players with the opportunity to engage directly in the age-old tradition of collaborative storytelling, but with a very modern twist. You will step into the role of an immortal vampire seeking to survive, and even thrive, in a complex society hidden beneath our own. In this **World of Darkness**, enemies hide in every shadow, and a moment's weakness could prove your eternal undoing. Each night is a constant struggle — not just for power, but also to preserve your humanity even as your vampiric instincts perpetually drive you into a dark spiral until you bottom out as a monster without a soul. The tale is about the allure of vast powers chained to very human weaknesses.

Inside this book, you'll find everything you need to play a game of live-action **Vampire: The Masquerade**. The mechanics chapters cover character creation, powers, merits, flaws, and skills — all the building blocks you need for personalizing your very own vampire character. Later chapters cover the political and social structures of this setting, the dangerous world in which your character exists, and guide you through methods of storytelling the game.

If you have never before experienced **Mind's Eye Theatre**: **Vampire The Masquerade**, we suggest that you start your journey with this chapter. We'll cover everything discussed here in more detail later in the book, but the introduction offers an overview of the best parts of the game. Let's start by answering a few questions.

What is Roleplaying?

Vampire: The Masquerade is a roleplaying game. Each player creates a character within a setting established by a Storyteller. The characters interact, working together toward common goals, or acting against one another in the pursuit of power, lust, wealth and, sometimes, nobler motivations. In many roleplaying games, the participants sit together around a table; the players describe their characters' actions, while the Storyteller describes the world and what happens to the characters, each in their own words. Some roleplaying games occur online, through a blog or forum, each player taking turns to write out her characters' actions, description, and thoughts; "roleplaying" also describes a type of console or computer game in which a single player customizes a character and plays through a pre-determined plot in a virtual world.

At its heart, roleplaying is a type of interactive storytelling. It's about being creative, having fun, and often interacting socially. Roleplaying allows us to experience adventures, dilemmas, highs, and lows that we may never experience in our daily lives.

Most of the time, a roleplaying game, like a good movie, revolves around having adventures. Your character might be a spy, or a pilot, or a sword-wielding knight on a quest to fight a dragon. Unlike traditional board, card, or dice games, there is no clearly defined way of "winning" and "losing." You establish goals for your character, and then you attempt to achieve those goals by describing your actions and encouraging others to assist you within an imaginary world. The goal of most roleplaying games isn't to win or lose: it's to build and share a compelling story with the other players.

Each player in the game creates her own unique character, and these characters can work together (or cause each other difficulty) through interacting with the plot and the world around them. One person takes the role of the Storyteller, narrating events and explaining what's happening to the characters. Together, you build a story starring characters you've created, using the rules in this book.

What is Mind's Eye Theatre?

Mind's Eye Theatre (MET) is the direct descendant of more traditional types of roleplaying, but instead of sitting at a table describing actions or navigating through a virtual adventure, MET is about the physicality of the experience: players wear cool costumes and decorate the playing area to give their stories visual appeal and a higher degree of immersion; they act out their characters' choices in real-time, similar to actors in a play; and they react emotionally to the awful and wonderful events of the story.

People who enjoy this style of roleplaying call it live-action roleplaying (LARP). (In some places it's known as interactive theater or improvisational theater.) LARP is all about expressing your own creativity and sharing it with other players. Unlike a video game that lets you choose from 10 predetermined costumes for your character and offers you only three dialogue options when you encounter a challenge, MET encourages you to give free reign to your imagination; you can create exactly the costume you want your character to wear and say exactly what you want your character to say. And unlike a forum or blog game, where you may have to wait days or a week for another player to respond to your last post, MET happens in real time, giving players immediate enjoyment as they share the events of every story as they happen. You won't just customize a sheet of statistics or choose a small picture to represent your character; you'll customize everything about her, every time you play.

Your character isn't the only thing that gets customized in **Mind's Eye Theatre** games. Storytellers and players often work together to make the playing space look and feel like a location in the **World of Darkness**, to help everyone immerse themselves in the experience and create a better shared story. You might decorate a living room to look like an ancient church, or arrange props and furniture in a hotel convention room so that it resembles a Wild West saloon.

What is a Character?

A character is the persona you create for **Mind's Eye Theatre**, through which you will experience the horror, danger, mystery, sadness, and romance of vampires. You physically embody this character, deciding exactly what she says and does, where she goes, and what choices she makes. She begins as an idea from your imagination, but you bring her to life when you play. It's a little like creating a special mask and shaping it constantly through roleplaying.

We all wear masks — you're a little different at work from how you are at home, different with your friends, different in your daydreams, etc. In everyday life we must all tie these differences together to create the whole self. In **Mind's Eye Theatre** we wear a mask of our own choosing; it's still only a mask, but you are its animating force, giving form to the persona created in your imagination. Your character can be any age, gender, or ethnicity, and because you're creating a vampire character, you'll make many more interesting choices about who she was when she was mortal, and what she has since become.

Other players in the game establish characters in the same manner, and you are encouraged to interact with them. Those characters may have different views or ethics than your character. Even if the player is your friend, her character may become an ally or an enemy, and her actions might help or hinder your character's goals. This kind of interaction makes roleplaying unique. In LARP, the game is usually larger, and a large portion of the game's enjoyment comes from interacting with other players through politics, dramatic scenes, and the occasional combat.

What is a Storyteller?

In a LARP, the player is responsible for portraying her character; the Storyteller's responsibility extends to everything else within the setting. A Storyteller creates the world that exists around the players' characters. She also devises the plot of the game, and adjudicates any conflict or challenges that arise. It is the Storyteller's job to make the setting feel real so the players can properly decide how their characters would interact.

Storytellers guide the plot of a game, creating adventures and devising the events that will challenge the characters during a game session. The Storyteller plays the parts of antagonists and non-player characters (NPCs) in the world, and describes any part of the setting that is not physically represented. It is also the Storyteller's job to act as an impartial judge when the rules of the game are applied. A Storyteller establishes theme and story, from action-adventure, to personal horror, to cutthroat political entanglement. It is her job to make sure your character is appropriate to the genre and narrative of her game.

Being a Storyteller is a demanding task, requiring before-game planning as well as quick thinking and improvisation when players take actions the Storyteller did not expect. At larger games, such as those at LARP conventions, a Storyteller might organize an entire staff of Narrators, or assistant Storytellers. Those assistants typically handle small-scale activity and answer simple rules questions, freeing the Storyteller to shepherd the main plot of the game.

For more information on the role of the Storyteller, see **Chapter Eight: Storytelling on page 323**.

What is the World of Darkness?

Your vampire character doesn't exist in a vacuum. She resides in the **World of Darkness**, the base setting for all **Mind's Eye Theatre** stories. It's a world much like our own but with some important differences. This is where your character rises each night to hunt and feed, where she competes for prestige and power against other nocturnal predators, and where she unravels ancient mysteries that threaten to rock the very foundations of everything she knows. This is where she must struggle against her worst instincts, where she will never again see the light of day. The mystery, tragedy, and dark majesty of **Vampire: The Masquerade** comes to life in this dangerous place.

All the contrasts of our own world – good and evil, wealth and poverty, safety and danger – exist in the **World of Darkness**, but they are greater, starker, and more shockingly profound. Stepping around the street trash on their way to a waiting limousine, the elite smirk cruelly at the plight of the homeless sheltering under soggy cardboard in the shadow of glass and steel spires that strain toward an uncaring heaven. Not far from this scene of urban decay, what little wilderness that still remains untouched faces destruction by greedy corporations eager to exploit it for immediate profits. And in the filing rooms and front offices of those selfsame companies, the bureaucratic sharks seek to fatten their own wallets at the expense of everybody unlucky enough to need their services. It's a world with few heroes and an uncertain future, a dystopian present where the unhappy possibilities of our world are taken to their worst extremes.

While mortal society goes about its day-to-day activities, its citizens are the unwitting pawns of vampires, werewolves, and other creatures that struggle nightly with internal politics, backstabbing, and vicious games of manipulation. These battles may span centuries, spreading out over entire continents, waged through mortal intermediaries and institutions such as corporations, governments, and churches. Nothing and no one is safe from the dark taint of such a world, and while characters residing in the **World of Darkness** are sometimes capable of astonishing moments of heroism, each victory comes at a high price.

Everything in the World of Dangerous is darker and more dangerous than it is in our own world. Packs of street thugs prowl urban jungles, while the forces of law and order are often subverted to serve the aims of powerful mortals or their more formidable, supernatural masters. Conspiracies are everywhere, and shadowy hands manipulate events behind the scenes. When violence erupts, as it so often does, it is all the more explosively vivid when seen against the gray backdrop of urban decay; blood and ash mix indiscriminately in the gutters. The **World of Darkness** presents a setting where vampires, supernatural creatures of myth, have always been among us and wield far more influence than mortals suspect. Though vampires hide from mortal awareness, these ancient creatures fight a long-standing war for supremacy, seeking to eradicate their enemies and seize control of the night.

What is Gothic-Punk?

Vampire: The Masquerade is a gothic-punk roleplaying game. The term *gothic-punk* refers to the synthesis of two subcultures that best represent the themes of **Vampire: The Masquerade**: the dark, elegant, Victorian aesthetics of gothic culture merged with the hard-edged, modern, urban sensibilities of punk. Gothic-punk presents a darkly romantic view of a post-industrial world.

The gothic aspect of the **World of Darkness** encompasses much of the look and feel of the setting. Massive buildings tower over mortals who scuttle in the shadows. Statues loom atop the buildings and empty alleys twist between massive structures, reminding the citizens that someone is always watching. Mortal institutions, too, are weighty and imposing. Uncaring governments, ultra-conservative religious institutions, and faceless corporations rule almost every aspect of society. The gulf between the haves and have-nots is growing wide enough to swallow the world.

Punk describes the lifestyle that fights against this universal culture of oppression. Denizens of the **World of Darkness** have a choice: become one of the faceless masses, or hurl themselves into the chasm between the downtrodden and

powerful, seeking to bring some sort of meaning to their lives. Whether they are rebelling or trying to claim scraps of power, the citizens of this world are consumed by need. Everything is frantic and frenetic; music is louder, fashion is more shocking, and violence hides beneath pleasant smiles.

Playing a Vampire

But first on earth as Vampire sent
Thy corpse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race.

— Lord Byron, "The Giaour"

The myths and legends of vampires can be found in cultures around the world, and they predate recorded history. Such creatures have been known by many names, such as the Norse *draugr*, the Hebraic *estrie*, and the Romanian *strigoi*. Popular retellings, from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to more modern movies and television shows, have romanticized these myths.

Vampires are sinister immortal beings, plucked from mortal culture and thrust into a supernatural world after undergoing the mystery of death. Mythically, they are dangerous predators and scavengers, living on the blood of others. They exemplify mankind's primitive fear of the dark, our curiosity about death, and the allure and sensuality of the unknown. Compared to mortals, they are usually powerful, sometimes ancient, and always darkly mysterious.

To exist as a vampire in the **World of Darkness** is to know the heights and depths of all human emotion, magnified a thousand times. It is the pain and power of the *Embrace*, the moment one becomes a vampire; it is suffering an unending hunger for blood that must be satisfied, again and again; it is the dull ache of longing for vanished daylight, the supreme ecstasy of the *Kiss*, and the bitterly cold taste of immortal vengeance plotted across centuries.

Vampires in the **World of Darkness** have their own culture, customs, laws, and vocabulary. Many call themselves *Kindred*, a reference to the ties of blood between the vampiric clans. Cultural legends among the Kindred state that all vampiric lineages trace back to a single founder: the first vampire, a creature called "Caine." Caine created, or Embraced, other vampires. Those vampires Embraced others, and so on, descending down into clans and a small multitude of bloodlines. As the Embrace is passed from one to the next, each new vampire is slightly weaker than the one before.

Creating a Character

Creating your character is a chance to truly unleash your imagination. It's a process that is simultaneously very simple and fiendishly difficult. Later in this book we'll guide you through the steps of quickly creating a character sheet that has all the mechanical elements you will need to play the game — that's the easy part. The effort comes when it's time to transform this collection of words and numbers into a complete persona, one that will interact believably with the other characters. Like Frankenstein's Monster, it's easy to assemble all the parts, but breathing life into your creation is the challenging part. You can draw inspiration for your character from nearly anything, including movies, books, history, myths, and legends, but the very best characters come from deep inside the self. You should treat your character as a genuine individual — one who cannot be copied and is impossible to forget.

Whether your character is an ancient relic of long-ago Rome, or a modern street punk Embraced last week, you should try make the character seem real. Think about how she will interact with other characters in the game; plan a personality that will get into heated arguments over ethics or religion; think about what traits your character values in others and what type of people get under your character's skin.

Vampires have many advantages over mortals – they're stronger, faster, deadlier, and often more alluring – but they aren't perfect. Your character will have weaknesses and flaws, and portraying these can be as much if not more fun as her strengths and advantages. Perhaps your character will suffer from an unquenchable desire for revenge against a more powerful vampire who wronged her a decade ago, and that need for vengeance will steer many of her choices in the game, leading her to make some tragic mistakes that create even more potent and dramatic stories for your enjoyment. Maybe your character will be so horrified at the thought of drinking human blood that she tries vainly to resist the awful thirst all vampires share — and that moment when she fails is all the more dramatic because she regrets so very much what she hasn't been strong enough to prevent.

For more information on creating characters, see **Chapter Three: Character Creation on page 83**.

What is a Setting?

When a Storyteller prepares to run a Vampire chronicle, she must first detail the *environment* of her game. An environment is the world in which a chronicle will take place. As Vampire lends itself best to urban fantasy, most chronicles occur in a realistic environment much like the world we experience every day. However, some games may take place in other time periods, such as the Dark Ages or the Victorian Era. Or, a Storyteller may wish to create a wholly new environment, such as a modern city that does not actually exist. It's entirely her choice.

Once a Storyteller establishes her chronicle's environment, she must define the specific *setting* for her chronicle. A setting explains the political structures of the game. A setting should detail common knowledge, social hierarchy, powerful non-player characters, local dangers and current events. It should also define any mechanics' changes or optional rules that the Storyteller wishes to put into place for her game.

For more information about settings, see **Chapter Nine: The Camarilla on page 359, Chapter Ten: The Sabbat on page 409, or Chapter Eleven: The Anarch Movement on page 459.**

The Golden Rules of LARP

The most important rules of the game are the ones that keep you, the player, safe. Remember that no matter how compelling LARP may be, it is only a game. Keep the following ideas in mind while you play, and be sure to remember that your fellow players are friends, first and foremost.

Be Safe

Always keep your safety and that of others in mind when playing.

- **No Touching**: Don't touch anyone without direct, verbal consent. Invading another player's personal space can be intimidating.
- **No Stunts and No Weapons:** It's easy for things to get out of hand when excitement or tempers are high. No matter how careful you are, or how well-trained, always leave real weapons at home.
- **Stay Alert and in Control:** Live-action roleplaying can be emotionally intensive, and if your judgment is too impaired, you may not be operating rationally. Pay attention to your choices and keep the game fun for everyone.
- **Keep the Masquerade:** If you're playing in a public place, remember that most of the people around you are not part of the game. Be sure that local merchants, neighbors, or hotel staff know you're playing a theatrical game. It helps to have flyers or business cards to give interested passers-by, so they can get more information without disturbing the players.

Personal Responsibility

The **World of Darkness** is a reflection of the tragedies of our own history, including the bad parts. A character may have to deal with bigotry, violence, and hatred, but a player should never be subjected to those things. Always consider the feelings of your fellow players or observers when dealing with sensitive subjects. **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade** is an adult game with dark, occasionally even disturbing themes. Exploring this paradigm comes with a personal responsibility to respect the feelings of others. If such a situation comes up in game, stop roleplay and make sure the other players are comfortable. Respectfully and generically describe your character's actions, rather than acting them out. Don't be the person who went too far and hurt another player's feelings.

Be Polite

Show respect to your fellow players and Storytellers. Occasionally, you will disagree with each other, even to the point of anger. Rude behavior devitalizes a game and kills the fun for everyone, so keep your temper in check, and try to see both sides of every issue.

Remember: It's Not Real

Immersion is an important part of the LARP experience. Sometimes, it's hard to separate the player from her character, especially after intensely emotional scenes. Be sure to get to know your fellow players outside of game, so that you don't make assumptions about them based on their characters' actions. Take breaks between intense scenes to calm down and talk to people out of character. Also, remember that real life comes first.

Sportsmanship

LARP is a game of storytelling, and failing to achieve a goal can lead to an emotional, dramatic, and inspiring scene that wouldn't otherwise have happened. Learn how to "lose" in character, and you will be rewarded with some of the most amazing and fun roleplay in the game. Remember that LARP is a collaborative experience. Work with your fellow players, even if you work against their characters, and always be willing to give up some of your character goals so that everyone can have a share of the fun.

Inclusion

Share the spotlight! Look for ways to include other players in plots and scenes, especially those who are shy or new to the hobby. Encouraging others to get involved is an investment that makes the game better for everyone.

Have Fun!

This one's self-explanatory. If you find yourself taking things too seriously, focusing too strongly on the rules instead of the story, or feeling like the game's an obligation — take a break. LARP is a game, and games should be fun. That's the most important rule.

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Final Thoughts

Savor the mood of the vampires and their world. The **World of Darkness** is grim and brooding, but it is pervaded by an underlying sensuality, and this disturbing combination makes this game a provocative and immeasurably fun experience — all the more so because you'll share it with friends.

Mind's Eye Theatre is an interactive game of adventure, emotion, and drama about creatures that are both more and less than human. Vampires are political, manipulative creatures who are doomed from the moment of their Embrace. Their immortality defines and drives many of their behaviors — for example, why simply murder a rival when you can embarrass her, again and again, for decades or even centuries, as a reminder of your power? Vampires can afford to take the long view, counting their victories in political leverage, seeking to control one another rather than removing an opponent from the game.

Creating a character for **Vampire: The Masquerade** is easy, and takes just a few minutes. The character sheet at the back of the book contains a quick and easy guide to all the rules involved in character creation, but you should also check with your Storyteller to see if there are any additional rules specific to the setting of your local game. Once you create a character, you can join a game and start playing. Enjoy the game!

Terminology

Here's a glossary of words and terms that may be new to you if you have never before experienced **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade**.

- **aggravated damage:** injury dealt by a particularly effective source; aggravated damage is more difficult to heal
- **attacker:** a character initiating a challenge against another individual or NPC
- **attributes:** the measure of a character's natural skill in three categories: Physical, Social, and Mental
- **Archetype:** a word or brief phrase describing your character's personality
- **backgrounds:** the measure of beneficial items, connections, or resources possessed by a character
- **Beast traits:** the measure of your character's control over her vampiric nature; each Beast trait indicates a loss of such control
- **bloodline:** a small lineage, usually an offshoot of a clan, which possesses unique qualities
- **Blood point**: a unit measuring a small amount of Blood consumed during the activation of powers, or for other abilities
- **Blood pool:** the total number of Blood points possessed by a character
- **clan:** One of the great vampire lineages; members of a clan share unique qualities, including weaknesses, access to specific merits, and aptitude with specific disciplines
- **challenge (static or opposed):** the method by which a player determines if her character succeeds or fails to take an action that is subject to a randomizer; a challenge may include many tests
- **damage:** standard injury dealt by weapons or other attacks
- **defender:** a character attempting to resist a challenge initiated by another individual
- **discipline**: categories of related supernatural powers possessed by vampires
- **elder power:** a powerful supernatural ability, the height of a given discipline, only possessed by elder vampires
- **everyman:** the portion of a complex scenario (combat) during which every participant is able to act; the first round in that combat
- **experience points:** points earned over time by participating at games, and spent to increase a character's statistics
- **flaws:** specific liabilities or disadvantages possessed by a character
- **Generation:** a measure of a character's position within her lineage; it determines the potency of a vampire's blood
- **health levels:** a measure of a character's current injuries, and how much damage she can take before she is incapacitated, torpored, or killed
- **merits:** unusual beneficial qualities or advantages possessed by a character
- **Morality:** a measure of a character's control over her Beast; Morality usually comprises either a character's Humanity or Path of Enlightenment
- **power:** a single supernatural ability; there are typically five distinct powers (dots) within a single discipline chain
- **round:** a single series of actions within a turn, usually comprised of each character's standard and simple actions
- **skills:** a measure of a character's trained abilities and education
- **Storyteller:** the game administrator responsible for running the game
- **techniques:** a supernatural ability made possible by the mingling of two or more vampiric disciplines, only possessed by vampires of relatively thin blood
- **test:** a single instance of rock, paper, scissors used to determine whether or not a total challenge succeeds or fails
- **test pool:** the numeric statistic used to compare a character's ability to succeed in a challenge
- **turn:** One circuit of rounds in a complex scenario, including a single everyman round and each subsequent Celerity round. At the end of one turn, the next turn begins with an everyman round, and proceeds through rounds thereafter until all characters are out of actions, and the end of the turn is reached.
- **Willpower point:** a unit measuring a character's inner drive and determination, points of which are used in numerous ways, particularly to retest during challenges
- **Willpower pool:** the total number of Willpower possessed by a character

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In-Character Lexicon

- **Advocate:** A new term for the leader of an Anarch city or small territory; see also *Baron*
- **Amaranth:** an ancient term for *diablerie*
- **Anarch:** a member of the Anarch Movement
- **Anarch Movement, the:** a sect of vampires who reject the social structures of the Camarilla and Sabbat. They are technically part of Camarilla society, but bound to only one Tradition: that of the Masquerade.
- **Ancilla:** a vampire of the 9th or 10th Generations, usually between 100 and 300 years past the Embrace
- **Antediluvian:** a vampire of the 3rd Generation, a founder of one of the great vampire clans
- **antitribu:** A member of the Sabbat of a clan other than Lasombra and the Tzimisce
- **Archbishop:** The leader of a Sabbat city or small territory
- **Archon:** An authority figure in the Camarilla; an individual empowered by a Justicar
- **Baron:** The traditional term for the leader of an Anarch city or small territory; see also *Advocate*
- **Beast, the:** a primitive, instinctive and monstrous urge that feels near-sentient and delights in evil actions; innate to the vampiric condition
- **Black Hand:** The militant, special operations force of the Sabbat
- **blood bond:** the use of the addictive power of vampire blood to exert supernatural control over another
- **Book of Nod:** a compilation of legends about the origins of vampires and the activities of ancient clan founders, used by the Sabbat as a basis for their sect's religion
- **Caine:** Mythically, the first vampire; most vampires believe all clans and lineages descend from him
- **Cainite:** a term used to refer to vampires during the Dark Ages; now primarily used by the Sabbat
- **Cainite Heresy:** the philosophical belief that vampires were purposefully created by God to command mortals, ruling over the *kine* as judges, protectors, and kings
- **Caitiff:** a thin-blooded vampire whose blood does not belong to nor demonstrates qualities inherent to any of the great clans
- **Camarilla:** the largest sect of vampires, members of the Camarilla follow six Traditions, and structure themselves much like feudal monarchies
- **childe:** A vampire created by the Embrace; a sire creates a childe
- **Code of Milan, the:** A set of principles followed by members of the Sabbat, emphasizing the duality of freedom and loyalty
- **coterie:** a group of allied vampires; vampires often keep membership in a coterie a secret, to better hide their alliances
- **diablerie:** the act of consuming another vampire's soul in order to gain a portion of that vampire's power; diablerie is extremely addictive and unpredictable
- **domitor:** a vampire who creates and maintains control over a ghoul
- **Elder, Pretender:** a vampire of the 8th Generation, usually between 200 and 500 years past the Embrace
- **Elder, Master:** a vampire of the 7th Generation, usually between 350 and 600 years past the Embrace
- **Elder, Luminary**: a vampire of the 6th Generation, usually more than 500 years old past the Embrace
- **Elysium:** a revered location, usually with great historical or artistic worth, formally designated as a place where vampires can gather in peace
- **Embrace, the:** the deliberate act of creating a new vampire
- **End Times, the:** an apocalyptic vampire legend predicting the return of the Antediluvians, and the end of the world; also known as *Gehenna*
- **feeding:** the act of consuming blood
- **Final Death:** the moment when a vampire is permanently destroyed, no longer undead
- **fledgling:** a newly-created vampire, a very young vampire
- **frenzy:** a vampire's loss of control over the Beast, resulting in a brief period of instinctual animalistic behavior
- **ghoul:** a mortal who has drunk vampire blood, gaining a small portion of supernatural power
- **Gehenna:** an apocalyptic vampire legend predicting the return of the Antediluvians and the end of the world; another term for the *End Times*
- **Golconda:** a legendary state of enlightenment, subject of great mystery and secret lore
- **haven:** the secure place a vampire has established where she can sleep safely during the day

- **Humanity:** the most common form of vampiric Morality, Humanity measures a vampire's empathy and helps retain control over the Beast
- **Justicar:** One of the highest authorities of the Camarilla; each Justicar is selected from and represents one of the pillar clans of that sect
- **Jyhad, the:** the subtle war waged among vampires of different generations, in which elders use younger vampires as pawns
- **Kindred:** a term used to refer to vampires, most commonly used by the Camarilla. The term references the shared ties of blood from sire to childe, and between the clans.
- **kine:** a term used by vampires to describe humans
- **Kiss, the:** the act of biting another creature in order to drink blood, an act which usually causes feelings of ecstasy and pleasure in the victim
- **libertas:** A term used by the Anarchs, meaning enlightened independence
- **lick:** A vulgar term for a vampire; more prevalent in use among the Sabbat
- **Neonate:** a vampire of the 11th, 12th or 13th Generations, usually between 1 and 200 years past the Embrace
- **Path of Enlightenment:** a type of vampire Morality other than Humanity, often espousing monstrous values
- **progeny:** another term for a vampire's childe
- **Prince:** The leader of a Camarilla city or small territory
- **Promise, the:** A specific bargain made between the Giovanni clan and the Camarilla in 1958
- **Regent:** the foremost authority of the Sabbat; its singular leader, said to be governing at the will of Caine
- **regnant:** a vampire who has enslaved another vampire with a blood bond
- **Roads:** a term used to refer to the Paths of Enlightenment, used during the Dark Ages
- **Sabbat:** a sect of vampires that revere the mythological first vampire, Caine, and revel in their inhuman and monstrous natures; also known as the "Sword of Caine" and the "Church of the Dark Father"
- **sect:** a large group of vampires espousing a common set of cultural and political values
- **sire:** a vampire who has created another vampire via the Embrace
- **Suspire:** a moment of utter enlightenment; the final test in a vampire's centuries-long attempt to reach Golconda
- **symbel:** a nonviolent contest, pitting vampires' reputations against their ability to win a duel, succeed at a task, or overcome a challenge
- **thrall:** an individual controlled via the blood bond
- **Treaty of Thorns, the:** a treaty made between the Anarch Movement and the Camarilla at the end of the Anarch Revolt. Those who rejected this treaty went on to form the Sabbat.
- **Traditions, the:** A set of six laws followed by vampires of the Camarilla; the Traditions emphasize secrecy from mortals and obedience to one's elders
- **Vaulderie:** A ritual practiced by the Sabbat to shatter the power of the blood bond and to cement pack loyalty
- **vitae:** a vampiric term for blood
- **wassail:** a permanent state of violent frenzy; the result of a vampire's final, utter loss of control to the Beast

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Two: Introduction to the World of Darkness

I dream of the first times, the longest memory
I speak of the first times, the oldest of us
I sing of the first times, the dawn of Darkness
In Nod, where the light of Paradise lit up the night sky
And the tears of our Sires wet the ground with blood…

— The Book of Nod

The wealth of canon material written for **Vampire: The Masquerade** spans decades, including four editions, countless sourcebooks, novels, graphic novels, video games, and two collectable card games. The following information is a brief summation of the **World of Darkness** setting specifically designed for **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade**. The **World of Darkness** has a rich and detailed history, with perspectives from many eras and in-depth histories of every clan. This is a very brief overview, touching on the background of the sects, clans, and societies.

This setting mines the best aspects of all of the source materials and distils it into a streamlined chronology. We selected the canon material that best conformed to the needs of a LARP environment. When required, the setting was altered to provide a better experience for a live-action game. Always check with your chronicle's Storyteller about any modifications she may have made to this timeline before designing your character.

For more information on **World of Darkness** settings, including mechanics and detailed social structures, refer to the later chapters in this book.

The Jyhad

Vampires are supreme urban predators, gifted with immortality and frighteningly preternatural powers. Removed from the mortal world, they spin webs of intrigue, playing deadly politics and enjoying great influence and wealth. While centuries slowly creep past, vampires sink into archaic depravity, sparring for control in the shadows of the night.

Driven by paranoia, jealousy, and the constant, predatory urge to gain power, vampires form societies and hierarchies much like those of mortals. These creatures claim territory, both literal and figurative, and defend it with a vicious steadfastness even as they avariciously seek to gain more. Manipulation and political struggles are common, all hidden beneath the elegant porcelain mask of social customs.

As immortal creatures, vampires prefer to humble their opponents rather than destroy them, thus providing themselves with decades of amusement and a constant reminder of their personal superiority. Rivalries and alliances can intertwine in a vast tapestry, shifting in unpredictable

patterns as politics twist and change. This worldwide struggle is called the *Jyhad*, and all vampires – whether they wish to participate or not – must compete if they wish to survive.

The Jyhad crosses all sects, all clans, and all eras.

The Camarilla

The largest vampire sect is the *Camarilla*, also known as the "Ivory Tower." In the Camarilla, a vampire's success – and survival – depends on political subtlety and social maneuvering. Vampire Princes rule cities, while the shadowy Inner Circle controls the ebb and flow of worldwide events. The Camarilla enforces a group of societal laws known as the *Traditions*, and it maintains a practice known as the *Masquerade*, which demands that no mortal be allowed to realize vampires exist.

Members of the Camarilla respect and preserve their *Humanity*, considering it critical to a vampire's ability to remain hidden among mortals. Even ancients of the sect cling to humane ethical beliefs, and demand no less from the younger members of society. The Camarilla hosts social gatherings and political functions, employing subtlety and Machiavellian manipulation as power shifts hands with each night. It is a cutthroat world, but a beautiful one: a bloody knife wrapped in elegant silk.

Several clans banded together to form the Camarilla, and are thus considered pillars of the sect. The Brujah, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Toreador, Tremere, and Ventrue are revered as founding clans; the Gangrel clan relinquished its position as a pillar clan, and in the intervening years, Clan Assamite has risen to prominence. Other clans are given far less credibility and freedom. In a social hierarchy loosely modeled on feudal Princes and dynastic bloodlines, elders command the most respect; they rule over lineages of vampires descended from their blood. Meanwhile, in the shadows, young vampires struggle to gain allies and work within – or fight against – a society that has stood, unchanging, for hundreds of years.

The Sabbat

The zealous vampires of the Sabbat preach that the world stands on the brink of annihilation. They believe that ancient vampires will soon rise from slumber and consume the world. These creatures, known as *Antediluvians*, defied the first vampire, a figure said by some to be the biblical Caine. Members of the Sabbat believe themselves to be Caine's favored descendants, and revere him as a religious figure. They revel in their vampirism, swearing vengeance on the Antediluvians and fighting their pawns — the vampires of the Camarilla. Damned by the Embrace, these monsters have little interest in acting human. They prefer darkness and inhumanity.

Also known as the "Sword of Caine," the Sabbat formed out of defiance. Its members fought against their elders, demanding freedom from the tyranny of lineages and blood bonds. Believing that the most ancient founders of the clans will one day arise and destroy their descendants, they prepare for the coming of Gehenna, bolstering their faith and training for war. Their social hierarchy is loosely based on the structure of the Catholic Church, with Cardinals ruling over large territories and Archbishops commanding smaller dioceses. Yet the history of the sect is rife with instability and civil war, as the Sabbat struggles to find balance between its two founding principles: freedom and unity.

A member of the Sabbat must follow a tract of societal laws known as the *Code of Milan* and practice unifying religious rituals known as the *Auctoritas Ritae*. Two clans, the Lasombra and the Tzimisce, first formed the sect and are most respected. Members of the Sabbat must walk a fine line between faith and war, freedom and unity, seeking ancient legends and defying the end of the world.

The Anarch Movement

Before the formation of the Sabbat and Camarilla sects, lineages and bloodlines reigned over the vampiric world. Elders tyrannically ruled their descendants, using properties of vampire blood to enthrall and enslave their childer. Unfortunately for them, a few rebellious childer broke these bonds and, in the name of freedom, began a ruthless and vicious war. Although initially successful, these *Anarchs* were eventually forced to surrender and sign a peace compact with the Camarilla, a document known as the Convention of Thorns. Those Anarchs who did not accept the surrender chose to flee, slaughtering humans in defiance. Those vampires went on to form the Sabbat.

The Convention of Thorns gave the remaining Anarchs a place within the Camarilla sect, but bound them to only one of the Camarilla's laws: that of the Masquerade. By maintaining this tacit alliance, Anarchs retain much of the freedom they had sought. Still, as nights pass and vampires grow older and more static, the initial membership of the Anarch Movement faded, meeting Final Death over the centuries or becoming full members of the Camarilla (or Sabbat) and turning their backs on the cause of libertas. Anarchs recognize that the Sabbat are monsters, preying on mortals and encouraging the Beast, and they rarely meet with or make deals with the Sword of Caine. Today, the Anarch Movement is a fractious, divided group; its members are as likely to argue among themselves as to fight against either the Sabbat or the Camarilla.

The Anarch Movement is a place for outcasts and loners, where young vampires rebel against the strict hierarchy

of clans, bloodlines, and the Camarilla. For some, the meaning of the sect is deeper than that; it is a place where philosophical and moral arguments find root, growing into political ideals of governance more in tune with the modern era. Nearly all clans are welcome among the Anarchs, so long as they abide by the Masquerade.

Independents

Not every vampire belongs to a sect. Independent clans, such as the Assamites and the Giovanni, refuse to create long-term allegiances with either the Camarilla or the Sabbat. On most occasions, the Camarilla continues to work with these individuals as suits its purposes, but the leadership of the Sabbat strongly believe that if a vampire is not a member of the Church of Caine, she is a servant of the Antediluvians and, therefore, an enemy. Members of the Sabbat rarely ally with anyone outside their sect, and such alliances never last beyond a single instance of necessity.

A Brief History of the World of Darkness

"All things pass away, like water through the stream of time.
With each sunrise, a little more of this world dies.
A little more time flows past, never to be regained."

— Ambrogino Giovanni, Historian

The city of Detroit shone in jeweled splendor, the highways interweaving like diamond-and-ruby-studded necklaces ignoring the ravaged wasteland of her neck. From the balcony of a suite at the MGM Grand, two figures looked down on the teeming web of life, the cold wind raising no goose bumps on smooth skin. He was dark, like a Spanish night. Her hair flowed like a pale banner over her bare shoulders, and there was a faint touch of red pooled at the corner of her perfect mouth. Gently, Vivek pulled her closer, arm drawing taught against her waist as he kissed away the droplet of blood.

Sophie shuddered beneath her silken corset and gown, unable to contain the emotions that feeding had stirred. "Is it always… like that?"

"Better," he murmured. "You will discover, in time, joys and pleasures you cannot yet imagine."

She raised her hands, staring at blue veins beneath porcelain skin. "I did not believe you…" her voice faltered.

Vivek laughed softly. "When I said I was a vampire?" He smiled. "Yes. I know."

"How does it work? Where did it come from? Are there others?" Sophie's questions rose like bubbles in expensive champagne, and he laughed with delight. A sheepish smile crept across her delicate features. "How old are you?" She asked more softly as Vivek kissed her soft shoulders.

"One question at a time, my childe," he said encouragingly, "For now, let me tell you a tale of the world you've entered, of the dark, secret aristocracy of the night. Your life hangs by a thread, my little love, and the sooner you open your eyes and see beyond the faces of the Masquerade, the closer you will be to true understanding. I hope you learn quickly, my dear. The dangers are great, but the rewards…" he drew a long breath, his black eyes lighting with a fiendish passion Sophie had seen only once before — on the night she was Embraced.

"Let me tell you the tale of the Kindred…"

Ancient Nights: The Tales of Enoch

"For as long as you walk this earth, you and your children will cling to Darkness. You will drink only blood. You will eat only ashes. You will be always as you were at death, never dying, living on. You will walk forever in Darkness; all you touch will crumble into nothing, until the end of days."

— The Book of Nod

Secret Knowledge

This section contains hidden facts, forgotten legends, and rare lore that comprises the history of the World of Darkness. Much of the information provided here is not common knowledge in any setting; cunning vampires have shrouded details, and hide the truth behind propaganda and lies. Characters with a high Lore skill will possess more information about this history than others, and characters with a low (or no) dots in Lore should remember that this knowledge is not readily available. If there is any doubt about the amount of knowledge a character should possess about these events, the Storyteller is the final arbiter of that information. For more information on the Lore skill, see page 94.

History and legend state that an all-powerful God cursed a man named Caine, punishing him for the murder of his brother and casting him out of Paradise. Secret, hidden legends follow where mortal histories fail, describing how God's curse transformed that simple farmer into the first vampire. From Caine, all other vampires sprang — his childer, the Second Generation; their childer, the Third Generation, also known as the Antediluvians and the founders of the clans; and so forth. Although this is the most popular origin, this myth is not the only such tale. Some broods of vampires believe in other, less well-known stories. To some, the first vampire was the Egyptian god, Set. Others, such as the Gangrel and Toreador clans, once argued that they sprang from a female creatrix. It is with Caine, however, that all reasonable vampires affix their origin, and it is with Caine that this story begins.

The tales of the first vampires are fragmentary legends pieced together by scholars, lost, found, and lost again over the ages. Those that remain have been compiled into a hidden codex of vampiric religion, known as the *Book of Nod*. The first tales of the Book of Nod describe the city of Enoch, a place where mortals and vampires lived together in peace at the dawn of civilization. Out of loneliness, Caine chose a handful of childer from the mortal population, bringing them into his Embrace. In time, those childer Embraced others, until the burden of the vampiric lust for blood threatened the well-being of their mortal kin. Concerned, Caine forbade further Embraces, but his commandment came too late. A dark host of vampires wandered the earth, indulging their Beasts and living in depravity, and the world was filled with sin. As punishment, God sent the great Deluge and the city of Enoch was destroyed. Seeing the eradication of all he had built, Caine felt a great sorrow and sank into lingering, torporous sleep.

While Caine was absent, his progeny grew even bolder. The Second Generation returned to the children of Noah, ruling over them with an iron grip. They created more childer, and their depravities were as numerous stars in the heavens. The Third Generation created broods, binding their children with the power of the blood. Defying their Second Generation sires, these Antediluvians, Embraced before the Flood, brought even more mortals into the night, commanding them into battle. The Second Generation fled or were destroyed, and in defiance of Caine's wishes, the Antediluvians built a second city to rival lost Enoch. They peopled this second city with mortals who would worship them as gods.

Even in the darkness of his slumber, Caine knew what they had done. He stirred and cursed the vampires of the Third Generation. They, along with all those descended from their Embrace, would be forever damned with frailties and weaknesses, as a penance for their disobedience. The vampires fell into argument, and rivalries and betrayal spread among the lineages of the city. Vampires slaughtered and fed upon one another out of greed, covetousness, and a lust for power. Soon after this, a childe of Brujah rose up against her sire, diablerizing him and shattering the peace. The Second City was destroyed, and the vampire clans were forced to scatter into the nations of the world.

Caine was never seen again. The Book of Nod states that one day he will rise from his sleep and call all vampires to the city of Gehenna. In that last city, when the End Times are upon us, all will be judged.

The First Age: Nights of Division

After the destruction of the Second City, the histories and legends become hopelessly fragmented, as each clan recorded its history apart from the rest. These were the first nights of the Jyhad, an ancient political game played by the broods of the Antediluvians, where some rise to power — and some fall to humiliation, subservience, or Final Death. A few integral moments are known, recorded, and hidden by the most learned historians of each clan.

Lilith

Ancient vampiric texts mention that Caine's original wife was the woman known as Lilith, created by God to be an equal partner to Adam. After she was cast out of the Garden of Good and Evil, Lilith wandered the unformed world. Through tribulation and pain, she learned to survive and even became powerful in her own right. Then, the legends say, she met the outcast, Caine. Some vampires consider Lilith, not Caine, to be the first vampire. Others claim she founded many of the clans. Legend tells that she created blood magic, blood bound Caine, or even overcame the vampiric banes of fire and sunlight. Whatever the truth, there are still vampires who worship Lilith. These *Bahari* keep their religion secret, lest they be destroyed as heretics by those who adhere to the more traditional beliefs of Caine.

In Egypt, a vampire named Horus overthrew Set and freed a kingdom. Though he cast Set down, Horus could not kill his sire, and the cult of Set bore its founder to safety in the deep desert. Elsewhere, the Antediluvian Saulot abandoned his Salubri childer, the gentle healers, and went east to seek enlightenment. When he returned, the childer he Embraced were no longer healers, but had become savage and devastating warriors. In the sultry lands of the Middle East, the radiant queen of the Toreador exiled all vampires save her own brood from the kingdom of Sumer. She demanded worship from mortal and Kindred alike and styled herself as the goddess Ishtar. Elsewhere, scholars of the Cappadocian and Malkavian clans collected scraps of knowledge, squabbling over half-remembered truths, while the Brujah and Ventrue clans tore each other apart in a series of brutal wars.

Believing that Caine would forgive him and lift his curse if he destroyed his entire brood, the Nosferatu Antediluvian created terrible creatures to eradicate his lineage. He unleashed the *Nictuku*, and commanded those vile beasts to hunt his childer and their progeny to the ends of the earth. Meanwhile, the Gangrel and the Ravnos clans fought over land and doctrine, unable to end bitter rivalries from the Second City. In the end, the Gangrel abandoned the fight and headed north, becoming wanderers and vagabonds in the northern wastes of Scandinavia.

In the Middle East, ferocious Haqim led the Assamite clan to the mountain stronghold of *Alamut*, ordering his lineage to judge all other vampires and to slaughter those found unworthy. The Lasombra Antediluvian used his influence to elevate Moorish scholars to heights of mathematic and military innovation, while Ventrue control of Rome organized a mighty empire. In high castles of the Carpathian mountains, Tzimisce occultists and koldun mastered vampiric blood magic, linking powerful elemental sorcery with the mysteries of vampiric vitae.

In Phoenicia, the Brujah clan attempted to reclaim the glory of ancient Enoch. As in nights of old, the vampires lived openly with the mortal population. The Brujah leader, Troile, pridefully claimed Carthage to be the third city of Caine. Fearing Caine would once more punish the clans, the Ventrue of Rome, rivals of the Brujah, called on political alliances and favors from the Malkavian, Cappadocian, and Toreador clans. With unified might, they attacked the city of Carthage and crushed all who stood before them. Troile and her Baali lover, Moloch, were driven into torpor, Carthage was overrun, and the earth of Phoenicia was salted with blood. The Baali (and some few Brujah allies) retreated to their unholy city of Chorazin, biding their time and waiting for an opportunity to take revenge.

The Long Night: The Decline of Empires

Through the age of Classical Antiquity, Rome prospered and expanded into an empire, paving roads, building aqueducts, and expanding civilization through conquest and economic trade. Elders nested in small fiefdoms where their power was absolute, calling themselves Princes and creating broods of childer to serve them and fight on their behalf. The rivalries and political viciousness of the Jyhad continued, shifting fortunes around the world as vampires ruled from ancient castles or elegant palaces. To the mortals who lived in fear of them, vampires were creatures of living myth and superstition, with unknowable, godlike powers. The kine feared the darkness that stalked them, walking the night long after god-fearing men and women had retired. These Princes of old ruled with vicious, cruel authority, demanding utter servitude from lineages, ghouls, and kine, and giving rise to mortal legends of seduction and bitter torment.

In 1022, the mortal mages of House Tremere attempted to seize immortality for themselves. Through experimentation and arcane sorcery, the cabal captured an elder Tzimisce and used his blood to perform a ritual that would give them everlasting life. But merely becoming vampires by their own hand was not enough for these wizards; the Tremere went even further in their ambition. Through the use of powerful magic, they captured and diablerized many other vampires, notably those of the Tzimisce and Salubri clans. Within a mere century, the Tremere had established themselves as worthy competitors in the Jyhad — with many powerful and vengeful enemies.

To defend themselves from the other clans, the Tremere usurpers took captives, ruthlessly twisting flesh and shredding spirits in a horrific ritual designed to enslave. They tortured prisoners from the Nosferatu, Gangrel, and Tzmisce clans, and tore their bodies apart to create savage monsters known as *Gargoyles*: mindless slaves whose memories and intelligence were ravaged by the alchemical process of their Embrace. Using these beasts as shock troops, the Tremere launched an offensive against the Salubri clan, destroying it utterly. Years later, the Tremere justified this slaughter by claiming the Salubri were tainted by infernal forces, and they called in debts from elders of all clans to force them to agree with this version of events. Thus it was recorded in the annals of vampiric history, and the Tremere were absolved of their rampant diablerie — at least, in the courts of Kindred Princes.

The Dark Ages: An Era of Faith and Fire

Between 1346 and 1350, the Black Death ravaged Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East, devastating nearly 200 million people: about 60 percent of the mortal

population. The aftermath of this plague forced a series of religious, social, and economic upheavals, ending the long nights of vampiric prosperity. The mortal blood supply drastically diminished, forcing vampires to follow their immigrating herds into densely populated cities. It was a bitter time, with vampires competing for once-plentiful blood. The nearness of other broods brought about an explosion of once-dormant feuds. Forced to live in close proximity, Kindred fought for dominance, using politics as a shield and betrayal as a blade. Princes ruled over vampiric courts, playing dark, sadistic games and living in decadence while mortals starved and festered in the streets below.

When the plague lessened, the remaining mortals turned to their faith in ever-greater numbers, giving thanks for their survival; this fervency was strangely paralleled in vampiric society. Among the courts of vampiric Princes, a gnostic doctrine called the Cainite Heresy emerged, giving rise to the philosophical belief that God wanted vampires to rule over mortals as judges, protectors, and kings. This doctrine originated in a sacred text known as the Book of Blood (the *Euagetaematikon*, in its native Greek), and Kindred scholars spread it widely. The vampires of the Cainite Heresy meddled in mortal religion, attempting to justify their faith and seize ever-greater control of the powerful Catholic Church. Made reckless by their pride, the Cainite Heresy's machinations were discovered by mortal priests and soldiers.

Fearing the legends of the undead and given knowledge of their powers, capacities, and weaknesses from captured vampires, mortal priests sanctioned the founding of the Inquisition and created the first organized group of vampire hunters in history. To protect the mortal population from the scourge of "Satan's Spawn," the Inquisition's zealots burned villages and massacred innocents in their hunt to find vampires, learning more about vampire abilities with each capture or kill. In the span of only a few years – a mere breadth of time – the eternal Princes of the night were forced to realize that their power was not absolute. Quickly, they stamped out the Cainite Heresy, but it was too late. The Inquisition grew more capable with each passing night, and vampires were, for the first time in history, living in fear for their unlives.

Meanwhile, Malkavians roamed through the nations of the world, spreading madness like an infection. Perhaps to insulate themselves from the attention of the Inquisition, several Methuselahs of the clan gathered to perform a tremendous feat. Unfettering their minds from the raw strictures of reality, these ancient beings reached into the heart of Malkavian madness and altered their clan's very blood, stripping away the power of Dementation for the less-infectious discipline of Dominate. Thereafter, these elders disbanded, vanishing once more into the night with no explanation for their deed.

In the Middle East, the Cappadocian Antediluvian called together his overpopulated clan, inviting its members to a Feast of Folly in the underground tombs of Kaymakli. Taking inventory of their talents, Cappadocius divided them into two groups: the macabre dilettantes and the serious necromantic scholars. The founder safeguarded those he considered worthy of the Embrace, and buried the rest deep within the tunnels of that lost city, condemning them to madness, torpor, and wassail.

In 1435, a loose confederation of elders, primarily from the Ventrue, Toreador, and Tremere clans, founded a coterie known as the Camarilla. Under the auspices of protecting vampires from further persecution from hunters, these elders codified a set of Traditions to structure vampiric interactions, and worked to establish these laws throughout the independent princedoms of Europe. Their cause was adopted by some, but mocked by others, and a majority of Princes refused what they saw as a surrender of their independent power. Throughout Europe, vampiric childer were used as fodder to delay and pacify the Inquisition, so that their more powerful sires could escape persecution. Resentment and anger rose, but due to the bonds of blood chaining lineages to their elders, the spark of rebellion smoldered but could not catch fire.

The Anarch Revolt: Nights of War

Desperate to escape the blood bond, childer of all lineages and all clans colluded against their tyrannical sires, hoping to find some way to break the chains of blood. At last, the sorcerous koldun of the Tzimisce clan discovered a way to shatter the bond — a ritual that became known as the *Vaulderie*. The ritual spread as more and more Neonates and Ancilla heard the call of freedom, leaving their once-beloved sires to burn.

Once freed, the rebellion exploded, and revolution was unleashed. Vampires flocked to their banner, desperate to be released from the false love of the bond and eager for vengeance. Decades of slavery were undone, and hundreds of elders died, their souls consumed by their childer. Some vampires, those who still studied the Book of Nod, feared that the End Times had come upon the world. Fearful elders labeled these upstarts *Anarchs*, condemning them for bringing anarchy to lawful princedoms during the height of the Inquisition. Still, the conflict might have been only a footnote in history if the Anarchs had not made a pact with the Assamites, offering Haqim's children the opportunity to diablerize elders in exchange for their support. Eager for blood, the Assamites accepted the alliance.

The revolt continued, and both sides suffered heavy losses. At the peak of the war, the Lasombra defeated and

diablerized their Antediluvian: a shocking and horrific act that rocked the vampire world. The Tzimisce quickly claimed the same accomplishment, and the revolution grew even more frenzied. Princedoms were overthrown, entire lineages burned, and the mortal Inquisition grew bolder and more capable. Mortals with True Faith hunted and massacred vampires on both sides of the war, turning a dangerous situation into near-annihilation.

During this period, many of the clans' Antediluvians disappeared — assumed to have gone into torpor or hiding, fearing the fangs of revolution or preparing for the day Caine would return. Some clans maintained contact with their founders, while others denied their existence, turning their backs on the fables of Enoch. Without the presence of their Antediluvians, the elders of the clans took power into their own hands, fighting over bloody scraps while the world burned.

Threatened on all sides by the Inquisition and the Anarch Revolt, independent Princes began to seek allies outside their clans. The Camarilla coterie used the uprising as a political tool, at last convincing static elders to gather and create a new sect. The six clans who initially supported the arrangement – Ventrue, Toreador, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Gangrel and Brujah – were given the most prestige, but no princedom was turned away so long as it swore to uphold the Traditions.

The Renaissance: Peace and Domination

In 1493, the Anarch Movement and the elders of the Camarilla entered into treaty negotiations. After years of fighting, the leaders of the two sects met at the Abbey of the Sacred Crown and signed the Convention of Thorns, officially creating an alliance and ending the war. Lauding this success, nearly all of the Princes of Europe and North Africa flocked to the Camarilla's banner. Lest stories of blood bonds and the End Times spark further revolt, the Inner Circle declared the Antediluvians to be creatures of myth. Further, they pronounced that the prophecies and histories of the Book of Nod were nothing more than superstitious fables. Any Camarilla member who espoused these beliefs, or studied such heresies, would be put to death.

Not all Anarchs agreed to the Convention of Thorns. A faction walked out of the negotiations, unwilling to compromise or acknowledge the authority of the Camarilla. In defiance, these rebels proclaimed a sect of their own: the Sabbat. They christened their independence by slaughtering mortals in the nearby town of Silchester, using their vampiric powers as broadly and obviously as possible in defiance of the Camarilla's Masquerade. Using the tales of the Book of Nod as justification for their hatred of elders (whom they saw as following in the footsteps of the Antediluvians who had disobeyed Caine), the Sabbat fashioned its hierarchy after that of a church, and proclaimed themselves the Sword of Caine. The vampires who abandoned the Camarilla clans to join the Sabbat proudly declared themselves *antitribu*, meaning they were outside of the reach of their elders.

The Assamites, unconcerned with vampire politics and thoroughly addicted to diablerie, continued destroying elders of the clans, despite the treaty of peace between the Anarchs and the Camarilla. In an act of unity, Princes across Europe announced a massive blood hunt, declaring war on the entirety of the Assamite clan. The war might have continued for many more decades, had a Nosferatu spy not proved that the mountain of Alamut was vulnerable. Forced to acknowledge Camarilla superiority, the Assamites surrendered.

In a bid to join the Camarilla, the Tremere crafted a mighty curse and levied it upon the Assamites. The spell prevented members of the Assamite clan from gaining sustenance – or the benefits of diablerie – by drinking vampire blood. With this show of mystic power, the Tremere were accepted into the sect. As part of their negotiation for entry (primarily to appease the Gangrel and the Nosferatu clans), the Tremere were forced to take oaths stating that they would release all slave Gargoyles, destroy the ritual used to create them, and never attempt to make more. Once they had obeyed this dictate, the Tremere become the seventh pillar clan of the Camarilla.

Through careful management, the Camarilla managed to soothe the Catholic Church and deceive the Inquisition, convincing mortals that they had successfully eradicated the vampire threat. So long as vampires remained hidden, mortal hunters would no longer hunt them. A Toreador elder, Rafael de Corazon, raised up the Tradition of the Masquerade: a promise to mimic human behavior, adopt Humanity as the sect's primary Path of Enlightenment, and prohibit mortals from realizing vampires exist. This quickly became the primary policy of the Camarilla.

After the Feast of Folly, the Cappadocian founder decided to repopulate his clan with true scholars of death. He Embraced a family of wealthy Venetian merchants who had a penchant for studying death's mysteries, and he educated them in Necromancy in exchange for gristly secrets of the occult. Although the Giovanni family were useful and provided Cappadocius a great deal of knowledge, they also proved to be his undoing. Eventually the Giovanni lineage of vampires, with secret assistance from the Ventrue clan, rose up in treasonous insurrection and diablerized the Cappadocian Antediluvian and all non-Giovanni members of his clan.

Empowered by their success, the Giovanni began to entrench themselves in the vampiric system of boons, collecting favors

and expending them in order to gain ever-greater leverage. Fear swept over the Camarilla at the thought of another vampiric war, and the Giovanni's political machinery stumbled. Through diplomatic gamesmanship, the young clan of Necromancers vastly expanded their wealth and territory outside their native Italy. Still, the unified cunning of the seven clans of the Camarilla proved to be a much more difficult enemy than scholarly Cappadocians, and in the end, the Giovanni were forced to stand down — or be destroyed. The newly founded Giovanni clan offered treaties of non-interference to the leaders of both the Camarilla and the Sabbat. The Camarilla agreed, and the two factions of vampires created the *Promise*, a document that shaped and regulated all further Giovanni-Camarilla relations. The Sabbat responded by massacring all Giovanni agents sent to negotiate. No further emissaries visited the Sword of Caine.

The Promise

The Promise of 1528 was the founding document of the peace between the Giovanni and the Camarilla, as signed by Claudius Giovanni and Raphael de Corazon. The exact text is long and detailed, and covers many topics; the following summary is not an attempt to present it word-for-word. A few (but not all) of the basic premises established by the treaty were as follows:

- The Camarilla recognizes the temporal rights of the Giovanni clan over the city of Venice. In return, the Giovanni clan officially recognizes all Camarilla domains.
- The Camarilla agrees that the Giovanni are free to conduct their business as they see fit. In exchange, the Giovanni agree to take no direct part in Camarilla politics.
- The Giovanni may accept, give, and do business in boons. Such boons are to be respected as formal contracts. Boon-breakers on either side are considered in violation of the Promise, and may be punished by those to whom they have become forsworn.
- A group of elders, one of each Camarilla clan, will come to Venice every 13 years to inspect operations. This dictum was first upheld in 1530, two years after the Promise was signed.

The New World: A Torch of Freedom

In an attempt to build strongholds for their sect, the Sabbat traveled to and explored the New World. Tensions were high, and political infighting among the fractious packs drove the fervent sect into civil war. The Sabbat faltered, its packs suffering harsh mutinies beneath the crushing weight of ideological conflict. Factions divided the Sabbat into political blocs, and the sect suffered numerous internal rifts. Only the steadfast loyalty and might of the *Black Hand*, an internal military force, kept the sect from utterly disintegrating. Desperate to create a more stable society, the Sword of Caine adopted of a set of laws entitled the *Code of Milan*. This quieted the fighting, stabilizing the sect for a brief time. However, while the Sabbat squabbled, the Camarilla gained a foothold in the United States, dominating the East Coast and driving the Sabbat north and south into Canada and Mexico.

Anarchs also made their way to the United States, drawn by the ideals of electoral democracy. They settled on the West Coast, where the frontier life suited their tough and hardy natures. As California joined the United States, the Camarilla leapt at the opportunity to place a strong Prince in Los Angeles, hoping to hold back its enemies in Sabbat-controlled Mexico. However, that Prince proved to be a tyrant, sadistically grinding the local Anarchs beneath his heel rather than maintaining peace. In 1944, the Prince ordered the savage public beating of an Anarch — and the faction exploded into riot and rebellion. The Prince of Los Angeles's death ignited an uproar that spread throughout the American West Coast. The Camarilla lost control of the majority of California, including the cities of Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, and, in time, San Francisco. Anarchs claimed these areas as Free States, and drafted a document called the "Status Perfectus," which applied the modern principles of a democratic union to vampiric society. But this new nation was unstable, and beset on all sides.

Across the ocean in Northern Europe, an ancient Nosferatu, Baba Yaga, awoke. According to rumor, her hunger upon awakening caused her to attack and diablerize all Ventrue and Toreador elders within her territory. This cunning and powerful Methuselah claimed Eastern Europe, creating a barrier of occult power known as the Shadow Curtain, which shut down vampiric passage to and from Russia. Where the Little Grandmother found the world not to her liking, she remade it to suit her needs.

In Mexico, the Sabbat discovered an infiltration by demonic forces; infernalists, eager to capitalize on the Sabbat's bloodshed and vicious deceit, had insinuated themselves among the hierarchy of the Sword of Caine. Although the Archbishops of the sect could root out a few, they did not have the training nor the knowledge to find and defeat every agent of the demonic. To combat this corruption, the most fanatic members of the sect came together to create a vampiric version of the Inquisition dedicated to destroying the infernal. At about the same time, the Sabbat Caitiff unified under the leadership a man named Joseph Pander and proclaimed themselves a fully-fledged clan.

Near the end of the 20th century, the Methuselahs of the Malkavian clan convened once more, as if guided by a mysterious and unseen force. Proclaiming that their "Great Prank" was now complete, they regressed the clan's vitae, sublimating Dominate and sparking the return of Dementation. Suddenly, and with no preamble or reasoning, members of the Malkavian clan rediscovered their infectious gift, and it swept over the clan with a licentious glee. Notably, a faction of Malkavians calling themselves the Knights of the Moon somehow refused this "gift" and remained loyal adherents to the practice of Dominate.

The Red Star and the Week of Nightmares

In July 1999, a massive earthquake shook Bangladesh. The city immediately shut down, and rumors spread through the vampire world that the city had been attacked by unknown agencies. Some said that mages had shattered the laws of nature, or that werewolves had summoned a hideous spirit of war — or, as was whispered in shadowy corners far from the courts of Princes, an Antediluvian had awakened after centuries of sleep. Whatever the cause, the Ravnos clan seemed afflicted in parallel with the city's destruction, falling to a supernatural and uncontrollable strengthening of their Beasts. They flew into fugue-like rages, seeking out and falling on one another until the majority of the clan had been consumed. By the time Bangladesh recovered a few short nights later, the Ravnos regained their lucidity. During the haze of the Week of Nightmares, the clan had been devastated by this relentless, savage thirst.

At the end of that week, a mysterious comet known as the Red Star appeared in the sky. At first, it was visible only to supernatural eyes. The fervent Sabbat believed the comet to be a sign of the End Times and Caine's return. With gleeful abandon, they preached the coming of Gehenna, launching massive offenses against the Camarilla, whom they claimed were the Antediluvian's pawns. Militant packs seized the cities of Atlanta and Washington, D.C., holding bloody festivos to celebrate the coming of the Dark Father. Attacked in open crusade, the Camarilla retaliated, and war between the sects reignited.

During these battles against the Sabbat, the Camarilla's Gangrel Justicar, Xavier de Calais, discovered a creature beneath New York City that he believed was inarguably connected to the Antediluvians. Xavier returned to share his knowledge, but failed to convince the Camarilla's Inner Circle to face the possible danger to the sect. Angered by what he saw as a lack of pragmatism, Xavier resigned from his post as Justicar. He abandoned the Camarilla, and his clan followed suit. The Gangrel proudly and fiercely declared themselves independent of any sect.

After the appearance of the Red Star, more and more Caitiff began to surface. This proliferation of thin-blooded vampires risked the Masquerade, and the Camarilla tightened its security in a desperate attempt to stem the tide. These security measures included the eradication of unclaimed Caitiff, an action that many elders felt was long overdue. The cities ran red with vitae, and fear gripped even the most isolated courts. Sabbat packs gathered in Mexico to discuss these momentous events. Preaching tales of the Book of Nod, they argued about the best way to fight the Antediluvians, and fought among themselves for leadership in the next crusades. During a sect-wide celebration known as the Palla Grande, unknown assassins murdered Regent Galbraith, the leader of the Sword of Caine. Showing great ambition, a young Tzimisce attempted to impersonate her, but was quickly discovered. The loss of its leader, the symbolic heir to the throne of Caine, shattered Sabbat unity and set the sect's political factions upon one another in widespread civil war.

Taking advantage of the internal conflict among the Sabbat, the Camarilla Tremere performed another powerful ritual, this one the result of hundreds of years of preparation. Targeting the blood of a traitorous elder of the clan, they mystically targeted and destroyed all Tremere who had taken part in the sect rituals of the Sword of Caine. Within the passing of a single moon, the majority of Tremere *antitribu* died in pillars of magical fire.

Even as the Sabbat struggled to recover from these tempestuous blows, the sect discovered new and fervent allies. The first was a small lineage of Salubri warriors. These cruel soldiers had somehow survived the extinction of their clan, and joined the Sabbat to seek vengeance against the Tremere clan. Even as the Sword of Caine welcomed the children of Saulot, another, even more unexpected ally surfaced. Calling themselves the Harbingers of Skulls, these masked Necromancers offered little information about their history or origins, but promised allegiance to the Sabbat so long as their own, covert interests were fulfilled.

Among the independents, a lineage called the True Brujah came out of hiding. Empowered by the legends of the End Times, they forged a pact with the Followers of Set, choosing to ally with independents in defiance of Troile. Through cunning, patient, cold strategies, they undermined their parent clan and dealt subtle but devastating blows to both the Brujah and the Camarilla.

Inside the mountain stronghold of Alamut, the Assamite clan underwent harrowing changes. A sorcerous Methuselah awakened after nearly 2,000 years of torpid sleep. After conquering the clan's modern leadership, this fearsome ancient proved his magical potency by shattering the curse that afflicted his clan and prevented the practice of diablerie.

In the wake of this triumph, Sabbat Assamites left their sect *en masse* to return to Alamut, breaking their vows to the Sword of Caine. Only the youngest, those who had never seen Alamut, remained loyal to the Sword of Caine.

With ultimate authority, the Methuselah demanded the Assamites return to the ancient worship of Haqim. He forbade the practice of any other religion, and destroyed those who would not give up their mortal beliefs. The resulting philosophical schism tore the clan in two. One of the clan's foremost sorcerers, Al-Ashrad, took a splinter faction composed mostly of his fellows and escaped the mountain. Calling on centuries-old boons to allow them entry, the Assamite Viziers joined the ranks of the Camarilla.

The Nights of Turmoil

While the Red Star shone in the sky, many vampires feared that the prophecies of the Book of Nod were true. They readied themselves for the End Times: an age of Gehenna, when Caine would return to seek vengeance against the Antediluvians and the clans they had spawned. This period of unrest and bedlam, known as the Nights of Turmoil, changed vampiric society forever.

At first, the Camarilla tried to ignore these dangers, killing any vampire who spread information about the Red Star or what it might signify. After the Gangrel abandoned the sect, the Inner Circle tightened its hold over princedoms and domains in fear that other clans might follow. A small group of vampires known as the Josian Archons were commanded to take charge of investigations into Gehenna, and to root out infernal corruption within the Camarilla. After the appointment of the new Assamite Justicar, the Josians formed an official agency under his guidance and acquired far more significant political backing than in the nights before the Red Star, but they were only a stopgap: a temporary defense against an onrushing tide.

As more and more time passed after the appearance of the Red Star, the Sabbat factions that had allied in celebration of the End Times began to question, realizing in panic and dismay that Caine was not to arrive. Fear swept through their ranks, and they turned upon each other, each faction blaming the rest. The internal divisions distracted the Sword of Caine at a critical time, as, without warning, mortal hunters descended upon Sabbat strongholds, viciously retaliating for the slaughter the vampires had performed. Coordinated, well-armed, and knowledgeable, these hunters eradicated all vampires in the Sabbat-held city of Savannah within a single night.

Panic gripped the vampires of the Sword of Caine. The hunters continued their purge, sweeping through several major cities and dealing heavy damage to Sabbat packs. Mortal hunters and covert government agencies tracked down entire dioceses of Sabbat and destroyed them. Major battles erupted in Los Angeles, Detroit, Puerto Rico, and Manila, and a majority of the Sabbat was exterminated. Worse, infernalists, thought to have been purged within their sect, began to appear more prevalently, as though a plague of demons had been unleashed from Hell by the approach of Gehenna. The Sword of Caine found itself on the brink of utter disaster.

Due to the Tradition of the Masquerade, the Camarilla had more success avoiding the attention of these mortal hunters. Fear caused many Camarilla domains to tighten security, becoming more insular. Officers rudely questioned visitors from distant domains, and even subjected them to the powers of the blood, simply to ensure they were neither working for hunters nor touched by the infernal. Paranoia spread, giving the Jyhad fertile soil. Insults became rivalries, and rivalries became feuds, all heightened by the desperate need to survive in an increasingly deadly environment.

Concerned that the mortal population would erupt in panic if it discovered vampires truly existed, both the vampires of the Anarch Movement and the government agents among the hunter factions kept the true nature of these battles secret. Though the hunters themselves were well-informed, the populace was kept as ignorant as possible — though it stretched the Masquerade to the breaking point.

Further, the Tremere began to notice a growing instability in blood magic caused by the shifting occult energies of the Red Star's passage. These fluctuations prevented them from reinstating their curse on the Assamites. Between the precariousness of their magic and the aggression of the Sabbat's newly returned lineage of Salubri Warriors, the Tremere fell back and relied even more on their allies in the Camarilla.

The Anarch Movement survived the Nights of Turmoil by remaining mobile. Although it meant sacrificing territory they had long held, remaining on the move allowed these young vampires to remain one step ahead of danger. Their understanding of modern technology and equipment also lent them an edge possessed by neither the Camarilla nor the Sabbat. At times, it seemed almost as if the Anarch leaders had direct information on the hunters' movements, eluding them with ease.

A Light in the Darkness

In the city of Los Angeles, factions schemed over an ancient artifact known as the Ankaran Sarcophagus. Noddist scholars believed this item had the ability to affect the End Times. In the end, a Gangrel scholar named Beckett claimed the sarcophagus — and then disappeared. A few

years later, a Malkavian prophet named Anatole, a known associate of Beckett's, reappeared in vampiric society. He claimed to be God's instrument to prevent the End Times. Anatole revealed that the prophecies predicted that an echo of ancient times would appear within the lands of the dead, the First City reborn: Enoch. Anatole claimed to have gone there, along with an escort of Giovanni and Brujah, and discovered a way to send the Antediluvians back into quiescent slumber. Whether he spoke truly, or whether it was a madman's ranting, the Nights of Turmoil came to an end in 2009. The Red Star faded, and no further signs of Gehenna have been seen.

Because of the rising of the Red Star, critical changes occurred throughout vampire society, altering the sects on fundamental levels. Even the most fanatic Sabbat were forced to admit that the threat of powerful, knowledgeable, and established mortal hunters meant that the Sword of Caine must support some form of Masquerade. On the other side of the war, the elders of the Camarilla could no longer afford to deny the existence of Antediluvians or the potential danger they represented. The sects softened these two critical stances, so that the sects could survive in the new era.

The New Epoch

During the Nights of Turmoil, the Camarilla's Inner Circle created the position of *Imperator*. A number of potent vampires jockeyed for the position from across the world, including one notorious Brujah elder named Germaine, a wanted criminal on the Red List. He hoped to gain clemency through winning the trials. Eventually, Karsh the Warlord succeeded in claiming the position. The Inner Council granted Karsh significant authority to raise a military for the sect's protection.

One of Karsh's subordinates was a Nosferatu Prince named Stanford Warwick. After Karsh became Imperator, Warwick broke with the Nosferatu clan's tradition of solidarity. He sold out the battle-plans of his *antitribu* brethren in order to save a city filled with Camarilla vampires. With ruthless authority, the Inner Circle used Warwick's information to defend Cleveland and eradicate attacking Sabbat packs. Confused and cut off, the Sword of Caine was forced to fall back. The Camarilla pushed south, retaking Atlanta and western Georgia, and forming a protective border against the powerful Sabbat packs in Birmingham. The demilitarized area along the Alabama border is a dangerous, roughshod zone of conflict, where vampiric fighting is disguised as race-related riots or other mortal troubles.

Within the Sabbat, ideological factions continued to diverge, spiraling into internal paranoia even as hunters eradicated pack after pack. Losses to the Camarilla further spread panic through the sect, driving the Sword of Caine into rabid, desperate conflicts. Packs murdered each other, slaughtering "unbelievers" to "purify" the sect. Unity was impossible; gatherings of packs were a risk, even to reestablish the ties of Vaulderie. Isolation set in as the hunters became the hunted.

Only the cunning and charisma of the newly elected Regent, Temoch the Jackal, allowed the Sword of Caine to survive. Temoch gained the post through rightful Monomacy, defeating all challengers. Upon taking the position of Regent, he seized command of the militant group known as the Black Hand, demanding that its two remaining Seraphim acknowledge his authority. Wielding the Hand's military might in precarious, high-risk strategies, the Regent rescued many packs from destruction, even going into battle personally when need required. Slowly, inexorably, he brought the sect under control. The Sabbat lauded his achievements, some elevating him to a near-divine level, claiming that the new Regent was truly the heir of Caine.

The Worldwide Economic Collapse

The financial collapse of 2009 swept like a firestorm through the global economy. The Ventrue lost control of the Swiss banks, resulting in a broad financial coup by the Giovanni. The Ventrue reacted swiftly, but the Giovanni had been preparing for decades. The Ventrue were outmaneuvered. Dreading the complete loss of their hegemony, Clan Ventrue awakened an ancient Swiss Prince named Purissimma Giess, hoping to utilize the Methuselah's power and gold reserves. It was a desperate risk, one that required the expenditure of many boons.

Giess awakened into a world she barely understood. Still, her expertise lay in the fields of vampire boons and prestation, and even after such a long sleep, she had a great deal of personal power to expend on behalf of her clan. Giess had built her reputation as a mediator of undead affairs, settling conflicts between the Ventrue and the Giovanni during the Victorian Age. Many Giovanni were personally in debt to her, and she used those boons ruthlessly to stifle the merchant clan.

In exchange for her significant personal expenditures on behalf of her clan, Giess demanded only one thing: that the throne of Switzerland be ceded again to her authority. The country's current Prince, the independent Brujah Guillaume, refused to surrender his praxis or even negotiate with the Ventrue. Rumors circulated in Europe that during Giess's reign the two vampires were lovers. If so, the Brujah did not welcome her awakening; he has not deigned to meet with Giess even on behalf of their two clans. A bitter, cold enmity

stretches between the two, causing all negotiations to freeze into futility. Both Giess and Guillaume are extremely well-connected, and any conflict would immediately escalate to consume both clans, and potentially the whole of vampire society. Giess is a scion of the Camarilla, and Guillaume is an independent Prince. The Giovanni wish to see Giess compromised, while the Brujah's enemies want Guillaume to fall from grace. Giess's Humanity is notably lacking, while Guillaume is a paragon of proper ethics and morality. Rumors claim that Guillaume has ties to mysterious and secluded elders of the Inconnu, while others whisper that Giess gained her boons over the Giovanni by aiding in their destruction of the Cappadocians. Both elders have prominent lineages, and both have many allies. The struggle between the two could inflame old hatreds between the Ventrue and the Brujah clans. If the rivalry is allowed to fester, or erupt into open war, it could tear the sect apart.

Further contributing to the Camarilla's troubles, information is surfacing about ancient treacheries: secrets sold by the Nosferatu. That insular clan is profiting from the rise in hostilities between the Brujah and the Ventrue, and is taking full advantage of both clans.

The Sabbat: False Idols

Regent Temoch stabilized the Sword of Caine, encouraging pack leaders to take a strong hand, enabling crippled diocese to reform, and using the sacred ritae to unite the sect. Still, the Sabbat was forced to face a difficult truth: between the Assamite defections, the hunter incursions, and the Nosferatu betrayal in Cleveland, they had lost many irreplaceable members of the sect. Limping, weakened, and badly disabled, the Sword of Caine was in a desperate position.

Mass-Embraces of discount store workers would never replace the strength the sect had lost. Pack consensus was that such power must be taken by force, and by the same means, Caine's vengeance would be carried out against the unrepentant. The Sabbat focused their ire on the three clans with the most obvious current associations with their Antediluvians: the Setites, the Assamites, and the Giovanni (in the case of the Giovanni, the Sabbat consider their founder, Augustus Giovanni, an Antediluvian). The Regent met with his Consistory to define their strategy. None of these clans had Camarilla support, and each stood alone. Further, each held the potential reward of extinguishing an Antediluvian and feasting upon its blood. Using this ambition as a rallying cry to revitalize the lagging packs, the Regent sent word through the Sword of Caine and turned its armies toward these seemingly more-attainable goals. The Sabbat reprioritized and began hit-and-run incursions against those clans in pursuit of the heart's blood.

A Tense Détente

In the wake of the Nights of Turmoil, the two great sects of vampires established a bitter and begrudging détente. While both sects are still powerful, losses suffered during the Nights of Turmoil weakened them both to a point where openly continuing the war would cause the destruction of both sects by outside forces. Thus, open and obvious warfare between the two sects has ceased. Make no mistake, there is no love lost between Camarilla and the Sabbat. Old grudges still burn, hatreds simmer, and slaughter simply waits for an opportunity to once more be unleashed. No one's forgotten the past. The war has simply gone underground, using small hit-and-run tactics rather than all-out massacres. The only large-scale battles are fought in the demilitarized zones, where neither sect establishes havens. Due to their losses, both sides have pulled back in order to survive. Each awaits the lessening of mortal watchdogs, and the inevitable passage of time, generation after generation, during which records will be lost and perspectives and priorities will shift. Someday, perhaps not so many years from now, mortal society will again forget vampires exist, freeing the Camarilla and the Sabbat to renew the widespread violence. When that day comes, blood will run in the streets.

The Camarilla: Decrees

In 2011, the Camarilla's Inner Circle held its 41st official meeting. First, in return for his loyalty to the sect, Prince Stanford Warwick assumed the post of Nosferatu Justicar. Many Nosferatu quietly cursed him for his treason to their clan, but similar numbers lauded the many lives he saved from Sabbat diablerists. His appointment has divided the clan's loyalties and caused dissention in the once-unified group.

Second, the Camarilla altered its official position on the Antediluvians. Rather than claiming these creatures don't exist, elders of the sect have been instructed to subtly assert that the Founders are loving fathers and mothers, and the ancient tales of hunger are fallacies and envious slander. However, the Camarilla still considers the Book of Nod a text heresy, a superstitious book of ancient lies perpetuated by the Sabbat in order to control its fanatic membership. Members of the Camarilla found with such knowledge are condemned as Sabbat sympathizers and traitors.

During their time in exile, the Gangrel formed a strange brotherhood with the Tremere. During the Nights of Turmoil, the Tremere spoke vociferously against excluding the Gangrel from the Camarilla and against the Inner Circle's stance that Antediluvians did not exist. To support their argument, the Tremere cited their experiences with the dread infernalist, Saulot, during the Dark Ages. In 2011, the Inner Circle accepted the Gangrel back into the Camarilla,

although they were refused the special graces offered to the pillar clans. The confederation of the two clans continues even after the Gangrel entered the sect once more, as the clan of wanderers does not forget a debt. In modern nights, the Gangrel are black sheep; their disobedience and defection is remembered often in the council of the Justicariate. The clan will have to accept penance before it can return to the prestige it once held.

For his part, Imperator Karsh maintained his troops even after open warfare with the Sabbat slowed into détente. The Imperator claims there are still numerous dangers present, and the Camarilla cannot afford to be caught unawares and without protection. Still, rumors circulate through the higher echelons of the sect that Karsh intends to seize control, replacing the Inner Circle with a more militant leadership.

Malkavians

The Lunatics are prophets, but as often as their wisdom is revered, it is also scorned. Members of the Malkavian clan speak of a "jolt" that occurred within their psyches on the night when the Red Star winked out. The most sensitive describe it as a distinct feeling of emptiness, a lack of completion somewhere within the clan's unified inner psyche. Since that night, the clan's visions have occasionally contained a dissonant, duplicate and strangely conflicting thread. It does not always influence their oracular predictions, but on occasion, a Malkavian sees things that do not happen – and, perhaps, could not happen – containing images of individuals already dead, or events that cannot come to pass. Their elders warn that when Gehenna was prevented, the world's future changed. It may simply take time for the Malkavian clan's sensitive minds to adjust to these thousand subtle deviations from what-was-to-be.

Malkavian oracles still see the future, and for the most part, they do so as accurately as ever. Yet, even though only the occasional vision is tainted by this false future, the fact that they cannot always trust their instincts leads to distress and concern among the clan. Further, new dreams hint at corruption yet to come, repeating the words and images of "darkness caused by a falling son," "a Baali curse upon two warrior clans," and "treason in the compass's heart." Many hope these, too, are echoes of things prevented on the night the Red Star faded from the sky.

Old Debts

A vicious streak recently surfaced in Toreador art, as if touched by a dark, cruel muse. Certainly, the clan benefited a great deal from political vacancies caused by mortal hunters. They claimed many princedoms in cities where hunters eradicated the original vampire population, and the clan's numbers have swelled to match their new prominence.

Secretly, the artistic resurgence is due to the fact that a lineage of Toreador *antitribu*, led by Baron Philippe Volgirre (who sired the current Toreador Justicar, Madam Guil), rejoined the clan in 2006 to avoid political fallout within the Sabbat. Some of the Prisci personally blamed this lineage for many hunter attacks, due to its careless obsession with dangerous art. In addition, the Sabbat's recent resurgence in religious fervor killed Baron Volgirre's personal enjoyment of the sect. Of course, his return surprised Justicar Guil, who believed she had killed the baron in 1579.

Volgirre cashed in an old favor owed to him by Rafael de Corazon, then blackmailed his childe and quietly arranged for the bloodline to reintegrate with the Toreador of the Camarilla. The Volgirre offered a simple benefit to Clan Toreador: the converts shared 600 years of vicious, dangerous art created through the suffering of mortals in exchange for refuge and a new beginning. For the jaded Toreador, such degenerate inspiration (and access to disciplines not usually found among the Camarilla) proved too tempting to refuse. Their beauty turned many heads, and their dark sensuality lured many hearts. Those who fear their wicked nature find themselves all too quickly influenced by Volgirre bloodline's beauty and allure.

The Independent Alliance

In 2008, Clan Giovanni suffered a terrible blow. An attack devastated the palatial Giovanni compound in Vienna, resulting in the abduction of their founder, Augustus Giovanni. Of the nearly 200 vampires and ghouls protecting him, none survived to tell the tale. The attack even destroyed the wraiths bound to serve him, their spirits torn apart as if cut by a thousand blades. Thus far, the necromancers have been able to discern only that Augustus still survives in physical form; he has not been destroyed or diablerized. His whereabouts, and the identity of his attackers, are still unknown.

The destruction of Bangladesh nearly extinguished the Ravnos. Noddist scholars believe the attack on that city targeted the Ravnos Antediluvian, and the pain and suffering of the founder caused waves of dementia to sweep through the clan. Certainly, the Giovanni realized that the loss of their Founder could bring about their own demise. To rescue him, and to survive without Augustus's direct protection, the Giovanni needed allies, but their hands were tied by the Promise: a treaty that afforded them no protection and little benefit. With but one way to advance their cause, the Giovanni broke ties with the Inner Circle and dissolved the Promise.

— The Treaty of Alliance —

The elders of Clans Giovanni and Setite, for themselves and their childer, gathered together out of mutual accord, do swear and affirm the following treaty of alliance:

I. ***Territory:*** All territory owned by either, outside of the lands of Egypt and Venice, shall be considered shared resources, to house and shelter us each within the other, as the local populace so please.

II. ***Emissary:*** In all territories, each clan shall have an Emissary to the other. These emissaries shall bear witness to significant business deals, offer advice and counsel, solve disputes, and give testimony back to their clans.

III. ***Punishment:*** No Setite shall deliver Final Death to a member of the Giovanni, nor shall a Giovanni deliver Final Death to a Child of Set, without permission from the Emissary of the accused.

IV. ***Protection:*** Each shall go to the aid of the other, in business or in combat, to defend or aggress, to the mutual benefit of both our clans. Both clans shall, to their utmost, protect the alliance and its territories from mortal awareness and incursion.

V. ***Independence:*** Neither shall bow knee, nor join in whole nor in part, nor ally with, nor take positions within, the sects of the Camarilla or the Sabbat. Personal alliances, boons, and individual agreements notwithstanding, none shall affect the part or the whole. No member of the alliance shall render aid to a Giovanni or Child of Set who holds status in these sects.

VI. ***Religion:*** There shall be no law made within these territories that shall discriminate or limit the free exercise of all forms of worship, sacrifice, or the determination of a soul.

VII. ***Accord:*** Finally, both parties agree to use every exertion to enforce peace and friendship between their clans.

So done for the Followers of SET, by our eternal hands, marks and seals, in the name of SET the Guardian, SET the Jackal, and SET the Creator.

So done for all our coscas, by the bond of Omertà, in honor of Capo Crimini Augustus Jovian Giovanni.

Ratified in Las Vegas, in the desert of Mojave, this ninth day of May, 2011.

Don Ambrogino Giovanni

Dona Isabel Giovanni

Don Francis Milliner

Don Michael Antonio Giovanni

Ororiouth

Qufur Am-Heru, Champion

Maatkare the Beloved

Hesha Ruhadze

The Giovanni turned to the Followers of Set, sending emissaries to their temples. Already under attack by the Sabbat, the Setites accepted the Giovanni's overtures and began a series of political negotiations between the two clans. Caught between the Sabbat's desire to slaughter Antediluvians, and the Camarilla's refusal to publically admit that such creatures influence the world, the Followers of Set and the Giovanni discovered common bonds. Both clans claim independence from the sect war, refusing to join either the Camarilla or the Sabbat, and both revere their Founders. Both are deeply enmeshed in the criminal underworld, and the two clans hold a similar outlook on the joy of profiting at the expense of idiots.

Initially, the Camarilla threatened the Giovanni, demanding they return to the Promise's restrictions. Tensions heightened, and the sharp edges of politics severed many lesser alliances. Giovanni were thrown out of Camarilla domains, refused entry to their courts, and openly slighted. Yet before the two sides could erupt into warfare, the Followers of Set stepped in to aid the Giovanni in their time of need. This suffrage bought the Giovanni time to begin their search for their Founder. In exchange, the Giovanni shared access to their centuries of accumulated wealth of Necromancy.

In 2011, a local temple of Followers of Set signed a pact with the independent Giovanni Prince of Las Vegas. Together, the two clans exploited their budding association and pooled their influence in the underworld. Seizing control of criminal networks, mafia families, and drug cartels, they established safe houses and meeting places hidden from mortal hunters. As many Elysiums were no longer safe, these locations became vampiric gathering points for Camarilla, Anarchs, and other independent clans, allowing the alliance to show its strength.

This partnership spread through many North American cities. Setite and Giovanni leaders united against the Camarilla, prevented incursions from the Sabbat, and forged the beginnings of what may become a worldwide alliance. This union is slowly spreading from city to city, as Setite temples and Giovanni Dons slowly sign on to the agreement.

Certainly, the arrangement has changed many things for both clans. No longer bound by the Promise, the Giovanni freely trade and congress with members of the Camarilla, though the Justicars and their servants hold grudges from the shattering of the Promise. The Giovanni would rather rule in hell than serve in heaven — and those who have joined the new alliance have every intention of making it more profitable than any Camarilla position. For their part, the Setites gain a great deal of necromantic knowledge, in particular, studies on resurrection and the Shadowlands. The alliance provides mutual protection from Sabbat predators as well as massive combined influence over the criminal agencies of the mortal world. Though it is limited in scope, and may be short-lived, the union serves both clans well.

Autarkis: On the Outskirts

During the Nights of Turmoil, many Caitiff were put to death simply for the "crime" of being clanless. The Justicars permitted sweeping dictates of destruction, sanctioning the Sixth Tradition against Caitiff throughout all Camarilla domains. Archons and Princes alike enthusiastically carried out these pogroms. Although the fervor for eradication has cooled, most Caitiff desperately keep their condition a secret, fearing death (or worse) if they should be found out.

The Anarch Movement lost territory, but grew stronger. Within the Anarchs, there is a strong trend toward technology after witnessing the Camarilla and the Sabbat devastated by a lack of modernism. The Anarchs know that vampires will survive only if they adapt. Already, small pockets of these vampires have organized themselves in contemporary fashion, typically as businesses or unions. Some even reject the term of Baron, claiming it is a relic of a feudal age and implies servitude and lesser station to Camarilla Princes. Instead, they prefer the term Advocate, a title more appropriate to current nights.

Assamites

The continued strife in the Middle East strongly reflects the warfare and upheaval within the Assamite clan. The Viziers have not returned to the fold. The Warriors and Amr remain loyal to the Mountain, while the scholars persist within the Camarilla and rely upon the political allies they have earned within that sect.

Within the mountain of Alamut, the assassins endure tribulations. Eighteen centuries of torpor drove ur-Shulgi's Beast to its edge, and the vast magical powers he channeled to remove the curse placed a heavy toll on his spirit. A madness close to wassail has claimed the Eldest.

Ur-Shulgi now sits on the Black Throne within the Mountain, demanding bloodier and bloodier tithes in Haqim's name. He is heard to whisper, over and over, "… so you shall hunger for all blood for all time." He kills his followers seemingly at random, insisting that the clan is being infiltrated by infernal Baali. After diablerizing the Council of Scrolls, the lore keepers of the Mountain, ur-Shulgi ordered a search for the fabled Baali city of Chorazin.

The Eldest of Alamut considered the matter of the schism for almost a decade on the Obsidian Throne of Alamut. Haqim's law expressly forbids the unsanctioned murder of Assamites,

however, these Schismatics rejected their Founder's dictates. On the anniversary of the schism, ur-Shulgi the Eldest demanded a purge of all Schismatics, announcing that they should be hunted down as traitors and infernalists; their inability to remain loyal was proof that they have been corrupted by the Baali. Those loyal to the Mountain have a new mandate: the blood of the Schismatics is to be reclaimed, and their ashes scattered on the wind.

The Lost: Ravnos, Salubri, and Cappadocians

More than 10 years ago, three monumental events occurred within the vampiric world. Bangladesh burned, and the Ravnos clan was nearly obliterated. A small group of Salubri revealed themselves, joining the Sabbat to serve as warriors and fellows among the Sword of Caine. Lastly, the ruins of Kaymakli opened, freeing the torpid remnants of the Cappadocian clan. All three of these clans seemed on the verge of extinction. Their numbers were small, with few allies and many enemies. Yet each has managed to survive.

Two types of Ravnos escaped destruction. The first were the youngest and weakest, who were therefore less affected. The second were victorious in the bloodlust of diablerie, and survived by feasting upon their fellows. In recent years, these new elders Embraced selectively in an attempt to bring the clan back from extinction. They achieved this goal, but the influx of modern blood and the loss of ancient knowledge caused many difficulties for the clan. The habits and understanding of these new Ravnos are not the old ways, and it is hard to acclimatize the clan's past with its future.

The Salubri relished their nights in the Sabbat. They were taken in as fellows, treated well, and given accolades. Although they began as thin-blooded creatures, they were given opportunity to diablerize fallen enemies, and now boast nearly as many potent-blooded vampires as any other clan in the Sabbat. Strangely, on occasion a Salubri Warrior discovers that an Embraced childe is a throwback, exhibiting the powers of a Healer. Such soft-hearted creatures do not survive the trials of the Sabbat. Still, some of these aberrations manage to escape the Sword of Caine, to wander alone in the world. They have no protection, no lineage, clan, or sect. When found by other vampires, they are nearly always destroyed.

Called the Harbingers of Skulls by the Sabbat, the remnants of the Cappadocian clan were not so fortunate. They rejected Sabbat fanaticism, and mouthed platitudes when asked about the glory of Caine. They, too, repopulated, but their efforts have been far slower and much more cautious. Whenever possible, the Harbingers allow their childer to "escape" the sect, only for education or to work together against their cardinal enemy: Clan Giovanni.

Anarchy in Greece

In late 2009, a number of foreign investors started a vocal panic over the Grecian government's debt crisis. This outcry led to a crisis of confidence that forced the risk insurance on credit default swaps to skyrocket, and caused a devastating economic crisis. A number of elders were severely undermined by these events, which provided an opening for a small, dedicated group of Anarchs. Building up both a subtle military presence and influential control, these Anarchs utilized a number of modern marketing techniques to foster dissent among the mortals. This dissention has spread, turning into the formation of a full-blown Greek Anarch Movement. Camarilla elders are watching the matter very closely, concerned that the revolution could spread across Europe. Some fear that this might even spark civil war within the Camarilla.

The Ebony Kingdom

The economic disaster of the First World caused Africa's economic pulse to quicken. A number of rival factions that had been fighting for decades quietly made peace, just as opportunity arrived. Soaring prices for oil, minerals, and other commodities brought a new influx of cash that revitalized the local economies. From deep within the African nations, the Laibon – vampires native to that continent, and very different from European Kindred – began to make significant political movements toward Egypt, Turkey, India, and Spain. These inquiries and movements were highly advanced, designed to gain access to areas rich with economic potential.

Unknown to European vampires, an internal power was spreading across Africa, unifying multiple clans of Laibon. A powerful Guruhi leader brought native traditions together with modern economic and civil engineering techniques, elevating the standard of living and allowing the Laibon to move forward into the modern age despite Africa's trials. Commanding respect and even fear from their opponents, these African vampires began to get involved with Kindred politics. They are not content to allow the Camarilla or the Sabbat to bring their war into affairs of the Dark Continent. It is rumored that the Ventrue are seeking to ally with the Guruhi, the Osebo, and the Ishtarri, African-based bloodlines said to have a substantial membership and vested interest in North African affairs.

Victory in South America

South America was a bitterly contested battleground between the Sabbat and the Camarilla for the entirety of 20th century. The sects engaged in fierce skirmishes, ravaging cities with vicious, damaging guerilla tactics. These methods could not

succeed forever, and eventually, an organized cabal of hunters burning with righteous faith struck down Sabbat packs in Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. These left an opening for the Ivory Tower to exert influence over these lands, seizing major cities and establishing dominion. The Sabbat remain in the jungles and uncivilized areas of these countries, but at significantly weakened strength. Many packs retreated to lick their wounds in Paraguay, rebuilding their strength while the Camarilla attempts to contain the mortal threat.

Led by Alexandria, Prince of Buenos Aires, the Camarilla subtly influenced a rapid modernization project in many South American cities, leveraging rich natural resources and funneling profits into countries for the Ivory Tower. There are even rumors that, if Alexandria is successful, her efforts will be rewarded with a Grand Conclave — hosted in South America.

Modern Nights

Most vampires do not know what caused the Red Star to flare in the sky, nor what made it fade, but they do know that its appearance changed the supernatural world forever. Most mortals went back to their daily lives, putting recent tribulations down to massive riots, gang violence, or biological weapons outbreaks, but the clans and sects faced a world that was on the brink of realizing that vampires are real.

The modern world is ripe with corruption and decay. Heroes are a half-forgotten legend, remnants of a time when humanity still had illusions of hope and raged against the fading of the light. Centuries of subtle manipulation have eroded the virtues of compassion and charity, only to replace them with a sheepish meekness. Mortals are encouraged to look away from trouble, lest they invite it into their lives. Life is cheap in the urban landscape, and desolate in the small towns. Most mortals are looking to keep the scraps they've managed to scrape together, and like rats in the sewers, they are willing to fight to keep themselves alive.

As in the 12th century, when the Catholic Church's Inquisition rampaged through Europe, mortal vampire hunters destroyed entire domains of vampires. Although the hunters' paranoia helped to prevent panic among the populace, the danger to supernatural creatures remains considerable.

Vampires thought it couldn't happen. They controlled powerful corporations and government interests; they had nations and world leaders fully under their sway. What they did not realize was that technology was not the sole providence of large organizations. It could be accessed fluidly by the common man. Any mortal can use Google Earth, view public security cameras, or purchase guns and ammunition online. The vastness of the web, along with the accessibility and ease of the internet, gave normal individuals far more power than they'd ever accessed before. Technology had nearly overwhelmed vampire society.

Something had to change.

Modern nights are quieter on the surface, but the politics are no less dangerous. Vampires of both sects turned inward, taking their frustrations and failures out on one another and fighting over the positions of power left behind by those who had been destroyed. These are dangerous nights.

Vampire clans destroy one another's accomplishments, and sects hold their ancient grudges close, as they have always done. Immortal feuds, eternal rivalries, and primordial curses haunt the night, and the Beast lingers, ever hungry, behind every set of eyes. Into this world, you are Embraced, and here, you must find your way or be destroyed — from within, or without.

Buckle up. It's going to be one hell of a ride.

The Clans

"Do not give the night your fear. Give her your respect. She is both a lover and an adversary."

— Raphael de Corazon, Toreador Elder

Legend says that the first few generations of vampires did not suffer the divisions of clan, and that they were capable of performing miracle-like feats. As progenitors passed the Embrace down to their childer, and from there, to more childer, the powers inherent in vampiric vitae grew weaker. Powers belonging to vampires of the Third Generation (those known as Antediluvians) were narrower in scope than the powers possessed by their Second Generation sires. The predilections, aptitudes, and weaknesses of the Antediluvians were more stable than their predecessors'. These distinctions were passed down to the vampires they Embraced, marking each one as belonging to a specific lineage. Those lineages, known as clans, have defined vampiric society throughout history.

Each vampire clan has certain characteristics. The supernatural powers carried in the clan's blood defines them, as does the specific curse that afflicts members of that clan. These are passed down from sire to childe until the blood is weakened by being so many generations removed from the Antediluvians that it can no longer support these distinctions. These thin-blooded childer are known as Caitiff. They have no clan, and are considered outcasts by vampiric society.

Once Embraced, a fledgling vampire is both physically and spiritually altered. Her body dies and is brought back from

the dead, and her blood is replaced with vampiric vitae. Many of these changes are specific to the clan into which she is Embraced, making her more like the clan's founder. This effect is stronger in those with purer blood, and less obvious in those vampires who are many generations removed. The characteristics of the clan may appear as new quirks in an individual's personality, faults in her temperament, or physical changes to her appearance. It also manifests in the powers a vampire can learn through the intrinsic qualities of her blood.

Each clan has three disciplines that are native to its blood (listed at the top of the clan's description). These disciplines, known as *in-clan disciplines*, can be learned without a teacher. To learn a discipline that is not one of her in-clan disciplines, a vampire must find a teacher. For more information on learning these *out-of-clan disciplines*, see **Chapter Four: Disciplines on page 111**.

On rare occasion, the vitae of a small lineage will diverge from the distinctive qualities of the parent clan. These lineages, called *bloodlines*, still bear notable signs of their progenitor Antediluvian, but may also carry distinctive markers and predilections, different supernatural powers, or a strange variant of the clan's curse. Like clans, bloodlines reproduce predictably. All childer Embraced by a vampire of a particular bloodline will also have the distinctive qualities of that bloodline. Such childer cannot revert to their parent clan. By default, a bloodline has the same weakness as its parent clan but some bloodlines carry an alternate or additional weakness.

Some rare bloodlines, on the other hand, claim that they are not descended from any of the clans. They have their own distinctive markers and native disciplines, and are treated as oddities and freaks by members of the more legitimate clans.

The descriptions given in this chapter define the clans and bloodlines used in the **World of Darkness**. Your Storyteller may use altered descriptions, more suitable to her setting or to the history of her chronicle. Be sure to speak with your Storyteller about any changes that may be in play for her game before you choose your clan.

Clan Merits

Each clan has a list of merits that are available only to vampires Embraced into that clan. These merits are not available to adopted members, allies, revenants, or ghouls, even if the ghoul's domitor is a member of the clan. These merits are mentioned here only in summary, except for the clan's bloodlines, which are covered in detail.

For the full write up of these merits, see **Chapter Five: Merits and flaws on page 235**.

Alternate versus Additional Weakness

In most cases, a bloodline has the same weakness as its parent clan, with no changes. Where this is the case, no alteration is mentioned. On occasion, a bloodline will have an *additional* weakness defined; the bloodline suffers this weakness as well as the weakness of its parent clan. In rare cases, a bloodline will have an *alternate* weakness; this weakness supersedes the clan's weakness. The bloodline does not suffer the clan weakness, but instead suffers only the weakness defined for the bloodline itself.

The Greater Clans

Assamites

You have two choices. You can close your eyes,
and when they open, you will be with your loved ones in death.
Or you can raise your weapon, and meet oblivion as a warrior.
— Antonio Salerno

Nickname: Assassins

Disciplines: Celerity, Obfuscate, Quietus

Assamites, also known as the Children of Haqim, originated in the ancient Middle East. Skilled assassins and swift warriors, the majority of the clan resides in a mountain fortress known as Alamut. These warriors will readily agree to dangerous missions, if paid a high enough blood-price. Their thirst for blood is legendary, as is their desire to judge vampires according to their founder's laws. Those who are found wanting must be destroyed.

The Assamite clan has no sect allegiance. Although a few scattered individuals have joined either the Camarilla or the Sabbat, the clan as a whole refuses to bow to any vampiric hierarchy. To that end, its members never agree to long-term contracts, remaining staunchly independent in the great Jyhad. This causes the clan to be both feared and mistrusted, as vampires know that Assamite loyalty belongs to the highest bidder. Some Assamites follow a religious-themed Path of Enlightenment that codifies the clan's fanatic devotion to the Mountain. Known as the Path of Blood, it venerates diablerie and insists on a fanatic reverence to the clan's founder, Haqim.

In the past, the Assamites were rampant diablerists, forced to stop only because the Tremere levied a powerful curse upon them at the behest of the Camarilla's Inner Circle. This curse caused vampiric vitae to become poisonous to Assamites, burning their veins. Because of this, Assamites (particularly ancient ones) hate the Tremere above all else. When the Eldest of their clan rose and took control,

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

he broke the curse with his own sorcery, throwing off the shackles of the Tremere and swearing the clan to vengeance.

Older Assamites tend to come from Middle Eastern and North African cultures, though young Assamites are Embraced from a more global demographic. An Assamite's skin grows darker with age, as opposed to other vampires, whose skin gets paler. Because of this, particularly ancient Assamites appear unnaturally onyx-skinned, as though carved from darkest ebony.

The majority of the Children of Haqim are warriors, trained as killers, spies, and covert operatives. They take contracts and return to Alamut with the spoils of victory when they are successful. The rest of the clan – a significant minority – are of the two other castes: the Sorcerers and the Viziers. The Sorcerers remain hidden in the mountain of Alamut, tending to the clan's powerful leader, a vampire known as the Eldest. The Viziers, once trusted by their clan, defected from the Mountain over an ideological schism, refusing to bow to the will of the Eldest. For that crime, they are hunted by their fellows. The Mountain will not stop pursuing them until all of the treasonous Viziers are destroyed.

Organization: The Assamite clan has an insular, structured culture. All Assamites are expected to follow the dictates of the Eldest, whom they treat with a mix of reverence and fear. Small cells of two to three Assamites (known as *falaqi*) can reside outside the Mountain, so long as they adhere to the faith of Haqim and the dictates of the Eldest. Although the clan once had a strong reverence for the Muslim faith, the worship of Allah has been forbidden by the Eldest. All Assamites must revere only Haqim, or be destroyed for their disloyalty.

Clan Weakness: Since the Tremere curse was broken, Assamites have returned to their bloodthirsty ways. Assamites find the blood of vampires highly addictive. When an Assamite drinks vampiric blood she gains 2 Beast traits for the next 10 minutes. If the Assamite frenzies during this time, she will attempt to diablerize the last vampire whose blood she tasted. Unlike normal Beast traits, these traits do not count when determining if a vampire loses a point of Morality, and these Beast traits fade after 10 minutes.

Clan Merits: Assamites may purchase any of the following Assamite-only merits:

- **Surprise Attack (1 point merit):** You are skilled at attacking from surprise.
- **Bloodline: Vizier (2 point merit):** You are a member of the primarily-Islamic Viziers. With the rest of your caste, you defied the worship of Haqim and fled the Mountain. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Celerity, and Quietus.
- **Awakening the Steel (3 point merit):** You possess a melee weapon that has been named and enchanted by a member of the Sorcerer caste.
- **Bloodline: Sorcerer (4 point merit):** You are a member of the Assamite Sorcerer caste. You obey the will of the Eldest and seek vengeance on the Tremere and the treasonous Viziers. Your in-clan disciplines are Obfuscate, Quietus, and Thaumaturgy: Lure of Flames. Additionally, you may learn one other Thaumaturgy path of your choice.

Bloodline: Vizier (2 point merit)

"One breath.
One action, on one day within the long span of your life,
and in that moment, you are transformed forever.
You are judged...and your fate is sealed."

— Ahmad Al-Shir

Disciplines: Auspex, Celerity, Quietus

Once, Assamite Viziers were responsible for compiling and documenting information on culture, government, the arts, and religion for the clan. However, after the clan's religious schism, the primarily-Islamic Viziers defied the worship of Haqim and fled the Mountain. Assamite Viziers are driven to accumulate knowledge with a zeal that borders on the obsessive. Viziers are creatures of research and accumulation, desperate for rare knowledge and willing to do anything to uncover forbidden secrets. They are extremely focused, even to their own detriment, and most Viziers will act irrationally (and even self-destructively) in order to further their research.

Alternate Weakness: Viziers are obsessive about their studies, even to their own detriment. All Viziers have an Obsessive derangement, with the trigger of "Unknown Knowledge." Viziers do not gain experience points for this derangement.

Bloodline: Sorcerer (4 point merit)

Disciplines: Obfuscate, Quietus, and Thaumaturgy: Lure of Flames. Additionally, you may learn one other Thaumaturgy path of your choice.

Members of the Sorcerer caste of Clan Assamite were content to spend immortality pondering magical theory, religious philosophy, and intellectual knowledge, but since the clan's curse was broken, they have dedicated themselves to two goals. The first is vengeance against the Tremere and against the treacherous Viziers. The second goal is to care for the Eldest, whose behavior has become more and more erratic. He sees shadows of the infernal in everything. The Sorcerers cannot disobey him, but they fear his madness will destroy the clan.

Alternate Weakness: Sorcerers have difficulty practicing the powers of Obfuscate, as their magic shines in their aura like a beacon to the powers of supernatural perception. Characters attempting to penetrate their Obfuscate receive a +1 wild card bonus on their Auspex test pools.

BRUJAH

"Might doesn't make right. Right makes might. Fuck it, I'm not going to waste my immortality compromising with the corrupt."

— Aligheri, Advocate of 8 Mile

Nickname: Rabble

Disciplines: Celerity, Potence, Presence

The vampires of Clan Brujah were once scholars and seekers of wisdom. They inspired the glory of ancient Carthage, a mighty city where mortals and vampires lived together in peace. However, Ventrue treachery and the armies of ancient Rome laid Carthage low and forever shattered the Brujah clan. Over the centuries, internal divides have shaken Clan Brujah to its core, changing the clan's nature from stoic philosopher to passionate warrior. The Brujah are no longer the creatures they were in Carthage.

In modern nights, the Brujah are a fiery group of warriors, individualists, and rebels, driven to both success and failure by their tempestuous natures. They feel mortal passions more deeply than other vampires, and are prone to attack first and ask questions later. Members of this clan love a cause, and will eagerly act on anything they see as injustice. They come together in violent gatherings called *rants*, where they give passionate speeches, challenge rivals to personal combat, or drum up support for crusades against the status quo. They know best that the capacity for emotion can also be a dark path. Many Brujah are driven to frenzy and madness if they cannot control their passions.

Members of the Brujah clan are Embraced from many cultures, regions, and religions. The Brujah have never been selective — they choose childer based on an individual's drive and desire to right wrongs. When it comes to fitting in with the modern world, Brujah do it better than most vampires. They easily adopt styles of rebellion: shaved heads, motorcycles, rivets, leather jackets, or t-shirts with rude slogans.

Organization: Brujah with experience tend to be inspirations to their clanmates, but a clanmate is expected to prove her worth rather than turning to her elders to solve problems, so clan hierarchy is loose at best. Brujah tend to group themselves into philosophical factions, often claiming to be Idealists, Individualists, or Iconoclasts. Iconoclasts are passionate about tearing down society and building something new, while Idealists prefer to solve society's problems rather than start completely over. Individualists are more reclusive, working on a person-by-person basis instead of concentrating on society as a whole.

Clan Weakness: Brujah are highly emotional, and have great trouble controlling the wrath of their Beasts. Their difficulty to resist frenzy is increased by 2.

Clan Merits: Brujah may purchase any of the following Brujah-only merits:

- **Brotherhood (1 point merit):** You gain a bonus when fighting alongside other Brujah.
- **Burning Wrath (2 point merit):** You can inflict aggravated damage with your fists.
- **Scourge of Alecto (3 point merit):** You can incite the Beast of anyone who attempts to ignore your Awe or Majesty.
- **Bloodline: True Brujah (4 point merit):** You are a member of a bloodline within the Brujah clan that reviles its tempestuous ancestors, and dedicates itself to intellectual studies and passionless pursuits. Your in-clan disciplines are Potence, Presence, and Temporis.

Bloodline: True Brujah (4 point merit)

"Peace is a curse, and happiness a burden.
Hope only exists so that we have farther to fall."

— Saphea bint Shahrokh

Disciplines: Potence, Presence, Temporis

One group of Brujah stands apart from the rest, and they absolutely abhor the majority of their clan. These vampires claim that the passionate Brujah are not the true inheritors of their Antediluvian's wisdom. Called True Brujah or Sages, they assert that Troile, the founder's most beloved childe, committed diablerie upon him, changing the very nature of the clan with that heinous act. Sages strive to be faithful to the founder's original, passionless ways, and revile emotional instability.

In keeping with their philosophy, a True Brujah's focus is studied pursuit of knowledge. Members of this bloodline tend to be reserved, sober, and austere individuals: academics and historians, with a love of education and a great capacity for learning. The bloodline comes together twice a century to share academic discussions, research, scientific treatises, and philosophical advancements.

Alternate Weakness: True Brujah lose their emotional capacity when they are Embraced. They cannot purchase the Empathy skill, and they pay double the normal XP costs for dots of Morality.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

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Followers of Set

"Hail, Set, father of all, who divided Egypt and drove the Nile from the desert sands. His is the voice in the night. He is the serpent between the stars. Set is all things, and we, his best beloved children."

— Ororiouth

Nickname: Serpents

Disciplines: Obfuscate, Presence, Serpentis

The Followers of Set, also known as the Setite clan, began as a death-cult in ancient Egypt, but the clan has grown prosperous in modern nights. Whether you're looking for hidden eldritch secrets or a drug-filled night of pleasure and excess, the Followers of Set can fulfill your every desire. These cunning vampires specialize in using the weaknesses of others in order to acquire power for themselves. The Followers revere their forefather, Set, as the first vampire, and claim that they are his only offspring — the other clans are descended from lesser creatures who became undead long after Set's rising.

At their core, the Followers of Set are a religious organization dedicated to the reverence and worship of their Antediluvian, the almighty Set of Egyptian myth. Faith permeates the clan, directing its members' actions and giving them a unified purpose. Even when schisms of belief have occurred, creating bloodlines such as the Daitya, the Tlacique, or the Vipers, most Setites are unified by their singular faith in Set. Only in the Sabbat have the Setites turned their back on their Antediluvian, advocating the worship of Caine and denying Set's divinity.

Unfortunately, such fanatic dedication makes enemies. Other clans consider the Followers of Set little better than infernalists selling their souls to an unknown entity. Certainly, Setites specialize in offering devil's deals, but they nearly always uphold their side of the bargain. Nevertheless, many vampires look on them with skeptical mistrust, and prefer not to ally with Setites.

The Followers of Set originated in North Africa; many of their elders claim to have been priests in ancient Egypt, using that claim as leverage to gain positions of power within the clan. In modern nights, the Setites choose childer from many cultures. They select primarily for charisma, dedication, and glibness. Typically, these childer are first brought into the worship of Set, and then given the Embrace as a dark gift in the service of their god. However, on occasion, a newly Embraced childe will reject these teachings and flee the temple. Some few of these individuals find themselves within the Anarch Movement, fighting for freedom from their elders' desires. To young Setites, this includes freedom of religion — a cause very close to their own hearts.

The clan has adapted well to modern society, shedding the trappings of the past like a snake sheds its skin. But within Setite temples, amid pillars of gold and Egyptian funerary statues, the worship of Set prospers and fills the night.

Organization: Followers congregate in temples, usually one within every major region. That temple coordinates a network of underground cults and drug dens, spreading its vampiric priesthood over several states or territories. A Follower of Set's clan prestige is based upon the prestige of the temple she serves and her position in its religious hierarchy. The largest and most prestigious temple is located in northern Africa, where a powerful Methuselah reigns. From there, the Grand High Priest sends out edicts to lesser temples in the name of Set.

Clan Weakness: Setites react negatively to bright light. They receive 1 additional point of damage when exposed to sunlight, and all test pools are reduced by 2 for any challenges attempted while in bright light of any kind. Note that defensive test pools are not subject to this penalty.

Clan Merits: Followers of Set may purchase any of the following Setite-only merits:

- **Personal Cult (1 point merit):** You are the leader of a fanatic cult, which gives you additional points of backgrounds.
- **Bloodline: Tlacique (2 point merit):** You are a member of the Tlacique bloodline, which claims descent from Aztec vampires and maintains temples in South American jungles. Your in-clan disciplines are Presence, Obfuscate, and Protean.
- **Bloodline: Vipers (2 point merit):** You are a member of the Viper bloodline, which serves as warriors for the clan. You protect its temples and use might to defend other Setites when necessary. Your in-clan disciplines are Potence, Presence, and Serpentis.
- **Addictive Blood (3 point merit):** Anyone foolish enough to drink a point of your Blood becomes addicted to it.
- **Setite Sorcery (4 point merit):** You can purchase Thaumaturgy: Path of Corruption, and one other Thamaturgical path of your choice.

Bloodline: Tlacique (2 point merit)

Disciplines: Presence, Obfuscate, Protean

These vampires claim descent from an Aztec aspect of Set they call "Tezcatlipoca," the god of night and black

magic. Founded in South America before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors, it is a mystery how the Setites propagated on that continent centuries before the Americas were discovered.

The native Tlacique resisted colonization and fought viciously against the invading vampires of Europe. In the end, they were overcome by Lasombra and Ventrue forces wishing a foothold in the New World. The bloodline survived, falling back to the undiscovered depths of South America's jungles. There, they strike out against all European vampires, maintaining hidden temples where the old ways – and the ancient gods – are still revered.

Bloodline: Vipers (2 point merit)

Disciplines: Potence, Presence, Serpentis

The Followers of Set have a reputation for seduction, persuasion, and stealth. The bloodline of Vipers, popularly known as "Warrior Setites," goes counter to that ideal, preferring brute force and raw intimidation instead. They are temple protectors, soldiers in Set's holy war, and they are eager to fight and die in the name of their dark god. Vipers have no fear, and unlike most vampires, feel that their immortality exists only at Set's whim. They are passionate, fervent ideologues who preach Set's word. This bloodline is known to forcibly convert others to the worship of Set through fear, torture, and intimidation.

Gangrel

"So, you have a swift strike? Great strength? What do I care? The mountain pays no mind to lightning's flash. You come and go in tumultuous brilliance. I alone remain."

— Mitru the Hunter

Nickname: Outlanders

Disciplines: Animalism, Fortitude, Protean

Other vampires consider the Gangrel to be primitive creatures. They do not understand the difference between primitive and predator. Yes, Gangrel can be vicious, cruel beasts, subject to animalistic drives — but they are also cunning and civilized hunters. As a clan, the Gangrel are wary and aloof. They disdain organized society and prefer to operate outside of structures and hierarchies. This individualism has caused them to develop in different ways, spawning many different lineages, from the territorial-based Anda or Mariners to the disparate Noiad or Coyote bloodlines, whose powers differ from the parent clan. The clan considers them all Gangrel.

Where other clans focus on politics, power, or acquisitions, the Gangrel are loners and travelers; few spend time in the courts of vampire culture. They have little regard for clan enmities or alliances. Conflicts with Gangrel more often concern domain and feeding rights instead of politics and power-brokering. Further, they don't differentiate between ancient and newly Embraced vampires, as other clans do. Instead, the Gangrel base clan prestige on an individual's capacity and ability, rewarding courage and individual strength. Gangrel elders demand respect — but it is a respect that they are willing to earn.

Most Gangrel appear scruffy-looking, rough, and ragged, as befits a clan of wanderers. Further, when they frenzy, they take on aspects of natural creatures, lending them an animalistic mien. They shelter where they please, in the soil of the earth, and do not care what others think of their appearance. Gangrel sire sporadically, often after hunting a prospective childe. They frequently abandon the fledgling vampire after her creation, forcing her to learn the basic lessons of survival on her own. Only after the childe has proven herself will the sire return to induct her into vampire society and introduce her to the clan.

Organization: On occasion, members of the Gangrel clan gather to discuss current events and share stories of their travels. These meetings are informal, rarely planned in advance, and often last only a few nights. Beyond that, Gangrel eschew organization other than the sire-childe relationship. The leadership of the Gangrel consists of those whose recent victories are most prestigious. Those whose noteworthy deeds are in the distant past, or who have recently lost face, receive far less respect.

Clan Weakness: All Gangrel have one animalistic physical feature. For example, you might have hawk's eyes, scales all over your skin, or a lion's mane. Every time a Gangrel frenzies, she temporarily gains an additional animalistic feature. Temporary animal features recede when the vampire sleeps for a day, but a Gangrel's permanent animal hallmark never fades. It can be hidden by clothing, or by powers such as Obfuscate, or temporarily removed by powers such as Vicissitude, but it will always return when the vampire sleeps.

Clan Merits: Gangrel may purchase any of the following Gangrel-only merits:

- **Protean Blood (1 point merit):** You can occasionally activate Protean powers without spending Blood.
- **Bloodline: Coyote (2 point merit):** You are a member of the Coyote bloodline. Sometimes known as "City Gangrel," the Coyotes are comfortable in urban environments. Your in-clan disciplines are Celerity, Obfuscate, and Protean.

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- **Bloodline: Noiad (2 point merit):** You are a member of the Noiad bloodline, which resides in the far north in order to study the Northern Lights. Your in-clan disciplines are Animalism, Auspex, and Protean.
- **Shape of Beast's Wrath (3 point merit):** You can transform into a monstrous half-man/half-beast.
- **Bloodline: Ahrimanes (4 point merit):** You are a member of the all-female bloodline known as the Ahrimanes. Your in-clan disciplines are Animalism, Presence, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery.

Bloodline: Coyotes (2 point merit)

"Everyone dies at some point. Resign yourself to it. Once you've done that, you can get down to the business of living."

Disciplines: Celerity, Obfuscate, Protean

The Coyotes, popularly known as "City Gangrel," are the ultimate urban predators. Their bloodline began centuries ago, but truly rose to prominence during the Industrial Revolution, when urban sprawl and modern technology changed the world. Coyotes were once seen only among the Sabbat, but in recent nights have been found as Autarks, Anarchs, and even the occasional member of the Camarilla. Unlike most Gangrel, the Coyotes are extremely comfortable in this environment. They are predominately modern, young vampires, choosing to hunt their prey within the cities and test the boundaries of their vampiric powers.

Bloodline: Noiad (2 point merit)

Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Protean

Of the Gangrel bloodlines, the enigmatic Noiad are perhaps the rarest. The lineage developed in Finland during the Dark Ages, and as civilization encroached upon them, their tribes of mortals moved further and further north to escape modernization. These Gangrel are seers and mystics, claiming to see visions of the future within the Northern Lights. Because they make their homes so far north, the Noiad spend months awake while the sun is beneath the horizon. They use this time to study the sky and seek prophecy. Other Gangrel occasionally seek them out to ask for specific portents, but the Noiad rarely trust visitors to their land.

Bloodline: Ahrimanes (4 point merit)

Disciplines: Animalism, Presence, Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery

The Ahrimanes are a rare, all-female group of Gangrel from the southern United States. These Gangrel are extremely shamanistic, and have an unusual bond with spirits of all kinds. They are extremely secretive, and extremely violent. Only female characters can purchase this merit. Although the group originated within the Sabbat, Ahrimanes are rare enough that no sect truly claims them. Ahrimanes most often choose to be Autarkis.

Giovanni

"You work with me, I'll work with you. You don't, I snap my fingers, and Vito snaps your neck.
This is a simple proposition, I tell ya. Nothin' but math."

— Vito Alonso de Caperio Giovanni,
Don of Genoa, Italy

Nickname: Necromancers

Disciplines: Dominate, Potence, Necromancy: Sepulchre Path

The Giovanni began their history as a house of mortal Venetian merchants. Embraced by scholars of Clan Cappadocian, the Giovanni were intended to be the clan's liaison with the mortal world during the Renaissance, but the crafty and power-hungry merchants quickly turned against their sires. The downfall of the Cappadocians was only the beginning of their ambitions.

The Giovanni built a vast fortune over the centuries, using their keen grasp of politics and a great deal of sharp financial acumen. Further, they mastered the secrets of Necromancy, exercising control over the spirits of the dead. Giovanni pride grew along with their rise in power, and they quickly cornered the market on Necromantic ability in the vampire world. For centuries, the Giovanni parlayed their talents, forcing other clans to accept their independence and ignore the dark deeds of their past. While the rest of the vampiric world judges the Giovanni for the destruction and diablerie of the Cappadocians, it cannot reasonably ignore the Necromancers — nor turn its back on the power that the young clan wields.

To those outside the clan, the Giovanni put on a great show of humility and friendship. However, within their cloistered walls, the family is cutthroat and incestuous, willing to perform vile acts in order to gain more power. They make no true alliances, but are willing to mouth pretty words in order to pacify other vampire clans. In the end, Clan Giovanni's only loyalty is to itself.

Organization: True to their Renaissance roots, the Giovanni have a strict internal organization. Elders command those of weaker blood, and keep the clan's younger members in strict order. The clan does not adhere to traditional gender roles, however; both women and men hold positions of power within the Giovanni. The internal structure is further complicated

by incestuous relationships, heretical death cults, and strange relationships with the ghostly spirits of deceased family members.

Clan Weakness: A Giovanni vampire's bite causes excruciating pain in the mortals who receive it. When a Giovanni feeds upon a mortal, she inflicts 3 points of damage for every blood she drains instead of the standard 2.

Clan Merits: Giovanni may purchase any of the following Giovanni-only merits:

- **Necromantic Expertise (1 point merit)**: You can purchase an additional path of Necromancy, except for Necromancy: Mortis Path.
- **Mook (2 point merit):** You can learn the powers of Celerity and Fortitude without a teacher.
- **Ghostly Retainer (3 point merit):** You have a loyal wraith Retainer. This wraith is the ghostly spirit of a departed family member.
- **Bloodline: Premascine (4 point merit):** You are a throwback to an older lineage of the clan. You do not suffer from the normal Giovanni clan disadvantage, and you can learn Necromancy: Mortis Path.

Bloodline: Premascine (4 point merit)

Disciplines: Dominate, Potence, Necromancy: Sepulchre Path

You are a throwback to an older lineage of the clan. You suffer from a ghastly pallor reminiscent of the Cappadocians, and you can learn Necromancy: Mortis Path. This path is learned without a teacher, is purchased at out-of-clan costs, and is not considered an in-clan discipline. This merit provides an exception to the rule that prevents non-Cappadocians from learning Necromancy: Mortis Path. Other Giovanni (especially old ones) are extremely suspicious of characters who demonstrate the ability to harness the Mortis Path, believing that such an individual may still be loyal to the Cappadocians. Your disciplines are the same as those of your parent clan (Giovanni), save that you can purchase the discipline Necromancy: Mortis Path without a teacher.

LASOMBRA

"I know that you fear me. You also love me,
in the secret place between the darkness and the soul.
You hide in the light, but remember:
every candle casts a shadow."
— Romero de la Salle

Nickname: Magisters

Disciplines: Dominate, Potence, Obtenebration

Spawned in darkness, their spirits merged with the depths of the Abyss, the vampires of the Lasombra clan are regal, elegant, and consumed with the flawless exercise of power. Few vampires have such will and control as the Lasombra, or maintain such a deep interest in excellence, nobility, and ambition. The clan's ranks are filled with priests who would be Pope, and counselors who steer the fates of nations. They enjoy the "sports" of the nobility (namely duels, poisoning, assassination, and ambition), and rule the night with elegance and dark desire.

Where other vampires seek meaning, looking to blood or their internal hierarchies to motivate them throughout an immortal existence, Lasombra seek nothing less than complete supremacy. Their influence in the church is unmatched. Throughout the ages, the Lasombra have invested themselves with the trappings of faith, seizing both wealth and power behind the scenes.

Even though faith is crucial to the Lasombra, most of them do not believe that vampires can be forgiven or redeemed. They believe that vampirism is a curse levied upon a few in order to drive mortals toward God's light or to punish and destroy those who will not turn from darkness. Certainly, the clan has long abandoned the hope for an afterlife or salvation. What pleasures a Lasombra finds, she finds in the mortal world; what glory she earns comes from seeing enemies and upstarts crushed beneath her boot.

Arrogance seems native to the Lasombra vitae. Even the clan's youngest fellows radiate a dark sense of command, and true elders can use their clan's power over shadow to enforce their will on the night itself. They feel that no other vampire is their equal, and that the Lasombra clan is of quantifiably superior blood.

Organization: The Lasombra prefer regal courts, dark masses, and the trappings and titles of aristocracy. Ceremony, as well as power, is integral to the clan's internal structure. The Lasombra are devious and murderous, to say the least. Lineage provides a great deal of prestige, and some familial lines are more revered than others. A complex system of patronage and mentorship provides further station, as does one's position within the hierarchy of her sect. A small group within the clan, known as the *Amici Noctis* (Friends of the Night), meet in secret and set policy for the rest of the clan. This body exerts its will over all members of Clan Lasombra, regardless of sect or personal alliance. When a Lasombra must be judged, she is brought before a Court of Blood, which sits in judgment on her worthiness, and can condemn her to death if she is found wanting.

Clan Weakness: Lasombra vampires cast no reflections. Whether in a mirror, in a body of water, on a polished surface, or in the rear-view of a taxicab, the Lasombra's

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image does not reflect. Her reflection cannot be captured by devices that use mirrors (like old-style cameras), but can be recorded by modern digital devices.

Clan Merits: Lasombra may purchase any of the following Lasombra-only merits:

- **Angelic Visage (1 point merit):** You gain the Charisma Social attribute focus.
- **Born in Shadow (2 point merit):** You don't need to spend Blood to activate the first 2 dots of Obtenebration.
- **Walk the Abyss (3 point merit):** You are trained in one of the rare arts of Abyss Mysticism. Through the use of this ritual, you can travel long distances by walking within the depths of the Abyss.
- **Bloodline: Kiasyd (4 point merit):** You are a member of the Kiasyd bloodline, which prefers isolated, studious existence. Your in-clan disciplines are Dominate, Mytherceria, and Obtenebration.

Bloodline: Kiasyd

"So much ignorance in the world.
It'd be tragic if I didn't have a sense of humor about it all."

— The Oracle of Koblenz

Disciplines: Dominate, Mytherceria, Obtenebration

Shortly before the 12th century, a Lasombra named Marconius experimented with the Obtenebration discipline and the blood of the fae. He experienced a catastrophic result, permanently altering his physical and spiritual nature; he became a Kiasyd. Kiasyd are isolationist, preferring a solitary life even to the company of their own kind. Some clans believe Kiasyd are not vampires, but have become something otherworldly (and potentially a breach of the Masquerade). Mysterious, foreign, and strange, Kiasyd are treated with suspicion and animosity whenever they surface within vampire society.

Additional Weakness: Like the bloodline's founder Marconius, a Kiaysd's Embrace physically alters her to the point that she is barely recognizable even as human. Kiasyd grow exceptionally tall, their skin pales to a chalky white, and their eyes blacken to ebony orbs. Kiasyd also suffer from the standard Lasombra weakness.

MaLkAvian

"I hear a lot about Malkavians being 'broken.' Then I look at other clans. We see things and know things that they can't. They're missing an entire sense that we have gained. They're the crippled ones, not us."

— Jessica Kesch

Nickname: Lunatics

Disciplines: Auspex, Dementation, Obfuscate

For some, eternity is no more than a continuance of mortal existence. For Malkavians, the transition is far more abrupt and devastating. The act of Embrace shatters the minds of those brought into this clan, driving them over the sharp brink of madness — but also unlocking supernatural gifts of insight and introspection.

All Malkavians are deeply, darkly insane; their psychology is precariously balanced on the edge of sanity's cliff. This is a painful, alienating phenomenon. The madness may take the form of a structured, clinically understood insanity, or it may be a complete reversal of the senses. It may come and go in vivid psychosis, or it may manifest as elaborate, long-term hallucinations. Each Malkavian's Embrace shatters the mind in a different pattern; no two emerge into immortality exactly the same.

It is difficult for other vampires to relate to members of the Malkavian clan. They are fractious, unpredictable, and sometimes unintelligible. They see the world differently and, occasionally, they try to educate and enlighten others to truths that only they seem to understand. These lessons take the form of pranks, and they are elaborate, terrifying, and dangerous, following logic only a Malkavian could understand.

Malkavians Embrace seemingly at random, taking their childer from all strata of mortal society. A Malkavian's outward appearance is usually specific to the individual's derangement, varying from disheveled and dirty to obsessively clean. Younger Malkavians tend to be deviants and loners, struggling to understand themselves and the new world into which they've been plunged. Elders tend to have a better grasp of their inner pandemonium, and seem more at ease. Further, all Malkavians are connected by a vast, lingering sixth sense – some say it is the slumbering consciousness of the founder of their clan – and they all have insights beyond any mortal capacity to understand.

Organization: Truly, the concept of structure is nearly meaningless when describing the rampant chaos that affects the Malkavian clan. Malkavians come and go as they please, barely noticing or caring as the ages pass. They have no

clan hierarchy, nor structure. Their elders are nominally in charge, primarily because they tend to be more lucid than those who are recently Embraced.

Clan Weakness: All members of Clan Malkavian suffer from a permanent, incurable derangement. They may acquire and recover from other derangements, but they can never recover from their primary derangement. Malkavians do not receive flaw XP for their primary derangement; however, they do receive flaw XP for additional derangements, as normal. Resetting a Malkavian's Derangement traits places her at 1, rather than 0. For more information on Derangement traits, please see **page 266**.

Clan Merits: Malkavians may purchase any of the following Malkavian-only merits:

- **Expanded Consciousness (1 point merit):** You can choose a second Mental attribute focus.
- **Bloodline: Ananke (2 point merit):** You're a member of the Ananke bloodline, practitioners of haruspexy who obsess over the bodies of the recently dead. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Dementation, and Presence.
- **Bloodline: Knights of the Moon (2 point merit):** You're a member of the Knights of the Moon bloodline, who do not manifest Dementation. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Dominate, and Obfuscate.
- **Labyrinthine Mind (3 point merit):** You receive a bonus to resist mind-altering powers, and people who attempt to read your mind risk gaining derangements.
- **Sophistry (4 point merit):** You can sometimes predict attacks before they happen, and use this unique insight to avoid harm.

Bloodline: Ananke

"I do not recall a time before the whispers clawed at my mind. I only know that I was never more alone, nor more accompanied, before I was dragged into the ranks of my clan."

— Cassius, Elder of the Moon

Disciplines: Auspex, Dementation, Presence

A remnant of a bygone age, members of the Ananke (AHN-a-key) bloodline are said to have kept the ancient temples, where oracles performed haruspexy (the art of divination through reading the entrails of a freshly killed animal) to read truths in blood. Ananke believe that the secrets of the universe can be witnessed in a microcosm by scrutinizing the bodies of the recently dead. Wisdom can only be gained by savagely tearing into the corporeal, physically delving through the inner workings of each creature in creation. This means that an Ananke Malkavian often has a low Morality, sacrificing her Humanity to her search for gristly answers.

Although the bloodline is experiencing a resurgence (more promising childer are available, due to the modern fascination with serial killers), by and large the Ananke are few. A member of this bloodline is compelled to collect trophies of her murderous exploits, using Auspex on them in meditative contemplation. She surrounds herself with the visceral "workings of the universe" in an attempt to find deeper understanding. Scholars suspect that one of the first Ananke Malkavians was the Methuselah known as the Ankou.

Additional Weakness: All Ananke are compelled to take gristly trophies of their activities, and if deprived of the opportunity to take a trophy, they become utterly unreasonable. If their collection is threatened, stolen, or destroyed, they cannot regain Willpower until they have started a new collection of *memento mori.*

Bloodline: Knights of the Moon

Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Obfuscate

These vampires are not truly a lineage, as their blood's alteration is not passed on, as other bloodlines' qualities are. The Knights of the Moon are throwbacks within the Malkavian clan, individuals who – for an unknown reason – did not manifest the clan's signature power of Dementation, regardless of their sire's aptitude with that discipline. These Malkavians may appear more stable than the rest of their clan, but the truth is that their insanity tends to manifest as a darker malfunction: vicious sociopathy, a cold, callous intellectualization, or a true psychotic break.

NOSFERATU

"Above, we are divided by politics, religion, and petty concerns.
Below, we are brothers and sisters
born of mutual agony and terror. We are hunted as one. We live and die the same way."

— Lorelei, Nosferatu Elder

Nickname: Sewer Rats

Disciplines: Animalism, Obfuscate, Potence

Members of Clan Nosferatu are physically twisted and deformed by the Embrace, turned from their mortal appearance into the shape of horrific monsters. Worse, Nosferatu deformations are so cruel and vicious that many who are Embraced do not survive. Because these vampires are so hideous, they must keep themselves hidden from mortal society, lest they break the Masquerade. These deformities cause a deep bond between members of the clan, unifying them.

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Some members of the Nosferatu clan revel in their repugnant appearance, using their deformities to shock and horrify other vampires. They keep their visages clearly apparent whenever possible, enjoying the discomfort that such a sight causes. In particular, these deformed vampires taunt the Toreador; the Nosferatu hate their beauty and artistic ability with a passion. If the Toreador had their way, Clan Nosferatu would be eradicated in order to protect the Masquerade — a thinly veiled excuse to cover bigotry and elitism. Clan Nosferatu carries similar animosity and revels in hurting Toreador above all else.

Members of Clan Nosferatu make their home amid the sewers of large cities, sheltering in broods with ghouled animals to protect them during the day. The Nosferatu are information-brokers, expert at stealth and cunning in the application of political pressure. They collect secrets, spying on and blackmailing other vampires. If they are cruel in their use of other people's secrets, it is because their eternity is a hard one. Their ugliness makes them loathed, and such alienation quickly turns to spite.

Legend has it that the Nosferatu Antediluvian regretted breaking Caine's law, and when the clan was cursed, he swore to eradicate his progeny from the earth. He took the most powerful of his brood, blood bound them, and commanded them to hunt the Nosferatu until every member of the clan is destroyed. No matter what sect or other loyalties a Nosferatu may have, the clan is unified in its fear and hatred of these *Niktuku*.

Organization: The Nosferatu tend to organize in small groups, usually broods sired by the same individual. These broods can sprawl into vast groups, with internal hierarchies based on nothing more than the original sire's whims and moods. Beyond a single city, the clan shares information via technology; they use email, forums, and secure servers known as ShreckNET, which is maintained by a powerful lineage of Nosferatu.

Clan Weakness: All Nosferatu are inhumanly ugly. Nosferatu cannot have the Appearance attribute focus.

Clan Merits: Nosferatu can purchase any of the following Nosferatu-only merits:

- **Unseeing Eye (1 point merit):** You can't be targeted by powers such as Clairvoyance.
- **Hidden Advantage (2 point merit):** It is more difficult than normal to see through your Obfuscate, and your powers of invisibility persist even while you sleep.
- **Pliable Blood (3 point merit):** You have a fourth in-clan discipline.
- **Unnatural Adaptation (4 point merit):** You have an unusual mutation that can be used to your advantage.

TOREADOR

"Le spine della rosa sono nacoste dal fiore:
the thorns of the rose are hidden by the bloom."
— Lynda La Plante, *Bella Mafia*

Nickname: Degenerates

Disciplines: Auspex, Celerity, Presence

Magnificent roses in a garden of evening stars. A lilting aria in a drowsy twilight. The sweet brush of a lover's kiss. These images evoke the Toreador, as these vampires are the most beautiful of all.

Toreador are artists, writers, and creators: artisans enjoying an immortal life of pageantry and sensuality. Unlike other clans, Toreador plunge themselves into the mortal world. Often, they will pretend to be mortal, living as glitterati and giving patronage to influential mortal artists. From city to city, passion to passion, the Toreador flit about, inspiring the finest art and leaving a trail of broken hearts.

With such refined tastes, it is easy for a member of the Toreador clan to become jaded and bitter, filled with ennui. Surrounded by excess, they quickly lose interest, seizing prize after prize — the sweetest of which are those stolen from another. The oldest Toreador often become depraved, sinking into debauchery simply so they can feel anything at all.

Toreador love politics and live for hierarchy, so long as they can remain at the top. They develop cults of personality, gathering followers captivated by their beauty or begging for their patronage. They are always at the cutting edge of arts, culture, and society. They pride themselves on their beauty and poise, hosting salons and gatherings to show off their wealth and style. Those who cannot keep up are mocked and ridiculed. Vampires who are ugly, uncivilized, or show no respect for the arts are torn apart by a Toreador's metaphorical claws. For this reason, there is an eternal enmity between the Nosferatu and Toreador clans, a hatred that will never be reconciled.

Organization: The Toreador hierarchy is based around an elaborate system of guilds and patrons, with rising stars shooting to the fore — and discarded just as quickly when their moment of glory has faded. Cliques of powerful elders snipe one another, engaging in subtle politics as they shred reputations and destroy lives. Young Toreador thrown into this pool of sharks must quickly learn to sink or swim.

Clan Weakness: Toreador are often entranced by beauty and art. When you encounter a piece of art, a performance, or something beautiful that you are particularly interested in or that you have never seen before, you must give it your undivided attention for a scene. Toreador can resist this urge by expending a point of Willpower. Although distractions like loud voices or a nearby scuffle can divert your attentions, Toreador dislike being interrupted while experiencing art and beauty, and will respond with anger — even violence or frenzy.

Clan Merits: Toreador may purchase any of the following Toreador-only merits:

- **Artist's Blessing (1 point merit):** You can purchase up to 7 points of Crafts and Performance skills, and you gain 3 free dots of one Craft or Performance skill.
- **Bloodline: Ishtarri (2 point merit):** You're a member of the Ishtarri bloodline, which devotes itself to the perfection of movement, whether in dance or battle. Your in-clan disciplines are Celerity, Fortitude, and Presence.
- **Bloodline: Volgirre (2 point merit):** You're a member of the Volgirre bloodline, which is a secret lineage of *antitribu* that has returned to the Camarilla. You have the default Toreador in-clan disciplines, but can purchase the first 2 dots of Vicissitude without a teacher.
- **Absent Sway (3 point merit):** Your art has a lasting emotional impact on those who observe it.
- **Dancer's Grace (4 point merit):** Your body is the ultimate form of physical perfection, and epitomizes the grace and dexterity of the Toreador clan. You gain a free retest when dodging.

Bloodline: Ishtarri

Disciplines: Celerity, Fortitude, Presence

Although a significant number of vampires reside on the continent of Africa, few choose to associate with the vampires of Europe or the New World. The Ishtarri are an exception. Some few years ago, they opened their gates to their cousins in the Toreador clan and were, in return, welcomed into the fold. According to the Ishtarri, the Toreador Antediluvian was once worshipped as the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, and their lineage began as a cult dedicated to her adoration. The Ishtarri are consummate dancers, acrobats, and spies, trained in a religion dedicated to immaculate form and movement. Like the goddess Ishtar, they venerate both love and war, and spend their existence perfecting the physical accomplishments of sexuality and combat.

Alternate Weakness: Instead of the standard Toreador weakness, Ishtarri suffer a -2 penalty to resist emotion-controlling powers, such as Presence.

Bloodline: Volgirre

"Art is the truth. Life is the lie."

— Baron Philippe Volgirre

Disciplines: Auspex, Celerity, Presence; additionally, Volgirre can purchase the first 2 dots of Vicissitude without a teacher

In 2011, a lineage of Toreador *antitribu* re-joined the clan, breaking their oaths to the Sabbat and rejecting the worship of Caine. This lineage is led by Baron Philippe Volgirre, a cunning and cruel Methuselah of the clan. His lineage is much like its master: fierce, proud, and degenerate. These Toreador practice fleshcrafting and other horrible arts, extending their creative endeavors to the dark, cutting edge of reason. Volgirre's lineage received false names and false histories, and has been allowed to integrate into the Camarilla without the knowledge of the other clans. The Volgirre have the same in-clan disciplines as their parent clan, but their long association with the Tzimisce allows them to purchase the first 2 dots of Vicissitude without a teacher, at out-of-clan XP costs.

TREMERE

"Evil is an excuse, a mere pablam spewed by those too weak to use force. There is no good, nor evil. There is only power, and powerlessness."

— Abetorius the Curseborn

Nickname: Warlocks

Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Thaumaturgy: Path of Blood

Of all the vampire clans, the Tremere may have the most shadowed history. Long ago, the Tremere were not vampires, but powerful mortal sorcerers, specializing in hermetic magic. Through vicious cunning and powerful ambition, they joined the society of immortal undead. Even in modern nights, Tremere are the undisputed masters of blood sorcery, keeping their secrets close and staunchly guarded. Their numerous successes have gained the Tremere many bitter enemies. Their legacy is one of occult power wielded by political acumen, and they are dangerous in the extreme. The Tremere demand respect above all else — both from other vampires, and within their own clan.

Over the centuries, no clan has committed such terrible atrocities as the Tremere. Dark deals, horrific experiments, and vile betrayals stain their reputation. Yet the Tremere continue to hold power, based primarily on strong alliances

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with other clans and the leverage of their magic. Those who turn against the Tremere lose access to their occult gifts and Thaumaturgical skill. A sorcerous ally can be a powerful boon.

Wizards left their black robes and tall staves in the Middle Ages; instead, the Tremere have adopted a strict, business-like mien as is appropriate to modern nights. Conservative suits, prim dresses and upscale accoutrements have replaced top hats and canes, as the image of occult mastery adapts with each passing age.

Organization: The Tremere exist in a strict, disciplined hierarchy of static ranks and severe restrictions known as "the Pyramid," which is led by a council of the most powerful Tremere elders. Titles such as Apprentice, Lord, and Regent clearly distinguish Tremere ranks within the clan.

Each Tremere is chosen carefully from a controlled mortal populace. Once transformed into a ghoul, the prospective childe is educated, tested, and then brought into the clan as a lowly Apprentice. With hard work, dedication, and judicious treason, a Tremere can rise through the Pyramid and seize power within the clan. Tremere do not live on their own, but haven together in occult chantries where they can work together and watch each other's backs.

Clan Weakness: The blood of the Tremere holds difficulties and inequities not found in the other clans. Because of these failings, Tremere are easily made dependent on the blood of another. It takes only two draughts of another vampire's blood for a Tremere to become blood bound instead of the normal three — the first drink counts as if the Tremere had taken two drinks.

Clan Merits: Tremere may purchase any of the following Tremere-only merits:

- **Thaumaturgical Expertise (1 point merit):** You can purchase an additional path of Thaumaturgy, other than the Path of Blood.
- **Bloodline: Telyav (2 point merit):** You are a member of the Telyav bloodline, a group of Lithuanian pagan Tremere believed to be extinct — and they prefer it that way, as other Tremere would destroy any Telyav they found. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Presence, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Blood.
- **Talisman (3 point merit):** You possess a magical talisman, which grants you a bonus when using Thaumaturgy.
- **Countermagic (4 point merit):** You are extraordinarily adept with magic, and can dispel Thaumaturgical effects.

Bloodline: Telyav (2 point merit)

"Thus, the fall of midnight. Thus, the rise of power.
Thus, life and death, sorcery and blood.
This is all we need."

— Dorotea Black,
Telyavedic Priscus of the Sabbat

Disciplines: Auspex, Presence, Thaumaturgy: Path of Blood

During Clan Tremere's rapid rise to the forefront of vampiric politics and power, the Telyav were a small cabal of Lithuanian warlocks Embraced for their knowledge and influence. They studied the myths of the legendary god-hero Telyavel, the Lithuanian protector of the dead. These pagan Tremere watched the atrocities performed by the clan through the Dark Ages and began to pull away from the Tremere. In return, the parent clan did not support the Telyav against their enemies, and by the 1600s, the Telyav were nearly extinct. The cabals of the Telyav, preferring animistic magic over the formal hermetic style of their parent clan, sought to escape the strict Tremere hierarchy. When given the opportunity, they allowed the other Tremere to believe their bloodline had been wiped out, with no survivors to tell the tale. They exist in modern nights, always hiding from the Pyramid, knowing that if other Tremere discover their existence, they will be utterly destroyed. Members of this bloodline are found almost entirely among the Sabbat.

Tzimisce

"The world is forever fluid, infinitely mutable, eternally new. This is the secret of change, that all things are crouched in eagerness to become something else, waiting only for a cunning hand to unleash them."

— Ratti-Ben, Sister of Blood

Nickname: Fiends

Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Vicissitude

Since before recorded history, the Tzimisce have resided in the mountains and fastnesses of the Old World, shutting themselves away from the pathetic mortal herd from which they feed. Absolute rulers of their territories, they are jealous, possessive creatures, deeply connected to the land and its mystic powers. They protect their domains viciously, living in groups based on lineage – a sire and her adoring childer – and know how to manipulate the blood bond with a cruel and expert touch.

Aeons in their stone castles have twisted the Tzimisce's spirit, and long centuries of study have given them mastery over flesh; they have the ability to shape and craft it as one might

alter clay. They practice a philosophy revering metamorphosis, looking beyond the fragile physical body in an attempt to discover the nature of the soul. Detached and scientific, Tzimisce use mortals both for food and for experimentation. They care nothing at all about humans, discarding the poor creatures ruthlessly when they are of no further use.

Tzimisce mystics know a great deal about the spirits of the earth, and practice a form of magic they call *koldunism*. They jealously guard these secrets, particularly from the Tremere, whom they see as usurpers of their ancient power. They look upon the other clans as pretenders and weaklings, rutting and living among the very animals they eat. To show their disdain, many Tzimisce craft their own flesh into strange, monstrous works of art, with crowns of horn and clothing fashioned from sculpted skin.

Organization: The Tzimisce are deeply mistrustful of other vampires, convinced that the other clans envy their secrets and will do anything to obtain them. They organize in small, tightly-knit family units based around ancestral fortresses in the Old World or recently obtained holdings in the New World. The leader of each such lineage is known as a *voivode*, and her power within her own domain is absolute.

Clan Weakness: The Tzimisce are inextricably tied to their domains of origin, and must rest in the proximity of at least two handfuls of native soil — earth from a place important to her from her mortal days, such as the soil from her birthplace or the graveyard where she underwent her Embrace. Each day spent without this physical connection to her land inflicts a cumulative -1 penalty to all of the Tzimisce's attack test pools (maximum -5). These penalties remain until she rests for a full day amid her earth once more.

Clan Merits: Tzimisce can purchase any of the following Tzimisce-only merits:

- **Blood of the Tzimisce (1 point merit):** You gain insight from your connection to the earth and to your ancestors.
- **Szlachta (2 point merit):** You can turn your Retainers into twisted abominations.
- **Bloodline: Carpathian (3 point merit):** You're a member of the Carpathian bloodline. Your in-clan disciplines are Animalism, Auspex, and Dominate. Carpathians can never learn Vicissitude, but may learn Protean without a teacher.
- **Bloodline: Koldun (4 point merit):** You are a Koldun, a Tzimisce student of ancient blood magic. Your in-clan disciplines are Animalism, Auspex, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery. Additionally, you may learn one other path of Thaumaturgy of your choice.

Bloodline: Carpathians (3 point merit)

"Eternity is a mirror. Within it, you see yourself wrapped in the things you cannot forgive."

— The Dacian

Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Dominate; Carpathians can never learn Vicissitude and cannot make szlachta, but they may learn Protean out-of-clan without a teacher.

A faction of Clan Tzimisce predates the clan's study of flesh-crafting. These old clan Tzimisce regard Vicissitude as a foul corruption, barely better than trafficking with the infernal, and they refuse to learn or utilize it. The Carpathians are set in their ways, deeply invested in the clan's noble heritage and dignified traditions. They protect their territories jealously, even from other Tzimisce, and do not allow unwanted trespassers to survive. Carpathians rarely venture out of Eastern Europe, but with the encroachment of technology, the quiet nights of regal custom may be drawing to an end.

Bloodline: Koldun (4 point merit)

Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery

While all Fiends are scientists and scholars of the blood, the Koldun claim to be the first vampires to master sorcery. Their magic is drawn from the land, from otherworldly lines of energy that criss-cross the earth in mystic patterns. The Koldun twist those energies as ruthlessly as others in their clan twist flesh. Koldunism is an ancient skill, and a demanding one. Tzimisce who learn sorcery do not do so purely because their sire had the talent. They must prove that they have an aptitude for rigorous control, and for bargaining with the spirits and enslaving them to the Tzimisce's desire. Those who try and fail always die, incinerated by the very power they wanted to command.

You can purchase Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery and one other Thamaturgical path of your choice. This additional path of Thaumaturgy can be learned without a teacher and is purchased at in-clan costs, but is not considered an in-clan discipline. For example, when using the Dominate power Possession, this additional path is not considered in-clan and cannot be brought along.

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Ventrue

"As noble a standard as loyalty sets, there is simply too much fear, self-doubt, and ambition in Kindred nature. To be sure, nobility is defined by a certain honor, a certain drive toward ascendancy. Yet total constancy is neither natural nor realistic; even dogs bite the hand that feed them! Such is the paradox of our existence, the dichotomy between desire and reality, dignitas and ruthlessness, loyalty and self-awareness: those are the hallmarks of our nights."

— A. Graves, Esq.

Nickname: Kings

Disciplines: Dominate, Fortitude, Presence

While other clans play at politics, study philosophy, or encourage the arts, scions of Clan Ventrue focus their pursuits on the one thing that truly matters: power. Rulership is in their blood, and rare is the Ventrue who does not feel a need to command. The Ventrue legacy is that of kings and queens, a lineage of sovereigns dating back to before the rise of the Roman Empire. They consider it their divine right to lead and shape the world. This attitude not only imposes itself on other vampires, but also extends to the province of humans, where Ventrue often play kingmaker and decide the fate of mortal empires.

Noblesse oblige is a term often heard in the halls of the Ventrue. The Ventrue clan values *dignitas*, a virtue based on honor, propriety and respect, and those who abide by its intricate rules will find themselves successful within the clan of kings. Ventrue are a cunning breed, educated and erudite, equally as capable with a sword as with a pen. Conservative and callous, Ventrue rarely make decisions based on emotion. Everything they do is weighed against the acquisition of power, and only the fittest survive. They know that ruthlessness is necessary to rule a domain of fractious undead.

The Ventrue practice of royal command translated into the modern world with ease. Instead of kings and emperors, they have become powerful CEOs, controlling empires of finance and business rather than land and serfs. The clan has shifted its attention to modern technology and commerce, where it thrives like voracious wolves in a field of helpless sheep. In order to maintain the clan's acumen, Ventrue choose childer from those who are already successful; military leaders, business executives, and wealthy investors join the undead ranks with ancient kings and queens.

Organization: Like mortal royalty, a Ventrue learns the pedigree of her blood from the day she is Embraced, and she must always be prepared to recite her lineage letter-perfect at the command of her elders. Internally the Ventrue organization operates in feudal fealty chains, although the exact nature has evolved from its ancient roots. Now, peerages, vassalages, and oaths of fealty merge seamlessly with business contracts, buyouts, and high-pressure management styles.

Clan Weakness: Ventrue have rarified tastes in blood. Each Ventrue finds only one specific type of mortal blood palatable, and does not gain sustenance from anything else. When a player creates a Ventrue character, she should talk to her Storyteller and define a specific type of blood that suits the character's taste. This category should be fairly narrow; less than one person in 10 should fit the description. This choice is permanent.

Blood of any other type (even animals) simply provides no sustenance to the vampire. No matter how much she consumes, her Blood pool will never increase, and she will immediately vomit the blood back out. The blood of other supernatural creatures (such as blood from other vampires) is exempt from this restriction, and can provide the character sustenance even if that creature does not match the Ventrue's feeding restriction.

If forced to feed in unfamiliar territory, a Ventrue must spend an additional downtime action to come into play at full Blood pool.

Clan Merits: Ventrue may purchase any of the following Ventrue-only merits:

- **Aura of Command (1 point merit):** Mortals cannot resist your Dominate and Presence.
- **Bloodline: Crusader (2 point merit):** You are a member of a stern, demanding bloodline of the Ventrue clan. Once reviled as aberrant, the Crusaders have begun to earn more respect from the elders in modern nights. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Dominate, and Fortitude.
- **Paragon (3 point merit):** You have a vampiric Retainer who is sworn to serve you within the hierarchy of the clan. This allows you additional advantages from certain backgrounds.
- **Regal Bearing (4 point merit):** Once per game session, you may use a Presence power without using an action.

Bloodline: Crusaders

Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Fortitude

You're a member of an often-ignored bloodline that has begun to earn more respect from the elders in modern nights.

Although Clan Ventrue has a glorious, regal past, it also has skeletons in the closet — darker aspects, which the clan would prefer to keep hidden. Among the clan's secrets is the rebellious, violent bloodline known as the Crusaders. These cruel vampires are more soldier than prince, resembling last-born noble sons thrust into war and bloodshed in order to earn a place at the royal table. The Crusaders are prone to cruelty, and are excellent trackers, able to locate even the most elusive of prey. Despite Ventrue unease about this bloodline's tendency toward sadism, Crusaders are Kings to the core, with all the egotistical pride of their parent clan. They are simply prone to a more visceral enjoyment of their victories; they prefer to look into an enemy's eyes the moment she turns to ash. Crusaders are somewhat infamous because they enjoy acts of cruelty and viciousness.

Caitiff

"Let them hate us.
At least then they're acknowledging that we exist."
— Stoneman

Nickname: Trash

Disciplines: Caitiff choose three in-clan disciplines from the following list: Animalism, Auspex, Celerity, Dominate, Fortitude, Obfuscate, Presence, or Potence.

The Caitiff are not a clan. They are lumped together as outcasts, but they have no ties of lineage to one another, nor do they bear any universally distinguishing traits. On occasion, a vampire's blood does not carry any marks of her sire's clan. These unfortunate childer are usually abandoned, disregarded as unfit for vampire society. They are thrown out of their lineage, an embarrassment to their sires. The very appellation implies that the vampire is worthless, an outcast to the vampiric world.

Most Caitiff flit from city to city, their very existence rendered meaningless by an accident of the Embrace. As a group, Caitiff have very little in common. They may come from any walk of life; they may have been chosen specifically by their failed sires, or their Embrace might have been a complete accident. At best, they are a pale shadow, a reflection of the clan that failed to Embrace them, with little to recommend them in the halls of vampiric society. Caitiff are alone in the night.

Other vampires shun Caitiff, even those who are otherwise open-minded. Long ago, superstition claimed that Caitiff were an infection, a disease, and that spending too much time among them would cause a vampire to create a Caitiff when she next attempted to Embrace. Other rumors call the Caitiff a curse, a punishment from God, Caine, or some other eternal force. Still other, darker legends say that an abundance of Caitiff is a sign of the End Times; they are an omen that signals vampiric power is waning and the world will soon be destroyed by fire.

Organization: Caitiff have no organization, and little sense of unity. They are killed in some domains, driven out of others, and completely ignored in still more. When a Caitiff has something to offer, she is used ruthlessly by other vampires. When she is no longer useful, she is eliminated. On occasion, small groups of Caitiff band together for protection, but they are as likely to sell one another out for safety and advantage as they are to keep their alliances.

Inherent Weakness: Caitiff cannot begin play with more than 2 dots in the Generation background. Caitiff can increase their Generation through diablerie. Caitiff cannot teach their in-clan disciplines.

Clan Merits: Caitiff can purchase any of the following Caitiff-only merits:

- **Auspicious (1 point merit):** This merit duplicates the effects of any one general merit with a cost of 3 points or less.
- **Eclipsed Blood (2 point merit):** You find it easier to stay awake during the day and you take normal damage from sunlight (instead of aggravated damage).
- **Vestiges of Greatness (3 point merit):** You can add one of the following disciplines to your list of possible in-clan disciplines: Dementation, Protean, Serpentis, Quietus, Obtenebration, Vicissitude, or Chimeristry.

The Lesser Clans

Baali

"You hate me, you revile me, you long to see me destroyed…
but the reality is that you need me.
If the angels want to win, you need the devil to succeed."
— Samael Jaqueson

Nickname: Demons

Disciplines: Daimoinon, Obfuscate, Presence

Vampires rarely speak of the Baali, superstitiously fearing that these infernalists may hear themselves called and be summoned. Long ago, a group of vampires made a pact with demonic forces, selling their souls for power to use against the other vampire clans. The first of these was Baal the Destroyer, a powerful force of conquest and destruction. Although his armies were eventually routed and driven into

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darkness, the Baali clan has not been obliterated. On the contrary, it still exists within the accursed city of Chorazin. Baali occasionally leave their city and hide among other clans, insidiously working to corrupt other vampires.

The Baali believe that demons are the children of true night, cast out of the sky by a narcissist God who created humanity only to satisfy his vanity. These vampires are foul, vicious creatures, and there is nothing a Baali wouldn't do to satisfy personal ambition. Bloody sacrifices, dark rituals, vicious slaughter or cruel vivisection, no act is too vile or requires too high a price. These vampires are not apologetic about their adoration of evil, but rather revel in the benefits. Because of its members' vicious ambition, the clan's knowledge of occult mysteries is vast — as are its enemies. Infernalists are feared and hunted, and most vampires see them as abominations.

Even though they are few in number, Baali are dangerous. They congregate in small covens, or "hives," sharing infernal knowledge and researching blasphemous demonic rituals. They know a great deal about the End Times, and often collect rare and obscure books of prophecy and lore. Baali use these revelations both to predict future events for their benefit, and also use them as a lure for scholarly vampires of other clans. Unlike other vampires, the Baali want the End Times to arrive. They see Gehenna as an opportunity for vengeance and for their demonic masters to rise at last.

Organization: Baali prefer to organize in small cabals whose members all worship a single infernal overlord. These cabals are not allied by loyalty or affection, but out of commitment to their demonic master and a fearful need to serve the founder of their clan.

Clan Weakness: Baali cannot bear to look upon or handle objects of any faith. The vampiric Demons must avert their gazes from such objects, and touching them burns their flesh for a point of aggravated damage, which cannot be reduced or negated. In addition, should a Baali run afoul of True Faith, any hinderance or damage effects are doubled.

Clan Merits: Baali can purchase any of the following Baali-only merits:

- **Infernal Heritage (1 point merit):** This merit duplicates the mechanics of the Infernal Power merit and the Path of Evil Revelations merit.
- **Bloodline: Angellis Ater (3 point merit):** You are a member of the Angellis Ater bloodline, which stems from satanic Lasombra. Your in-clan disciplines are Daimoinon, Dominate, and one choice of Potence, Presence, or Obfuscate.

Bloodline: Angellis Ater (3 point merit)

Disciplines: Daimoinon, Dominate, and one choice of Potence, Presence, or Obfuscate

Once, the Angellis Ater were a bloodline of the Lasombra. Known in the Dark Ages as "Black Angels," they took the Lasombra penchant for faith and evil ambition to an extreme, claiming to serve satanic purposes. They worshipped sin and fostered true darkness of the soul, doing so in a vicious parody of the Catholic Church.

This bloodline was wooed away from its parent clan by a Baali named Azaneal, the ruler of Chorazin. He convinced the Angellis Ater that their adherence to satanism would be best served by allying with the infernal Baali and making their own infernal pacts for power. They quickly consummated their alliance with demonic rites; through sinister purpose and unknown magic, the Angellis Ater transformed their blood and became a lineage of Baali. The Angellis Ater have many subtle and influential contacts in mortal churches, from the spires of Rome to the Pentecostal snake-handlers of the Deep South.

Additional Weakness: The Angellis Ater suffer from both the Baali and Lasombra clan weaknesses.

Player Characters

Most player-character Baali are escapees, fleeing from their sires before they can be taken to Chorazin and sworn to the service of an infernal power. Players who wish to play a character who is vested with the infernal should be sure to speak with their Storytellers to confirm that such a concept is suitable for the troupe's setting. Note that a character using the Daimoinon discipline is assumed to be having congress with demons, and that purchasing the 5th dot of the discipline explicitly means the character has signed an infernal compact and has sworn her soul to a demonic power.

Cappadocians

"The great poet Ovid once wrote, 'Fas est ab hoste doceri.' One should learn even from one's enemies."

— Anisa Marianna Lopez

Nickname: Graverobbers

Disciplines: Auspex, Fortitude, Necromancy: Mortis Path

The Cappadocian Antediluvian was a monastic scholar with little interest in leadership or political causes. Cappadocius sought truth, questioned the secrets of life and death, and asked that his childer do the same. During the Dark Ages, the clan was populous, if not powerful, and its members were often seen as impartial judges in the great Jyhad. The clan's obsessive attitude about its studies (and open practice of Necromancy) led other clans to see these vampires as grim and disturbing, and their isolationist tendencies kept the Cappadocians from having many strong allies.

Generally, the Cappadocians did not consider ethnicity or nationality when Embracing childer. Individuals of every religion were brought into the clan, so long as those mortals wished to study death. Due to their monastic habits, Cappadocian scholars spent little time among mortals. They left such tasks to one of their lesser lineages, a group of vampires Embraced from a Venetian merchant house. Unfortunately, the Giovanni proved untrustworthy and seized control of the clan, hunting down and diablerizing every Cappadocian they could find.

Only a few of these vampires survive in modern nights, hiding themselves away from the rest of the vampiric world and preferring their studies to politics. These vampires hate the Giovanni with a passion, and select childer far more cautiously, leading to an extremely low population of Cappadocians throughout the world. Those who remain have taken on new appellations, such as the Harbingers of Skulls in the Sabbat, hiding their true lineage in order to better remain undisturbed in their twin pursuits of research and revenge.

The two Cappadocian bloodlines are very distinct and originated in entirely different fashions. The Lamia were guardians and protectors of the monastic line; they are now disgraced and nearly extinct. The Samedi, a more recent offshoot of active Cappadocians, hide their true nature and exist as mercenaries and scholars of voudon.

Organization: In the Middle Ages, Cappadocians fulfilled the roles of advisors to Princes or stewards of large repositories of knowledge. Internally, the clan had little hierarchy, although they revered those with more knowledge and tutored the young or unlearned. After the Giovanni destroyed the majority of the clan, the Cappadocians who remained had even less interest in communicating with one another, lest such association reveal their location to the Giovanni.

Clan Weakness: No matter how much blood a Cappadocian consumes, her skin remains deathly pale, resembling a corpse.

Clan Merits: Cappadocians can purchase any of the following Cappadocian-only merits:

- **Necromantic Insight (1 point merit):** You can purchase an additional path of Necromancy.
- **Bloodline: Samedi (2 point merit):** You are a member of the Samedi bloodline, an independent group of repugnant, rotting vampires who practice voudon. Your in-clan disciplines are Fortitude, Obfuscate, and Thanatosis.
- **Pierced Shroud (3 point merit):** You gain power (Blood) when sentient creatures die within your line of sight.
- **Bloodline: Lamia (4 point merit):** You are a member of the Lamia bloodline, which consists of women once sworn to protect their Cappadocian masters. Your in-clan disciplines are Fortitude, Necromancy: Mortis Path, and Potence.

Bloodline: Samedi (2 point merit)

Disciplines: Fortitude, Obfuscate, Thanatosis

The Samedi are repulsive, even more so than their deathly, disfigured parent clan. Rotting skin, exposed bone, and the hideous smell of decomposition commonly afflict the Samedi, as does the tendency to be rude and uncompromising. These vampires claim to be the childer of the voudon loa Baron Samedi. Mercenary and self-interested, the Samedi do not join sects, preferring to work independently, keeping to themselves as much as possible. Samedi are known for maintaining the absolute law and word of any bargain they make — for good or for ill. As mentioned, the Samedi are putrid beyond words.

Bloodline: Lamia (4 point merit)

Disciplines: Fortitude, Necromancy: Mortis Path, Potence

The Lamia, once called Gorgons, protected the Cappadocians and their sacred libraries centuries ago. During the Giovanni revolt, most Lamia died fighting to

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protect their masters; they failed this task. Male Lamia exist, but they are even rarer, as the clan is not prone to Embracing males. The Lamia were never very numerous, and tend to Embrace female childer (the better to remain unnoticed in the Dark Ages). These childer were chosen for their interest in the dark arts and educated as warriors after their Embrace. The Lamia did not study death as the Cappadocians did, but focused on disease and its effects on both mortals and vampires.

Alternate Weakness: Lamia carry the Seed of Lilith, a wasting disease spread by their bite. Any mortal who is fed upon by a Lamia becomes sick and may die. The victim must make a test (Physical attribute + Survival skill versus a difficulty rating of 8). Those who fail die within one week. Those who succeed will recover in a few days. Many Lamia choose to feed from animals as often as possible, and those who don't generally feed from the hardiest of mortals.

Ravnos

"Those people who are traveling just to get somewhere are missing half the point."

— Leila Voight, lead singer of "Fresh Blood"

Nickname: Deceivers

Disciplines: Animalism, Fortitude, Chimeristry

The Ravnos clan has a shady reputation, burdened by history and prejudice. Its members are tricksters, thieves, and vagabonds, stealing what they wish and moving on to the next target. Ravnos typically reject systems of authority, ignoring sect boundaries and disobeying laws. In recent nights, a great tragedy struck the Ravnos clan, reducing its numbers to near-extinction. Although it has begun to repopulate after the horrors of the Week of Nightmares, the clan is still small. The majority of its membership consists of newly Embraced individuals, still struggling to understand the vampiric world. The elders of the clan have become more reclusive, frightened of another purge. Like the gurus of ancient days, they share the clan's wisdom only with those who prove worthy.

Most Ravnos are new Embraces, as the clan has sought to repopulate after the horrors of the Week of Nightmares. Torn between the old ways and the modern ideals of their new childer, the Ravnos are a clan torn by transition and in mourning over a thousand truths that have been lost.

With their unique ability to create illusions, Ravnos specialize in questioning truths and unraveling mysteries. Capricious Ravnos use this ability for profit, seizing opportunities for short-term gain. Other members of the clan lose touch with reality entirely. Those who live to ancient years see this power as a philosophy and use it to achieve a more enlightened state of mind. They study the balance between reality and deception and contemplate the nature of utter truth.

Younger members of the Ravnos clan may be of any nationality or culture, though they tend to be chosen for their skills at survival and trickery. Freedom-loving youth, hipsters, traveling rock band groupies, political activists, Irish travelers, Romani gypsies, or teenage runaways, Ravnos have many new icons of youth and vigor from which to choose. Older Ravnos tend to hail from the Brahman Hindi caste, remembering a time when the Ravnos were more caste-based than they are in the modern era. The two groups often bicker over the clan's future, as the youthful Ravnos struggle to find their own place in the world. The older Ravnos are wiser, stronger in blood, and more practiced — but the new surge of young vampires brings fresh ideas, technological experience, and a great deal of energy and change. The clan stands on a precipice between respecting the traditional ways and embracing new ones, between ancient truths and too-fast lies. The Ravnos must find balance, or be forever changed.

Organization: Self-sufficiency is important to the Ravnos clan. Its members wander the world and have little care for established vampire society. The majority of the clan are young, naïve childer, prone to selfishness and short-sighted goals. Those who survive this period of trial will establish the clan's place in modern nights.

Clan Weakness: A turbulent history makes the Ravnos slaves to their vices. Each Ravnos has a Compulsion derangement, representing a penchant for some sort of vice — lying, cruelty, or theft, for example. They feel a compulsion to indulge in this vice if they have the opportunity. Ravnos do not gain flaw XP for this derangement. For more information, please see **Derangement: Compulsion on page 268**.

Clan Merits: Ravnos can purchase any of the following Ravnos-only merits:

- **Waking Dream (1 point merit):** You may briefly treat an illusion you've created as though it were real.
- **Bloodline: Brahman (2 point merit):** You are a member of the Brahman bloodline, a group of Indian philosophers and gurus. Your in-clan disciplines are Animalism, Auspex, and Chimerstry.
- **Escape Artist (3 point merit):** You are extremely skilled at slipping away from dangerous situations.

Bloodline: Brahman (2 point merit)

"The unknowable is pure mind. It is all things without limitation. Ignorance, arrogance, disbelief — these are restraints. You are free only when you are open to the unknowable world."

— Sourav Khadikar

Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Chimeristry

The Ravnos originated in India, where the clan was once organized in a rigid system similar to the castes of India. Sires passed their place in the castes (called *jati*) down to their childer, and a Ravnos could never alter her place once Embraced into the society. Today, only one caste survives.

The Brahman are philosophers and gurus, tasked with discovering enlightenment and sharing it with the clan. After tragedy struck the Ravnos, the last of the Brahman chose childer for their adherence to traditionalism. It is their hope that with support, guidance, and a rigid system to provide structure, the clan can thrive again.

SALUBRI

"Whoever called it the 'Art of War' never marched six clicks covered in the bloody scraps of a Dac Cong."

— Atwell M. Baize

Nickname: Furies

Disciplines: Auspex, Fortitude, Valeren

In the Dark Ages, the Salubri were a respected clan of healers. Their founder, Saulot, was very wise, and other vampires treated his childer with respect. When Saulot vanished into the East to seek knowledge of the mysterious state known as Golconda, his childer were left without protection or guidance. In his absence, the Salubri were targeted by an ambitious group of mortal mages wishing to steal immortality for themselves. These Tremere slaughtered the Salubri, feasting on their souls to steal the strength of the ancient blood.

When Saulot returned from his quest, he found the clan in shambles, nearly eradicated. The journey transformed him, and the new childer he Embraced were very different from the old. More warlike and far less interested in mystic apotheosis, these childer wreaked furious vengeance upon the enemies of the clan — but in the end, they lost the war. Saulot was destroyed, the Salubri were branded infernalists and diablerists, and the other vampire clans joined the Tremere in the destruction of the Salubri. The clan was destroyed, and even legend of its existence faded into obscurity.

Fearful of the Tremere and their allies, the remaining Furies and their Healer cousins took great pains to hide themselves from other vampires. Over the centuries, other clans parroted Tremere lies, calling Saulot's quest to achieve Golconda a betrayal of the vampiric state. Unkind pseudonyms such as "cyclops" and "soulsucker" became common terms to describe this once-honored clan.

In modern nights, the Furies have experienced a resurrection. A new leader, a Fury named Adonai, has brought his clan together and found allies in their quest for vengeance against the Tremere: the Sabbat. One of the foremost warrior clans in that sect, the Salubri have established themselves as a significant danger to the Camarilla. Once that sect discovered the clan had returned, it reestablished the ancient slander, branding the Salubri diablerists, infernalists, and worse. The Furies are devoted to the destruction of Clan Tremere, though they must proceed with great caution, as the Tremere have many allies. Fortunately, the Furies have no interest in concepts such as honor or pride. They are ruthless hunters, vengeful soldiers in a long-forgotten war. They care only about vengeance, and they are willing to seize it from the shadows, whatever it takes.

No member of the Camarilla will associate with a Salubri, and even Anarchs fear and revile members of this clan. If discovered, Salubri are always destroyed. It is difficult for a Salubri to hide her clan, because each one manifests a third eye upon her forehead after the Embrace. This eye is usually closed, the minute slit of its eyelid hidden upon the flesh of her forehead. However, when she frenzies or utilizes the 3rd dot of her clan's distinctive discipline (Valeren or Obeah), the eye opens with a frightening aura of supernatural light.

Organization: Because of the clan's destruction at the hands of the Tremere, the Salubri have no organization. For the most part, they do not even know one another, and hide themselves even from their own kind. Although they are slowly beginning to repopulate, most vampires believe the lies spread about their nature, and childer will be destroyed if they are discovered.

Clan Weakness: Salubri can only feed during acts of violence, and as such, cannot purchase the Herd background nor make use of another character's Herd.

Clan Merits: Salubri can purchase any of the following Salubri-only merits:

- **Righteous Fury (1 point merit):** Your faith augments your Brawl and Melee attacks when fighting demonic agents.
- **Spiritual Armor (2 point merit):** Your faith protects you from demonic powers.

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- **Bloodline: Healer (3 point merit):** You are a throwback to a more peaceful time: a member of the Healer bloodline. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Fortitude, and Obeah.

Bloodline: Healer (3 point clan merit)

"The pages of our history are thick with death. How many more chapters must be written in blood before we find peace?"

— Nanuq of the Inuktitut

Disciplines: Auspex, Fortitude, Obeah

Salubri Healers, known as Lambs, descend from those vampires Embraced before Saulot's trip to the East. They were devastated by the Tremere until only seven survived, and those gave the gift of the Embrace with extreme rarity, never increasing their numbers, lest the Tremere discover they still survived. In modern nights, they have broken that prohibition against the embrace, and on rare occasion, Salubri healers embrace childer they find to be particularly compassionate or wise. Yet even though they are few, the Salubri Healers continue on their founder's quest, convinced that one day they will unlock the secrets of Golconda and ascend to the angelic state described in the writings of Saulot.

Alternate Weakness: Salubri Healers cannot feed on unwilling victims. Feeding by any method other than using the Herd merit (yours or another character's Herd) requires an additional downtime action. Normally this means the Salubri must spend 2 downtime actions feeding.

Rare Bloodlines

Daughters of Cacophony

"This is the difference between a muse and an angel:
one is civilized, tamed, trained, and exquisite.
The other is a wild and terrifying thing.
One sings from the heart. The other wounds it."

— Persephone von Pierce, burlesque star

Nickname: Sirens

Disciplines: Fortitude, Melpominee, Presence

As mortal culture entered the Age of Enlightenment, it invented new machines and expanded the world to the broadest horizons of the globe. So, too, did significant changes ripple through vampire society. The Daughters of Cacophony stepped onto the stage of vampiric existence with fanfare, refusing to hide themselves or act as though they were any less important than the ancient clans. Some scholars believe this bloodline is an offshoot of the Malkavian clan, or of the Toreador, but the Daughters refuse to validate either claim. They prefer to be known for their talents and not as a mere appendage; they refuse to be a derivative of someone else's fame.

Whatever their origins, Daughters of Cacophony are known for their extraordinary voices. The intensity of a Daughter's song, and the madness it brings, is nothing less than awe-inspiring. Song is as much a part of their immortal existence as blood. Every moment of a Daughter's eternity is spent listening to the music of the spheres. It sings all around them, forever entrancing them with its melody. This curse – or blessing – makes the Daughters of Cacophony seem unfocused or capricious.

Nearly all the members of this bloodline are female. Through the Victorian era, the Daughters preferred to keep it that way, but in recent nights, they have relaxed these strictures. Older male Cacophonists are usually exemplary castrati, while young ones come from all ranges of vocal talent. Such males of the clan are colloquially known as the Sons of Discord, and are almost universally blood bound to their female sires. These male Cacophonists are treated with suspicion by many of the older female members of the clan, and must earn the right to sing.

Bloodline Weakness: The Daughters of Cacophony constantly hear music. This unceasing song distracts the Daughters as much as it guides them. They suffer a -2 penalty to all test pools based on Investigation.

Bloodline Merits: Daughters of Cacophony can purchase any of the following Daughters of Cacophony-only merits:

- **Supernatural Aria (1 point merit):** Your potential maximum level of the Performance: Singing skill is increased by 3, and you pay half the XP cost to purchase Performance: Singing.
- **Soaring Octaves (3 point merit):** You can use Entrancement on any character listening to you sing.

GARGOYLES

"If we cannot have justice, then at least we will have revenge."

— Harlequin

Nickname: Grotesques

Disciplines: Fortitude, Potence, Visceratika

The Tremere created the much-maligned Gargoyles during the course of the sorcerous clan's darkest experiments. Created from the blood and flesh of kidnapped Tzimisce, Nosferatu, and Gangrel vampires, a Gargoyle is an amalgam

of parts fused into a single creature with no memory of its conjoined past. In the beginning, they were slaves to the Tremere, acting without sentience, intelligence, or will. Only after a revolt did Gargoyles find freedom; they were forcibly freed by members of other clans.

The monstrous Gargoyles are a constant reminder of a darker age. They revile Clan Tremere utterly and with furnace-like hatred, always looking for ways to exact vengeance upon their creators. Modern Gargoyles are Embraced, not created, but the process still eradicates all traces of the vampire's memory, rendering each new Gargoyle a blank slate. Still, older Gargoyles teach their childer the story of the bloodline's enslavement, ensuring that each generation knows the atrocities suffered at the hands of the Tremere.

With their hideous appearance, Gargoyles are a threat to the Masquerade. They must always keep themselves hidden from mortal eyes. This bloodline often befriends Nosferatu, Gangrel, or Tzimisce, feeling drawn to these clans as if by some primitive memory of blood.

Bloodline Weakness: Gargoyles are monstrous in appearance and cannot pass for human without supernatural aid, such as Obfuscate. In addition, the Tremere created the Gargoyles to be slaves and, as a result, they have a -2 penalty to Mental test pools to resist Dominate powers, including Dominate-based techniques.

Clan Merits: Gargoyles can purchase any of the following Gargoyle-only merits:

- **Flight (1 point merit):** You have functional wings. These wings allow you to fly as fast as you can move.
- **Dark Statue (3 point merit):** You can use your standard action to transform into a statue of yourself, seemingly carved from solid stone.

Slaves

After the revolt, the Tremere were forced to release all Gargoyles. Those few slaves which are still kept (in dark and secret places) are ruthlessly Dominated, prevented from retaining any memories or intelligence from day to day. They are mere golems, brutes with no personality or ability to reason; they are less than animals and treated with callous abuse. Such creatures are not appropriate player-characters.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Three: Character Creation

"To a new world of gods and monsters!"

— Dr. Pretorius, The Bride of Frankenstein

Consider for a moment that your game is an interactive play. Your location transforms to a stage in the mind's eye. The Storyteller serves as the director, ensuring that the flow of the performance achieves the proper emotional impact and satisfies the audience. Who is the audience? Everyone who participates is both actor and audience of the storylines created by the troupe.

Each player assumes the role of a character, a persona within the context of the game through which the player interacts with the game world. You, the player, fulfill a role in the story. Like a character in a novel or movie, you are a protagonist in the stories of your chronicle. Rather than making up a new character for each session, you create a single, richly detailed individual, then assume that role each time you play the game. As your troupe's story evolves, you can watch your character grow and develop, have successes and failures, and perhaps ultimately resolve their story in *Final Death*. Ultimately, the character you create becomes as real and as timeless as one of the great protagonists (or antagonists) in a literary work. To guarantee that all players use the same capabilities for their characters, the rules of **Mind's Eye Theatre** (MET) provide a single, simple set of guidelines for character creation.

This chapter describes how to create a vampire character. You begin with a general concept, and then translate that spark of creation onto a character sheet, using the various mechanics of the game. The process is simple, but it is often worthwhile to create characters with the Storyteller's collaboration, so that she can answer questions and guide the creation process to match her unique setting.

Setting-Specific Mechanics and Clan Rarity

A setting is the defined history, culture, and social structure of the vampires in your chronicle. It includes special rules created to enforce your setting. Your Storyteller will share the specific details of your chronicle's setting with you. It is recommended that you create a character that is appropriate for the specific game play environment.

MET: Vampire The Masquerade contains three standard **World of Darkness** settings: The Camarilla (**see Chapter Nine: The Camarilla on page 359**), the Sabbat (**see Chapter Ten: The Sabbat on page 409**), and the Anarchs (**see Chapter Eleven: The Anarch Movement on page 459**).

The rules for generating a vampire character in this chapter are setting agnostic. The default settings examine the vampire experience through very different angles and thus have additional requirements and options for character creation. It is recommended that you read through the Setting-Specific Mechanics of your chronicle before you make a character.

Quick-Start Character Creation Guide

Step One: Inspiration, page 86

- Decide your character's concept.
- Choose an Archetype.

Step Two: Record Initial Experience Points (XP), page 88

- Your character begins with 30 initial XP. You may spend this XP during the character creation process.
  - › You may gain more initial XP by choosing flaws during the creation process (step eight).
  - › Your Storyteller may award more initial XP, if you are portraying an experienced character.

Step Three: Choose a Clan, page 88

- Choose a clan.
  - › Remember that clan will determine your character's initial (in-clan) disciplines (step seven).
  - › Check with your Storyteller to determine if your chosen clan is common, uncommon, or rare in your game's setting. If you wish to portray an uncommon or rare clan, you must use some of your initial XP to purchase a specific Rarity merit. For more information on these merits, see page 237.
  - › If you want your character to be a member of a bloodline, you must use some of your initial XP to purchase a bloodline merit. For more information on bloodline merits, see the section of the book that describes your chosen clan.

Step Four: Assign Initial Attributes, page 89

- Rank the character's attributes as primary, secondary, and tertiary.
  - › Assign 7 dots to the character's primary attribute.
  - › Assign 5 to the character's secondary attribute.
  - › Assign 3 to the character's tertiary attribute.
- Select one focus for each attribute type (Physical, Social, and Mental).
  - › Physical focuses: Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina.
  - › Social focuses: Charisma, Manipulation, or Appearance.
  - › Mental focuses: Perception, Intelligence, or Wits.

Step Five: Assign Initial Skills, page 91

- Choose one skill and fill in the first 4 dots of that skill.
- Choose two skills and fill in the first 3 dots of those skills.
- Choose three skills and fill in the first 2 dots of those skills.
- Choose four skills and fill in the first dot of those skills.

Quick-Start Character Creation Guide

Step Six: Assign Initial Backgrounds, page 98

- Assign 3 dots to a single background of your choice.
- Assign 2 dots to a second background.
- Assign 1 dot to a third background. If you have not already assigned dots to the Generation background, you should assign this point to Generation. If you don't have a dot of the Generation background, your character begins play as a mortal.

Step Seven: Assign Initial Disciplines, page 105

- Assign 2 dots to a single in-clan discipline.
- Assign 1 dot in each of your character's remaining two in-clan disciplines.

Step Eight: Choose Merits and Flaws, page 106

- You may spend some of your initial XP to purchase up to 7 points of merits. This limit of 7 merit points includes any merits purchased earlier in the creation process (including uncommon clans, rare clans, and bloodline merits). Your character can never have more than 7 points of merits across all categories.
- Choose your character's flaws. You may receive a maximum of 7 XP from flaws. Add XP gained from flaws to your initial XP. With the Storyteller's permission, a player may choose more flaws, totaling more than 7 points, but the character cannot earn more than 7 XP from flaws.

Step Nine: Spend Initial XP, page 106

- After purchasing merits and adding XP from flaws you may use your remaining initial XP to:
  - › Purchase more attributes, skills, or backgrounds.
  - › Purchase additional dots of Generation. You must purchase the Generation background at the XP cost of the *new* Generation. For example, if you assigned one of your starting background dots to Generation, and would thus be a Neonate, and you wish to play a Pretender Elder, you would need to spend XP as follows: Neonate to Ancilla (new level x2) costs 4 XP; Ancilla to Pretender Elder (new level x2) costs 6 XP. Therefore, you must spend 10 XP to go from Neonate to Pretender Elder.
  - › Purchase additional dots of your in-clan disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Celerity, Dominate, Fortitude, Obfuscate, Presence, or Potence.
  - › Purchase up to 3 dots in common out-of-clan disciplines
  - › Purchase another dot of Morality.

Step Ten: Finishing Touches, page 108

- Note the character's total Blood points.
- Note the character's total dots of Willpower (normally 6).
- Note the character's total health levels.

Step Eleven: Before the Game

- Take your character's background and completed character sheet to your Storyteller for approval.
- Prepare your costume, print out your sheet for easy reference, and go to game!

A setting might make changes to character creation, including:

- Clan Rarity (some clans may be more or less common within a specific setting.)
- Limited Generation Background (For example, the Anarch setting restricts elder generations.)
- New Backgrounds
- New Merits and Flaws

Your Storyteller may have created an alternative setting, and established her own rarity levels. If the clan you've chosen to portray is uncommon or rare in your game's setting, you must purchase a specific merit in order to play it. (See **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, Rarity Merits on page 237**.)

Step One: Inspiration

Character Concept

According to Greek mythology, the goddess Athena sprang forth from Zeus's head, whole and fully formed. While we hope you will find character creation equally simple, you may discover that creating a compelling character requires some back-and-forth with the Storyteller. It's important that your character is appropriate for the setting, and will complement the other stories in the troupe. Be sure to consider how your character reflects the themes of your Storyteller's setting, and how she will interact with other characters in your game. A character should be more than a pile of attributes, weapon statistics, and supernatural powers. The best stories come from a character's dreams, fears, and motivations, things that are greater than mechanical maximization or humorous quips. Playing a vampire should be akin to starring in a Shakespearean tragedy; the character knows that the world is unfair. She realizes that the odds are stacked against her. Although the character might die in the end, it's how she interacts with others, and how she faces her ultimate doom, that truly makes the character a legend.

It is often best to begin thinking of a character concept by defining who that character was as a mortal. Once you know that, you can move through the character's life history. Did she reject her mortal life when she was Embraced? Did she cling to it, wishing she could return to mortality? Did the character feel that the Embrace was a gift, or did she feel it stole her life away?

This foundation is important, because it helps a vampire relate to others, and gives her a perspective on both the vampire world and the mortal one. It helps you formulate a base personality for your character, and provides an anchor for the vampire's attitude and personality.

Here are three simple questions that may help you define your concept:

- **Who were you before you became a vampire?** Was the character prosperous in her mortal life? Was she destitute? Did she enjoy her mortal life, or hate it? Did the character know anything about vampires before she was Embraced?
- **Why were you Embraced?** Was the character Embraced because she was considered "worthy?" Was it a mistake? Was the character's sire acting out of impulse, passion, or some other quick spark of emotion, or was it done after a long period of consideration?
- **Who have you become as a vampire?** How did the character adapt to the Embrace? Is she still controlled by her sire, or is she independent? Did she accept her sire's tutelage, or did she rebel?

Sample Concepts:

- A rich debutante Embraced to become her sire's lover: Disgusted by her sire, she's given up her pampered lifestyle in favor of freedom and has found a place in the Anarch Movement.
- An untrustworthy criminal who was in the wrong place at the wrong time: He's turned his skills towards "acquiring" mystical artifacts and investigating the occult black market.
- A gifted investigator Embraced to spy on her sire's enemies: After her sire's death, she's used decades of accumulated secrets to blackmail her way into the position of Prince.

Archetypes

Carl Jung proposed the concept of Archetypes, universally understood symbols or prototypes that are common to all cultures. Archetypes communicate truths about the world. Nearly every culture has a word for rain, or recognizes the image of a mother. In MET, selecting an Archetype allows you to easily describe your character's personality to others in the game. To help, we've provided a list of common Archetypes that you may wish to consider as you create your character. Bear in mind that the Archetypes described here are by no means a complete list. Players and Storytellers should feel free to create more, inventing a new Archetype that better describes the character in question.

Each Archetype summarizes a type of character or personality, offering a basic impression of the character. Is your character a Con Artist, or is she more of a Loner? By choosing an Archetype, you tell the Storyteller (and other players) what they should expect to see in this character's roleplay. It doesn't mean that your Con Artist can't occasionally tell the truth; the Archetype only implies the character's most important, and most prevalent, qualities.

Once per hour, when you are performing an action (or resisting an action) that exemplifies your Archetype, you receive a free Willpower retest. This retest doesn't cost you a Willpower point, but it takes the place of your normal Willpower retest. You cannot use both Archetype and Willpower to retest on the same test.

Sample Archetypes

- **Architect** – You love physical and social structures, and abhor anyone who works outside the system.
- **Artist** – You focus on inspiration, emotion, and the creative drive. You exist for your art.
- **Bully** – You're proud of your superiority, and everyone knows it. They'd best let you have your way.
- **Caregiver** –You shelter the weak, tutor the ignorant, and go out of your way for others.
- **Child** – Your understanding of human nature is naïve and unsophisticated. You have much to learn.
- **Competitor** – You love a challenge. Victory's only worthwhile if there is a risk involved.
- **Con Artist** – You're a swindler, a liar, and a cheat. Sometimes, it's a living — and sometimes, it's an art.
- **Conformist** – You keep a careful eye on society and work to fit in. Whatever the group wants, you want.
- **Curious** – You're inquisitive, even to your own detriment, and can't walk away from an unsolved puzzle.
- **Curmudgeon** – Doubt, criticism, and scorn are your weapons. Nothing annoys you so much as trust.
- **Cultured** – You are refined and accept only the finest. You belong with the elite.
- **Enigma** – You're quirky, strange, and often misunderstood. You just don't relate well to others.
- **Fanatic** – You have a cause that inspires you. Nothing is more important.
- **Fighter** – You're used to difficulty, and you like to face it head-on. Combat is always an option.
- **Freak** – You like to shock and disgust others, breaking down their comfortable assumptions.
- **Free Spirit** – You're uncontrollable and unpredictable, and that's how you like it. You hate rules.
- **Judge** – You uphold a standard of behavior; those who don't conform are punished or cast out.
- **Know-It-All** – You're a scholar, a brain, and you like to show it. Others should admire your smarts.
- **Introvert** – You're inwardly focused. Thoughtful, shy, and reserved, you prefer to stay quiet.
- **Leader** – You have drive, energy, and ideas. You want to be in command.
- **Loner** – You can't work within the system. You expect rejection and prefer to work alone.
- **Loose Cannon** – Energetic and over-eager, you're prone to go off half-cocked.
- **Martyr** – You prove your worth by suffering and work to gain sympathy of others.
- **Mediator** – With a natural talent for solving disputes, you're at your best when negotiating.
- **Mercenary** – Your loyalty can be bought and sold; you'll do anything, for the right price.
- **Monster** – Causing horror through wickedness, cruelty, or vicious acts brings you delight.
- **Penitent** – You must atone for a wrongdoing in your past; you constantly seek forgiveness.
- **Protector** – Defending the things you love is the core of your existence; you hold the line.
- **Rationalist** – Reason and logic guide you. You reject decisions based on emotion.
- **Royalty** – You are a noble, inherently better than others, and you feel the responsibilities of your station.
- **Survivor** – You'll do anything, no matter how debased or who you must betray, to stay alive.
- **Type-A Personality** – Capable, but self-critical, you demand perfection from yourself and others.

- **Teacher** – You delight in educating others and expect to be seen as an authority in your field.
- **Traditionalist** – You adhere to rote and routine, preferring the predictable over anything new.
- **Troublemaker** – You love to fight authority, inciting rebellion and encouraging defiance.
- **Toady** – You attach yourself to powerful personalities and siphon advantage from their victories.
- **Trickster** – You're a deceiver, a mischievous figure, and you prefer to win through cunning.
- **Unflappable** – You're always calm and cool whether facing difficulties or experiencing victory. When you actually feel excitement, you obsess — until that, too, fades away.
- **Untrustworthy** – Everyone's out for themselves in the end. Why hide it?

Step Two: Record Initial XP

Your character begins with a minimum of 30 initial XP. If your Storyteller wishes, she may award additional XP to permit more-experienced player characters.

Keep track of your initial XP and use it to purchase attributes, skills, backgrounds, merits, and disciplines later in the creation process. If you do not spend all of your initial XP during character creation, you may bank up to 5 points for use later in the game.

Step Three: Choose a Clan

Once you have determined your character's concept and Archetype, it is time to choose a clan. Consider what sort of clan might have been attracted to your concept and how that might tie into the circumstances of your character's Embrace. An artistically inclined mortal, for instance, is likely to be Embraced as a Toreador, whereas a businessman might have attracted a Ventrue sire.

Your character's clan determines her role in vampire society, the stereotype other characters will apply to her, and the expectations to which the character will be held. Clan also determines a character's innate disciplines, as well as certain strengths and weaknesses. Going against a clan's stereotype is perfectly acceptable, so long as it is done on purpose and reflects the character's personal story.

If your concept doesn't inspire a match with any specific clan or bloodline, a character can always be *Caitiff* — a clanless vampire. Caitiff are thin-blooded vampires, and are usually possessed of an unpredictable assortment of disciplines. Although they do not suffer from the limitations and weaknesses of the clans, Caitiff are treated as second-class citizens by other vampires, who do not trust them or their motley blood.

For more information on clans, please see **Chapter Two: Introduction to the World of Darkness, page 41**.

A Brief Description of the Greater Clans

- **Assamite** – Based in the Middle East, these deadly assassins see themselves as judges, bringing death to the "lesser" vampire clans. They revere their founder, Haqim, and avoid all entanglements of alliance or sect.
- **Brujah** – The Brujah are a passionate clan, prone to aggression and anger. They are philosophers, warriors, rambunctious friends, and dangerous enemies. They often advocate causes, fighting against oppression and tyranny in the hope of a better world.
- **Followers of Set** – Decadent, seductive, and corrupt, the Setites worship their God in golden temples and seedy opium dens, seamlessly merging ancient Egypt and modern crime.
- **Gangrel** – The nomadic Gangrel are savage predators and feral loners, preferring wilderness and freedom to the confinement of an urban sprawl. They are masterful shape-changers and stalwart allies.
- **Giovanni** – The Giovanni are incestuous and insular masters of necromantic magic. With the ruthlessness of a mafia dynasty and the ambition of a modern corporation, these Venetian merchants seek power at any cost.
- **Lasombra** – Elegant and inhuman, the Lasombra relish their vampiric existence. With regal grace, they command the shadows and delight in both kinds of darkness — of the night, and of the soul.
- **Malkavian** – Although gifted with adept insight, all members of the Malkavian clan suffer from some form of macabre insanity. Alternately terrifying and serene, these vampires often seek to enlighten others… whether they like it or not.
- **Nosferatu** – Members of Clan Nosferatu are hideous to behold, their bodies horribly warped and twisted by the Embrace. Clandestine spies and wily secret-stealers, they control the flow of information in vampire society.

- **Toreador** – The Toreador are sensuous, gregarious hedonists, known for their beauty as well as their cunning. Of all the clans, they are the most refined, always found at the cutting edge of mortal art and culture.
- **Tremere** – Long ago, this sorcerous clan of vampires seized immortality and shaped their own fate. In modern nights, they are feared and mistrusted for their occult secrets, though none can deny the power they wield.
- **Tzimisce** – A clan of fallen nobles from Eastern Europe, the reclusive Tzimisce are jealous, possessive creatures. With the power to shape flesh and bone, the masters of metamorphosis seek to evolve beyond mortal understanding,
- **Ventrue** – Stoic and composed, the Ventrue are the pinnacle of vampiric aristocracy. They are monarchs and CEOs, wealthy benefactors and commanding military leaders, ruling the night with an iron fist.
- **Caitiff** – With blood too thin to claim a clan or lineage, Caitiff exhibit few common characteristics. These unfortunate vampires are usually abandoned and disregarded after their misbegotten Embrace, and must rely on themselves in order to survive.

Lesser Clans

In addition to the greater clans, a few reclusive, rare or small clans exist. These include: Baali, Cappadocians, Ravnos, and Salubri. Descriptions of lesser bloodlines begin on **page 69**.

Bloodlines

Most clans have one or more bloodline merits available. Once you have chosen a clan, you may wish to purchase one of these bloodline merits. Note that if your bloodline stems from a clan that is considered rare in your setting, you must purchase both the appropriate Rarity merit and the appropriate bloodline merit in order to create a character of that bloodline.

Bloodlines represent only a small portion of their original clan. They are a lineage within the clan whose blood has been altered – perhaps on purpose, or perhaps without their intent – and now differs from the rest. Usually, members of a bloodline consider themselves to be part of their parent clan. However, some bloodlines hold a grudge against the original clan, or may even have seceded wholly from their founder's line. Two rare bloodlines, the Daughters of Cacophony and the Gargoyles, are not attached to a parent clan. Your Storyteller can explain more about the bloodlines represented in your chronicle's setting.

Remember that bloodlines do not spontaneously appear or disappear. If you are a member of the Crusader bloodline, you were Embraced into the bloodline by your sire (who must also be a member). If you Embrace a childe, she will also be a member of the Crusader bloodline (unless her blood is so thin that she becomes a Caitiff).

For more information on bloodlines and bloodline merits, please see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 237**.

Step Four: Assign Initial Attributes

Attributes quantify a character's innate strengths and weaknesses. Depending upon how a player allocates her starting dots, the character might be strong and perceptive, quick and intelligent, or witty and beautiful, based on whether the character has high Physical, Social, or Mental attributes.

A character should also be weak in some attributes. Creating a character who is an imperfect individual makes her more realistic, and gives the character weaknesses that she can overcome during the course of the chronicle. Moments of growth are good for a protagonist, and raising an attribute can be a wonderful reward after a tense moment in the story. It could indicate that the character learned from her experiences, growing wiser, stronger, or more capable of surviving in a dangerous social setting.

Most characters have attribute ratings between 3 (poor) and 5 (average), though exceptionally gifted individuals may have ratings of 7 (excellent) or even 10 (peak human capacity). As vampires are supernatural creatures, their players receive bonus points that they can add to their potential attribute maximums. The number of points a vampire character receives in this manner varies according to her Generation, reflecting the potency of the vampire's blood. For more information on Generation, please see **page 100**.

Assigning Starting Points to Attributes

To assign points in attributes during character creation, you must first rank your character's attributes. Decide which of the three attributes (Physical, Social, and Mental) are important, making one primary, one secondary, and the last tertiary according to your vision for the character. A boxer would likely have a primary Physical attribute, where an artist might place the Social attribute first, and so on.

- Assign 7 dots to an attribute, indicating that this is your character's strongest, or primary, attribute.
- Assign 5 dots to a second attribute, indicating that this is your character's average, or secondary, attribute.
- Assign 3 dots to the last attribute, indicating that this is your character's weakest, or tertiary, attribute.

Physical Attributes

Physical attributes measure your character's general strength, agility, and stamina. A character with modest Physical attributes is not very athletic, while a character with high Physical attributes is exceptionally strong, dexterous, or tough. Vampires may expend Blood points to supernaturally augment their Physical (and only their Physical) attributes for a short time. For more information on spending Blood in this manner, please see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 294**.

Physical Attribute Example:

Vincent the Nosferatu is fighting a mortal vampire hunter. Depending upon Vincent's attribute level, his Physical focus, and his ranks in an appropriate skill, he might fight in different ways. If he has focused in Strength, he might try grappling his enemy. If he has focused in Dexterity, he might attempt to shoot the hunter. If he has focused in Stamina, he might try to resist attacks long enough for him to escape.

Social Attributes

Kindred are manipulative creatures, using humans (and one another) as building blocks in their attempts to advance personal schemes. Social attributes describe a character's appearance, charm, and ability to interact with others. If your character has few Social attributes, she is awkward, shy, or just plain-looking. A character with a high rating in her Social attribute is attractive, compelling, and smooth, more capable of convincing others to do as she desires.

Social Attribute Example:

Rose the Toreador needs to find a way to get past the bouncers at the most popular nightclub in town: a socially oriented challenge. Depending upon her attribute level, her Social focus, and her ranks in an appropriate skill, Rose can attempt this in a variety of ways. She might flirt with the bouncers, relying on her Appearance focus and the Performance skill. If she has focused in Charisma, she might charm the bouncers with her ready Wit, using her Empathy to figure out what they want to hear. If Rose has focused in Manipulation, she might try to convince the bouncers that she's part of the band playing that night, using her Subterfuge to make the lies as believable as possible.

Mental Attributes

Mental attributes indicate a character's aptitude for problem-solving, learning, deduction, and general alertness. A character with high Mental attributes is attentive, logical, or intuitive. On the other hand, if a character has low Mental attributes, she is not as capable. Such a character may be poorly educated, naive, or mentally slow.

Mental Attribute Example:

Nixx the Tremere is investigating a crime scene, hoping to find clues as to the identity of a clever thief who broke into the chantry. Depending upon his attribute level, his Mental focus, and his ranks in an appropriate skill, Nixx can go about his investigation using a number of different methods. He might studiously look around the room, using his Perception focus and the Investigation skill to notice if anything is out of place. If he has focused in Wits, Nixx might use his Academics skill to remember everything that was in the room and see if he can tell what's missing. If Nixx has focused in Intelligence, he might utilize his Science: Forensics skill and check the room for fingerprints, hair follicles, or other evidence.

Attribute Focuses

Once you have assigned your initial attribute dots, you must then select one focus for each attribute. Each attribute has three focus options. These focuses will help you further define your character and provide benefits when the character utilizes her area of expertise. For example, a boxer might choose to take the Physical attribute focus for Strength, and an artist might choose the Social attribute focus for Charisma.

An attribute focus provides a bonus during challenges involving that attribute, so long as the character's action falls within the focus's description.

Carefully consider which focus you will choose for each attribute. Once you are finished with character creation, changing your focus requires you to spend 10 XP.

Optional Rule: Storytellers may allow new or inexperienced players to change their focuses within the first three games if they feel that the player honestly made a mistake or misunderstood the system.

Physical Focuses

The three Physical focuses are *Strength, Dexterity*, and *Stamina*.

- A Strength-focused character is vigorous and muscular. Once per combat, such characters may use one Strength-based combat maneuver without cost (Disarm, Grapple, Knock Down, or Pierce the Heart).
- A Dexterity-focused character is quick and nimble. Once per combat, such characters may use one Dexterity-based combat maneuver without cost (Burst of Speed, Disarm, Fighting Blind, or Quick Draw).
- A Stamina-focused character is tough and robust. Such characters do not suffer wound penalties. In addition, such characters cannot be Knocked Out or Knocked Down by a combat maneuver unless the attacker has a higher Physical attribute than your character.

For more information on combat maneuvers, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 280**.

Social Focuses

The three Social focuses are *Charisma, Manipulation,* and *Appearance.*

Social powers often give special benefits for a character with a specific focus. For more information, see **Chapter Four: Disciplines on page 111**.

When making a non-power-based challenge that relates to your character's Social focus, the Storyteller may choose to award you a +3 bonus to that challenge. Alternately, when your character is attempting a non-power-based focus-related action that requires a significant investment of time, such as sweet-talking all the lawyers in town, your Storyteller may halve the time needed for your character to perform the action.

Mental Focuses

The three Mental focuses are *Perception, Intelligence, and Wits.*

Mental powers often give special benefits for a character with a specific focus. For more information, see **Chapter Four: Disciplines on page 111**.

When making a non-power-based challenge that relates to your character's Mental focus, the Storyteller may choose to award you a +3 bonus to that challenge. Alternately, when your character is attempting a non-power-based focus-related action that requires a significant investment of time, such as translating an ancient text into English, your Storyteller may halve the time needed for your character to perform the action.

Step Five: Assign Initial Skills

Attributes represent your character's raw potential, but skills represent the experience and training she's received throughout her life — both mortal and immortal. A character with high skills is well-educated or has a great deal of knowledge about the world. A character with low skills might be naive, sheltered, or uneducated.

You can purchase up to 5 dots of each skill. It's not normally possible to buy more than 5 dots in a skill.

Skills provide two kinds of bonuses to your character. First, they allow a character to perform certain actions that an untrained character simply cannot attempt. Second, they augment a character's attributes, making certain actions easier because the character has experience or education with a related skill.

For example, a character with a high Physical attribute rating who does not have the Athletics skill might find it difficult to scale a wall or to leap a series of hurdles. A character with a high Social attribute who does not have the Intimidate skill might find it difficult to bully her way past a security guard.

You should select your character's skills based on that character's background, and then place (or purchase) more dots in the skills with which the character should be most proficient. Skill levels range from novice to master, as follows:

- • **Novice:** You have learned the fundamentals of this field of knowledge.
- •• **Practiced:** You have mastered the basics of this area of study.
- ••• **Competent:** You are good enough to earn a professional living in this field.
- •••• **Expert:** You have surpassed the majority of your peers and are considered an expert.
- ••••• **Master:** You are world-class at this activity and considered to be amongst the best in the field.

Choosing Skills

Choose the skills that best reflect your character's education and experiences, and assign starting dots to those skills as follows:

- Choose one skill and fill in the first 4 dots of that skill.
- Choose two skills and fill in the first 3 dots of those skills.
- Choose three skills and fill in the first 2 dots of those skills.
- Choose four skills and fill in the first dot of those skills.

Fields of Study

You can purchase some skills multiple times to reflect a character's background and interests. For example, skills such as Crafts, Performance, and Science are very broad, and encompass many different fields of study. When you choose one of these skills, you must also choose a more concentrated field of study within that skill. As in the real world, a field of study specifies in which craft, performance type, or scientific area the character has been trained. Examples might include Crafts: Calligraphy, Performance: Classical Guitar, or Science: Forensics. Thus, a character could be skilled in multiple types of performance and therefore take the Performance skill several times (each with a different field of study).

You might wish for your character to be trained in both Science: Biology and Science: Chemistry, reflecting the fact that the character works in a pharmaceutical laboratory. To do this, you must purchase each of these scientific fields as a separate item, and note the individual ranks in each skill in separate places on your character sheet. Your character would not technically have 5 dots in Science, as those two fields of study are uniquely distinct.

Repair and Modification

Repairing or modifying equipment is considered part of the skill associated with the item. For example, a character with the Firearms skill can repair a jammed gun. A character with the Computer skill can repair or upgrade a computer. A character with Drive can repair any vehicle she can utilize with that skill.

Skill Descriptions

The following skills are available to your character. If you want a certain skill or talent that is not on this list, speak with your Storyteller. Many items can be purchased as fields of study under one or more skills. For example, a character who is an architect might purchase Science: Architecture, Crafts: Architecture or even Occult: Architecture, depending on how the character was educated in that field, what she chose to pursue as an interest, or how she intends to apply her knowledge within the game.

Academics

You possess a level of scholarship and general knowledge beyond primary schooling. This skill reflects the fact that the character has received an in-depth education. With Academics, you can express artistic criticism, comment on the classics, discuss philosophy, and indulge in cultural debate. A player may further focus the character's education by choosing a field of study for each dot purchased, such as mathematics, literature, history, journalism, theology, or anything appropriate to a classical education.

System: Once per night, a character with Academics may spend 10 minutes in study. Thereafter, she may retest a single static (non-combat) challenge without using Willpower. This retest must be relevant to one of the character's specific Academics categories.

Animal Ken

You know how to handle animals, and you understand their behavior. You know how to calm an animal, care for it, and train it to perform certain tricks or obey commands. You also know how to panic or enrage an animal, when necessary. The Animal Ken skill also makes hunting animals much easier, allowing a vampire to temporarily hide the predatory aura of the Beast long enough to close in on unwitting prey.

System: Animals are instinctively afraid of vampires and react poorly when one is nearby. With knowledge of Animal Ken, the sight or smell of your character no longer stirs an animal's fight-or-flight instincts. Animals retain a healthy respect for the vampire's predatory nature, but will not react unusually to her presence. Additionally, a character with the Animal Ken skill has knowledge of the Beast and is able to use it to alleviate other characters' Beast traits. By talking to a character for 10 minutes, you may calm her Beast and remove a single Beast trait. No character can be targeted with more than one successful application of Animal Ken per game. Your character cannot use this skill on herself to remove her own Beast traits.

Athletics

You have a knack for athletic endeavors. You are good at sports, and have often participated in physical competitions. This skill is useful when attempting physical activities or sports, when fighting with thrown weapons, or when using a bow.

System: Athletics allows a character to swim, climb, or jump as a simple action, rather than a standard action. Additionally, characters with the Athletics ability may use combat maneuvers as appropriate when fighting with thrown weapons or when shooting a bow.

Awareness

Your senses are keen, and you are trained to notice unusual things in your environment. You also have visceral reactions

to the presence of the supernatural, such as a headache or a strange feeling in the pit of your stomach.

System: Awareness allows a character to have a chance to notice supernatural powers being used nearby (see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, Noticing Attacks on page 281**). Additionally, when a character with Awareness is in torpor, she may control her thoughts and use powers that only affect herself while in that state. Another character with Telepathy may communicate with this individual, as the mind is fully functional within the torpid form.

Brawl

You have been trained to fight, and know how to use your body in hand-to-hand combat. You might have military training, you might have been trained in the martial arts, or maybe you grew up with a lot of rough-and-tumble siblings. Whatever the case, you know how to dish out damage with your fists and feet.

System: Characters with Brawl may use appropriate combat maneuvers when engaging in unarmed combat. For information on combat maneuvers see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 280**.

Computers

You have the knowledge required to operate and program computers, including mobile devices. In addition, you have a fundamental understanding of the internet, including website management, data-mining, and hacking.

Without the Computers skill, a character can do little more than turn electronic devices on and off. She can answer a cellphone by pushing a button, or add a number to its address book, but she cannot use apps or access complex functionality. Such a character can perform only simple tasks on a computer. In the modern world, we take technology for granted. Almost every modern character has a dot of computers, but to a static, ancient mind (or a primitive one), such things are scorned as dark and confusing wizardry.

System: A character with Computers receives 1 additional downtime action between games. This may be utilized like a normal downtime action or it may be used to cancel or observe 1 downtime action spent by another character. This reflects your character's ability to do research online, tap into information networks, and confuse computer systems. You can cause general havoc with city records, operational electronics, and the mundane online bureaucracy of day-to-day life. No character can be reduced to fewer than 1 downtime action between games.

Crafts

You are artistically talented and have the training or experience needed to create art or build items. You can create beautiful and expensive objects. When you choose the Crafts skill you must choose a specific field of study, such as clockwork, blacksmithing, calligraphy, poetry, or anything appropriate. Note that some artistic fields are better represented under the Performance skill. You may buy this skill multiple times, each with a different field of study.

System: A character with the Crafts skill may temporarily increase her Resources by spending 2 downtime actions (one to craft the item and one to sell the item). This increases the character's Resources background by 1 for a month, even if the character does not have current dots in the Resources background, up to a maximum of 5. (For more information on downtimes, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 307**.)

Dodge

When trouble rears its ugly head, you know how to get out of its way. Quick reactions let you evade blows and shots, preventing injury. You can use Dodge to attempt to evade an attack that you're aware of, such as diving for cover as someone fires a gun or twisting away from a sword.

System: Characters with the Dodge skill may choose to sacrifice their standard action to increase one Dodge test pool this round by +2. Additionally, if your character is caught in an area-effect attack (like an explosion) you may make a Dodge test (difficulty 8) to reduce the damage suffered by 1. For more information about Dodge test pools see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 274**.

Drive

Most people can drive, but you have the knowledge and training necessary to perform difficult and dangerous actions while behind the wheel of a vehicle. The first dot of the Drive skill gives you competency driving cars. For each additional dot, you are considered competent driving another vehicle in the following categories: carriages, chariots, motorcycles, sail boats, motor boats, large ships, fixed-wing planes, airliners, or helicopters. You may choose other categories, if approved by your Storyteller.

Without the Drive skill, a character can do nothing more than operate a car with an automatic transmission. You cannot operate a clutch or travel safely at speeds higher than 65 miles per hour. Without Drive, a character cannot operate other types of vehicles (including motorcycles and construction vehicles). In the modern world, we take speedy

travel for granted; to a static, ancient mind, these vehicles are extremely dangerous.

System: Without the Drive skill, your character must use her full attention to operate a vehicle. With the appropriate Drive skill, you may operate a vehicle using a simple action instead of a standard action.

Empathy

A character trained in Empathy tends to be educated in fields such as psychology, anthropology, or other aspects of human interaction and culture. Such characters are sensitive to the moods, emotions, and motives of other people, and can identify when someone has mental problems, psychological weaknesses, or buried issues.

System: By speaking briefly with a subject, your character learns whether or not the subject has any derangements. If your character examines her target for a few minutes, she can determine which derangement(s) the target has. If your character is aware of a target's derangement, she can spend a standard action to increase or decrease her Derangement traits by 1 (minimum 0, maximum 3) for an hour. Empathy cannot reduce a Malkavian's Derangement traits below 1. You cannot use Empathy on yourself.

Firearms

You have been trained to handle a wide variety of firearms, from holdout pistols to heavy machine guns. You can clean, repair, recognize, and accurately fire most forms of simple modern weaponry.

System: Characters with the Firearms ability may use appropriate combat maneuvers when engaging in ranged combat. For information on combat maneuvers see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 280**.

Intimidation

You're good at being fearsome and have often used this talent to terrify others or cow them to your will. Your tactics might be based on your physical size, fighting prowess, reputation, or just knowing how to push someone's buttons and play on her fears.

System: A character with the Intimidation skill is extremely frightening. Stock NPCs (including Retainers) with a rating of 1 or 2 will not attack a character with the Intimidation skill. If your character acts aggressively towards a 1 or 2 point NPC, it will flee. This behavior does not apply to mindless Stock NPCs, such as inanimate objects given life by magic or mindless zombies.

Investigation

It takes a great deal of training to be a good investigator. You have that education and the experience to use it. You notice subtleties and can connect disparate pieces of information. With effort, you can set a jumbled mass of data into patterns, discovering clues that others would have overlooked.

System: Use a standard action to visually scrutinize an individual within three steps, or use three standard actions to examine a room or small area. You automatically detect any carried weapons (even beneath clothing), explosives, or hidden objects. Items with the Concealable quality are automatically noticed only if you physically pat down or search the target.

Leadership

Leadership is a combination of authority, strategic thinking, and the understanding of team dynamics. It combines the ability to motivate people with the resourcefulness to draft a successful plan. Even when you are among strangers, you can command attention and gain respect.

System: Stock NPCs who are following your character's instruction receive a +2 to any action they are otherwise capable of doing. In addition, for each dot of Leadership your character possesses, you can learn the details of another vampire's specific status trait, once per night. (For more information, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, Status and Vampire Society on page 310**)

Linguistics

Most people have a fluent command of one language: their native tongue. If a character has no dots in Linguistics, then she can only communicate in her native language. Other individuals make a diligent effort to learn multiple languages, and through study, master quite a few.

System: For every dot of Linguistics that a character possesses (including the first), she is fluent in one language, in addition to her native tongue.

Lore

In order to survive, a vampire quickly learns her own biology. She knows that she must feed on blood, she feels the drives of the Beast, and she quickly recognizes dangers such as sunlight and fire. After a short time as a vampire, she gains an understanding of vampiric society, such as the most prevalent clans in her setting, as well as common vampiric disciplines and powers.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

To know more about the supernatural world, a character must collect and study Lore. With several dots in Lore, the character is familiar with centuries of legends, understands the minute details of vampire existence, and may have even studied one or more pages of the Book of Nod.

System: For every dot of Lore that a character possesses, the player chooses one category in which to specialize. Whenever a character requires knowledge that may be available through this category, the player makes a static challenge (Mental + Lore) to gain specific and detailed insight from the perspective of that specific topic.

Remember that Lore is not Academics; Lore involves knowledge of the supernatural world, where Academics is the study of more mundane topics. Your Storyteller will be the final arbiter of your character's categories for the Lore skill. Potential categories in Lore might include the events of a specific period of vampiric history; a focus on one of the individual vampire clans; or a specialization in a type of non-vampiric creatures, such as werewolves, fae, or mages.

If you fail a Lore challenge, you cannot attempt the test again until you acquire new information.

Example: *Eric has 3 dots of the Lore skill. With his Storyteller's approval, his categories are: Brujah clan, Mages, and Vampires of Ancient Constantinople.*

Medicine

You have a trained knowledge of human anatomy, including knowledge of medicines and the ability to treat wounds or diagnose diseases. For information on healing mortals with the Medicine skill, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 287**.

System: By spending a downtime action studying the target's blood, hair, skin, or remains (including ash) in a proper medical facility, you can determine a creature's supernatural type (if any). Characters who are familiar with vampires can also determine clan and generation. With use of proper equipment, you can preserve blood (including vampiric blood) for up to one month per dot in the Medicine skill.

Melee

You are a dangerous combatant, especially when you are armed with any sort of weaponry. Melee represents your ability to use non-ranged weapons of all forms, from swords and spears, to esoteric martial-arts weaponry such as *sai* or *nunchaku*. This skill also includes training with vampire-related weaponry, such as wooden stakes.

System: Characters with the Melee ability may use appropriate combat maneuvers when using melee weapons. For information on combat maneuvers see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 280**.

Occult

You are familiar with occult topics such as mystic philosophy, superstition, or folklore. Occult includes knowledge of many traditions such as Jewish Kabbalah, primitive shamanism, New Age beliefs, or psychic research, but is always appropriate to mystic studies. It does not imply a command of hard facts, but basic knowledge of rumor, myth, legend, and hearsay.

System: Use a standard action to visually scrutinize an individual within three steps. You automatically detect the telltale signs of active rituals on the person or magic items carried by that individual. This does not allow you to identify what these rituals or items do, nor to identify spells they can cast that are not active (nor to tell if the individual possesses Thaumaturgy or if the rituals were cast by another). Further, characters with the Occult skill may purchase the Occult advantage for their Haven background (for more information, see the Haven background on **page 102**). You cannot apply this advantage to a Haven that is not your own.

Performance

You have been trained in physical performance, and are comfortable entertaining a crowd. This skill represents your talent and technical ability, as well as the ability to enthrall an audience and keep them wanting more. When you choose the Performance skill, you must choose a specific field of study such as dance, comedy, acting, oratory, singing, or anything appropriate to the dramatic arts. You may buy this skill multiple times, each with a different field of study.

System: A character with the Performance skill may temporarily increase her Fame by spending 2 downtime actions (one to promote the upcoming performance, and one to perform). This increases the character's Fame background by 1 for a month, even if the character does not have current dots in the Fame background, up to a maximum of 5. (For more information on downtimes, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 307**).

Science

The modern Information Age allows for all manner of studies. By categorizing and breaking down the world into many different forms, the methods of logic and reason give

sentient beings the means to understand the universe, or at least small pieces of it. Education in Science covers techniques of inquiry, modern studies, and a broad range of underpinning work in a diverse range of fields. When you choose the Science skill, you must choose a specific field of study: biology, chemistry, physics, metallurgy, electrical engineering, mathematics, geology, and botany are all possibilities, though such a list is far from comprehensive. You may buy this skill multiple times, each with a different field of study.

System: A character with Science receives 1 additional downtime action, which can only be spent on a downtime relevant to that Science. A character receives 1 additional downtime action for each Science — but, again, can only spend these downtime actions on activities specifically relevant to the pursuit of each Science.

Security

You may have been a dedicated security consultant or an incorrigible thief. No matter which side of the law you operated on, you learned a great deal about modern security techniques. You understand both the ins and outs of the technology and the structure of security organizations, and know how best to circumnavigate both. With a little time and effort, you can design comprehensive security protocols for a location or, conversely, defeat such measures.

System: You may pick a lock or palm a small item as a simple action instead of a standard action. Characters with the Security skill receive the Security advantage for their Haven background for free. This character can also use a downtime action to apply this advantage to another character's Haven; this effect lasts for one calendar year (for more information, see the Haven background on **page 102**).

Stealth

It takes a great deal of physical training to move silently, and a tremendous amount of mental dedication to remain unnoticed when others are attempting to find you. You know how to take advantage of surrounding cover, how to act nonchalant, and you understand the uses of timing and diversion. By taking the appropriate precautions and using your natural skill, you can blend into the crowd and remain unnoticed even without supernatural powers.

System: A character with Stealth is skilled at hiding among a crowd. So long as you have a few appropriate items, you can automatically pass yourself off as a specific type of person, convincing others that you are a policeman, or blending in with the dancers at a club. This does not make you unrecognizable and will not fool people who are already aware that it is you in disguise.

Streetwise

You're a savvy individual, completely capable of taking care of yourself no matter how difficult the circumstances. The streets and the underbelly of urban areas hold no danger for you, and you know the local criminal organizations and how to contact – or avoid – them. You can recognize tagging and other territorial markers, and you know the signs, colors, and accoutrements that are used as identification by those who make their homes in those areas.

System: As long as your path leads through a densely populated urban area, it's not possible to follow you without using supernatural powers specifically designed to track.

Subterfuge

Lies, bluffs, and subtle games of manipulation are the purview of those who have studied the art of Subterfuge. An individual trained in this skill is capable of hiding her intentions and redirecting the attention of others in order to deceive them. You may be at your best with feats of "magical" misdirection, or you may be a con artist, making money playing three-card-Monte on the streets. You may use phraseology to confuse your listener, or you might be the sort to utilize small feats of hypnotism to confuse and distract. Like the old hucksters used to say, there's a sucker born every minute.

System: Once per game, if your character is caught using a supernatural power, it instead seems as though another character of your choosing within three steps of you used the power, not you. This does not apply to powers that have an obvious source, such as Flame Bolt or Dread Gaze.

Survival

You know the ways of the wilderness and you feel at home in untamed environments. You know how to navigate a variety of terrains, find shelter, and survive in hostile habitats. You can control your responses and act with temperance and composure, having suffered numerous hardships with ease. Your survival instincts are rarely ignored, even under the direst provocation.

System: Once per hour when your character is suffering from a rage or hunger frenzy, she may alter her response and instead go into a fear frenzy, allowing her to run away without harming her friends (or innocent bystanders).

Step Six: Assign Initial Backgrounds

Backgrounds flesh out a player's concept, helping you to define many portions of a character's history. Does the character have a powerful mentor in vampiric society? Does the character have access to a great deal of money, or is she poor? Does she have any servitors or companions? Backgrounds help you to portray these personal items, creating a framework for the character's life.

Each background may be purchased up to level 5. It's not normally possible to buy a background above 5.

Choosing Backgrounds

During character creation, the player chooses three backgrounds and assigns dots in the following manner:

- Assign 3 dots to a single background of your choice.
- Assign 2 dots to a second background.
- Assign 1 dot to a third background.

Generation: If you do not assign at least 1 of your free background dots to Generation, your character will begin play as a mortal (or a ghoul). (Character creation rules for player-character Ghouls are detailed in **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 296.**)

Losing Backgrounds

The Storyteller may strip a background permanently if your circumstances change significantly. For example, if you fake your death and change your face, you'll probably lose the Fame background.

Other players can work to undermine your backgrounds. Attacks from other players can temporarily reduce your backgrounds, but given time you will recover. As a general rule it takes two games or one month (whichever is longer) to recover 1 dot of a lost background. For example, if another character killed your 3-dot Retainer, it would take six games or three months (whichever is longer) to find a suitable replacement.

Background Descriptions

The following backgrounds are available to your character. In general, having multiple dots in a background allows for more effective or more frequent use of that background's benefit. Some backgrounds change your character during character creation, while others affect the character only after she enters game. Read each background carefully to determine which are appropriate for your character's story.

Allies

The Allies background represents mortals who support and help you. These mortals may be family, friends, or even a loyal corporation or criminal organization. Allies may represent friends who work at the morgue, write for a prominent blog, or circulate in the high society of local celebrities. With Allies, you can make a few calls, cut a few deals, and get trustworthy assistance in a wide range of activities.

Remember that Allies are mortal, and are not aware of the supernatural world of vampires. They genuinely believe you are a friend, and they may ask you for a favor in the future. If your Allies ask for a favor in return, and you are unable to assist them, you may lose dots in the Allies background until you "make good" on the deal.

System: For each dot of Allies that you purchase, you must define one group of people with whom your character is allied. For example, a character with 3 dots of Allies may choose to define those Allies as mortuary workers, a local gang called the Vatos, and a local independent rock band known as the Iron Jugs. When you have your character call in favors, you must tell the Storyteller which group (or groups) she is contacting and explain how that group is capable of assisting your character with the specific problem.

These Allies can perform reasonable tasks and may be more capable if the task is something appropriate to their profession. For example, Allies in the local morgue could do something mundane, like watch a building. They would be very good at something in line with their profession, like disposing of a body. However, it would be outside their area of expertise to rob the local liquor store. The character's second Ally, the local gang, would be more appropriate for that task.

If the situation requires character sheets for your Allies, the Storyteller generates up to three Stock NPCs, one of level 3 and two at level 1. All of these NPCs are mortal, and none have any supernatural abilities. Note that Allies are capable of fighting, but they are not designed to be a character's personal army. If a character's Allies are killed, the character loses access to the Allies background for the next two games or one month (whichever is longer).

You may use this background once per game for each dot of Allies the character possesses.

Alternate Identity

You maintain a second identity, complete with papers, birth certificates, or any other necessary documentation. This

cover personality may be a ruse to help your character hide among the mortal populace, or it may be a vampire identity designed to infiltrate another clan. You may buy this background multiple times, with each instance representing an entirely separate cover identity.

- • Your identity is very shallow. You have a driver's license or other minor documentation, and it can survive a perfunctory internet search.
- •• You have a well-grounded identity that could withstand the scrutiny of a minor criminal investigation. This might include birth certificates and social security numbers, or in vampiric society, it might represent a newly established infiltration.
- ••• Your identity is very well established and will stand up to all but the toughest scrutiny. This persona has a long and believable history, including friends, family, and character witnesses. In vampiric society, you may have arranged a plausible (but dead) sire and a verifiable history.
- •••• Your identity is designed to infiltrate another clan or sect. At this level you've established a rudimentary identity as a new (or fairly new) vampire of the clan/sect you're attempting to infiltrate. You have arranged a living sire who claims to have created you, and you have been present at several historical events as a member of the clan.
- ••••• Your identity is a respected member of society; it holds powerful office in the mortal world, or among vampires, concretely influences another clan or sect. You have a long history, an in-depth lineage, and your cover is solid enough to pass even supernatural means of verification. Note that this doesn't prevent the character from being "found out" if you make a mistake and other players catch on. Even the strongest Alternate Identity will fail if you can't keep a secret.

Alternate Identity will not fool supernatural powers or direct observation. For example, it will not help you when targeted by Telepathy. In addition, an Alternate Identity can be Accepted by another sect or political group, and gain status in that group. For more information on Acceptance and status, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, Status and Vampire Society on page 310**.

Contacts

You have established close personal relationships with people all over the city. When you start making phone calls and asking for gossip or inside tips, the amount of information you can dig up is impressive. You know who to bribe, manipulate, or coerce into offering information, and the favorites list on your cellphone looks like a who's who of the city's most important people.

Your Contacts help you keep an ear out for rumors and gather information. When you call on your Contacts, the character makes a few phone calls, checks in on her snitches, and listens to the local gossipmongers. The character very quickly gets rumors and information appropriate to the network she's established with this background.

System: For each dot of Contacts that you purchase, you must define one individual with whom your character has a close relationship. This individual is considered to be very well connected in their field or area of expertise; she knows a great deal and actively remains aware of current events within her sphere of influence. For example, a character with 3 dots of Contacts may choose to define those individuals as Bethany, the wealthy socialite; Carlos, the head of Accounting at a local financial conglomerate; and Jane Anne, the owner of one of the most popular nightclubs in the city. When the player has her character call these Contacts, she must tell the Storyteller which individual (or individuals) she is contacting and explain how that individual might know information of use to her character in the specific situation.

When you use your Contacts, you may ask the Storyteller for one piece of information about an ongoing plot, or you may ask for information about one influence transaction that occurred within the city in the last month. If used to investigate plot, these Contacts will provide information that the Storyteller considers appropriate. If the Contacts are used to investigate influences, the character will gain a full description of the influence result and information that may be used to discover who controls that influence (if anyone).

You may use this background once for each dot of Contacts the character possesses, per session.

Fame

Mortals are often chosen for the Embrace from the ranks of the elite. As a result, some vampires can claim a particular distinction from their breathing days: whether a prominent career in music or art, or a birthright within a royal or exceptionally wealthy family. Fame fades over the years, and is therefore normally the province of younger vampires. A player portraying an older vampire with this background must justify to the Storyteller the reasons that her character is still well known and recognizable to mortal society.

When purchasing Fame, decide why your character is famous. The number of dots purchased in this background determines the range of the character's mortal acclaim. For example, a painter with 1 dot of Fame might be known only within artistic circles, while an actor with 5 dots of Fame would be a nationally known celebrity.

When you interact with mortals who recognize your character's Fame, you may add +5 to any non-supernatural Social challenges. Additionally, NPCs will often give you favors, assist you without question, and grant you the benefit of the doubt. For example, a famous celebrity will not have difficulty getting a private room, borrowing someone's car, or convincing people in a hotel that the strange things they saw were just scenes being filmed for a new horror movie.

Note that when you call on your Fame to help you, the circumstances will quickly become common knowledge among your sphere of acclaim. If a famous painter asks for a free ride home from the airport, it will make the news and, people will speculate about her reasons for needing the ride.

Fame ranges:

- Local scene
- •• City
- ••• State
- •••• Adjoining states/region
- ••••• Entire country

High levels of Fame can be disruptive to a chronicle. Storytellers should regulate the Fame background as they feel appropriate for their setting.

Generation

According to some clans' legends, the biblical figure known as Caine was cursed by God and became the first vampire. Caine then Embraced a second generation of vampires, who in turn Embraced a third, and so on. Because of this legend, vampires (even those who do not believe the myth) measure the strength of their blood in generations, counting how many sires have passed between them and the mythical apex, whomever it might be.

Generation is the measure of a vampire's capability, based on the strength of her blood. Generation can only be purchased at character creation and is static thereafter for the course of the game (except in the case of *diablerie*, see below).

Vampiric blood, also known as *vitae*, is a significant factor in a vampire's potency. To reflect this, there are mechanical differences, both advantages and disadvantages, to purchasing Generation. Having several dots in Generation means your vampire has stronger, purer blood, which can support elder powers. Thus, vampires of the 8th generation and above are collectively called "elders."

Buying fewer dots of Generation means the vampire's blood is diluted, thinner and less pure, but therefore also less static. The blood of a character with fewer ranks in Generation is flexible enough to support techniques: powers created by mixing two or more disciplines together into a single effect.

To play a vampire, you must purchase 1 dot of Generation. You may purchase more dots during character creation, but you cannot purchase them after the character enters play. Players should note that these dots are not additive — if you buy 2 dots, you don't get the bonuses of both: only those of the highest dot purchased.

Diablerie

The less scrupulous among the higher generations sometimes steal the power of their elders through the foul process of *diablerie*. Diablerie allows a vampire to consume the soul of a more potent vampire and therefore gain some of her victim's power. For more information on diablerie, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 306**.

- **Generation (Neonate)**

  Neonates have very weak potency of blood. They are usually recent Embraces and, therefore, more attuned to the modern world. The vitae of a Neonate is far too thin to develop elder powers, due to their distance in generation from the first vampire of her line. However, the benefit of thin blood is that its flexibility allows Neonates to easily learn and utilize techniques.

  System: With 1 dot, the character is of the 11th generation. If the player wishes, she can choose to take flaws that will reduce her generation by one or two steps (12th or 13th generation), both of which are also considered "Neonates." A Neonate has a Blood pool of 10 points, and can spend that Blood at a rate of 1 point per round. Neonates may purchase any number of techniques at standard cost.

  Neonates purchase skills and backgrounds at reduced cost. Neonates may purchase skills and backgrounds for new level x1 instead of the standard new level x2.

•• Generation (Ancilla)

The blood of an Ancilla vampire is thicker than that of a Neonate, but is still not pure enough to empower elder powers. Ancilla may learn and utilize techniques, just like vampires with thinner blood. These vampires are usually of moderate age and do not understand modern technology with the ease shown by Neonates.

System: With 2 dots, the character is of the 9th generation. If the player wishes, she can choose to take a flaw that will reduce her generation by one step (10th generation), which is still considered "Ancilla." An Ancilla has a Blood pool of 12 points, and can spend that Blood at a rate of 2 points per round. Ancilla may purchase any number of techniques at standard cost. Ancilla purchase skills and backgrounds at the standard rate.

••• Generation (Pretender Elder)

A vampiric Pretender Elder is a powerful creature, with blood just thick enough to support one of her kind's most potent powers — but only one. At this stage, a vampire's blood still retains a certain flexibility. This allows a Pretender Elder to become adept at techniques, though she cannot learn these powers as easily as Neonates or Ancillae. Such vampires tend to be hundreds of years old.

System: With 3 dots, the character is of the 8th generation. A Pretender Elder has a Blood pool of 15 points, and can spend that Blood at a rate of 3 points per round. She may purchase any number of techniques at increased cost (20 XP each), and may purchase one (and only one) elder power at standard cost (whether in-clan or out-of-clan). Elders purchase skills and backgrounds at standard costs.

•••• Generation (Master Elder)

These frighteningly potent vampires are paragons of their clans. Their vitae is powerful and increasingly pure, capable of learning and utilizing multiple elder powers. However, this potency means that a Master Elder's blood is static, and she does not possess the flexibility necessary to learn techniques.

System: With 4 dots, the character is of the 7th generation. A Master Elder has a Blood pool of 20 points, and can spend that Blood at a rate of 4 points per round. Master Elder characters may purchase any number of elder powers (both in-clan and out-of-clan). A Master Elder cannot purchase any techniques and purchases skills and backgrounds at standard costs.

••••• Generation (Luminary Elder)

Luminary Elders are fearsome creatures. These vampires are pure-blooded reflections of the ancient founders, with extremely thick and potent vitae. This potency allows a Luminary Elder to utilize elder powers, but the purity of her blood makes learning out-of-clan disciplines more difficult, as her blood is so strongly attuned to the powers of her clan.

System: With 5 dots, the character is of the 6th generation. A Luminary Elder has a Blood pool of 30 points, and can spend that Blood at a rate of 5 points per round. Luminary Elder characters may purchase any number of elder powers (both in-clan and out-of-clan). Luminary Elders may purchase the sixth level of all skills. A Luminary Elder cannot purchase any techniques. Luminary Elders pay increased costs for all out-of-clan disciplines (including elder powers).The cost for a Luminary Elder to purchase an out-of-clan discipline is the new level x5 instead of the standard new level x4. Luminary Elders purchase skills and backgrounds at standard costs.

Generation Chart

Title	Generation	Blood Pool	Blood/Round	Attribute Bonus
Neonate	13th – 11th	10	1	1
Ancilla	10th – 9th	12	2	2
Pretender Elder	8th	15	3	3
Master Elder	7th	20	4	4
Luminary Elder	6th	30	5	5

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Attribute Bonuses

A character's attributes comprise her Physical, Social, and Mental capacity. All characters in Vampire have a default maximum of 10 attributes in each of the three categories.

Each dot of Generation gives a character one bonus attribute point. Players can use these points to increase their character's attribute maximums. Each bonus point increases a single attribute category maximum by 1; a character must still purchase the attribute with XP as normal.

An 8th generation character receives 3 bonus points granted by her dots in Generation. The player of this character may choose to raise one attribute maximum by 3, to a new maximum of 13; this means she leaves the other two attribute maximums at 10. That same player could instead decide to raise one attribute maximum by 1 point (to 11), and one by 2 (to 12) points, leaving the third attribute category at its standard maximum of 10.

Again, in all cases, the character must spend XP in order to purchase attributes up to that new maximum.

Players are not required to assign attribute points until the character is ready to purchase an attribute above 10. For example, Marlowe the 8th generation Malkavian has 3 bonus attribute points, but at character creation none of his attributes are above 10. After playing for a few months, Marlowe realizes that the Mental discipline Obfuscate has become a staple of his play-style and decides to raise his Mental attribute to 11. At this point Marlowe has spent 1 of his 3 bonus attribute points.

Haven

Every vampire must have a safe place she can retreat to during the day, commonly described as a *haven*. A vampiric haven can be anyplace your character may reasonably survive: an expensive hotel suite, a mansion, a trailer park, a hidden tunnel in the sewer system, etc.

System: Every time you purchase a dot in the Haven merit choose one of the following advantages. You cannot select the same advantage more than once for a single Haven location.

- **Guards**: Guardians regularly patrol your Haven. Anyone who tries to infiltrate your Haven must contend with 5 levels of Retainers who guard your Haven (you may choose to make five level 1 retainers, one level 5 retainer, or any other combination that adds up to 5. Your guards only work in your Haven and cannot travel with you. If you want underlings who can leave your Haven, consider the Retainer background.
- **Library**: Before making a Research or Lore test, you can spend one hour looking things up in your library to receive a +3 bonus to your pool.
- **Location**: Your Haven is located in a prestigious neighborhood. Anyone who wishes to use downtime actions to negatively affect you must spend twice as many downtime actions as long as you regularly stay in your Haven. Additionally, you receive a number of story benefits (police respond quickly when you call, your roads get cleared first when the weather is bad, etc.)
- **Luxury**: You've filled your Haven with comfortable and expensive extras, such as televisions, automatic chairs, computers, or works of art. You receive a +3 bonus to Social tests versus mortals when they are in your Haven.
- **Security**: Any challenges made to break into your Haven or to bypass detection suffer a −3 penalty. Additionally you will always receive at least one turn of warning when someone attempts to break into your Haven (no matter how well your attacker tests). Characters with the Security skill gain this bonus for free.
- **Size**: Your Haven is enormous with dozens of rooms. You can comfortably house up to 10 additional characters.
- **Staff**: Your Haven includes several servants who see to the needs of yourself and your guests. Staff doesn't normally fight, but if forced to engage, treat them as level 1 Retainers with no specialties applicable to combat.
- **Occult**: Your Haven contains a number of simple wards and hedge-wizard tricks to keep out unwanted guests. You may have runes carved into the window sills or a line of salt at the door. Regardless of the wards used, supernatural Stock NPCs cannot enter your Haven without being invited. This has no effect on player-characters or NPCs with full character sheets. You cannot purchase this bonus unless you have the Occult skill.

Herd

You have gathered a group of mortals from whom you feed without fear of reprisals or risking the notice of mortal authorities. A vampire with the Herd background doesn't have to go far to hunt; the Herd offers a safe and easy way to gain blood. You must define your Herd, whether they are kinky club-goers captivated by a vampire's charisma, or a fanatically religious cult that views you as some kind of priestess or incarnate divinity. A Herd could be a group of enslaved prisoners, a medical pass that gives you access to fresh blood supplies, or a personal zoo of animals. Work with your Storyteller to describe the exact nature of your character's Herd.

Characters with the Herd background do not have to spend a downtime action feeding each month. If plot, influence actions, or other circumstances require vampires to spend more than 1 downtime action feeding, you reduce the number of downtime actions required by a number equal to your dots in Herd. If you have more dots in Herd than you must expend for downtime actions to feed, you may allow other individuals to feed on your Herd, thus using the dots to supplement their downtime actions in the same manner.

Additionally, at any point you may spend five minutes out-of-game feeding rather than the standard 15 minutes. If you do, you will gain a number of Blood points equal to your herd rating. You cannot allow other characters access to this advantage.

Influences

The Influence background is a mechanical means to express the series of social connections, business transactions, and personal favors that make up your character's influence over the mortal world.

You may purchase up to 5 dots of either influence category as listed below:

- **The Elite:** You have influence over the upper crust, those who are wealthy, hold legitimate power, own corporations, or control noteworthy institutions. These individuals live in a world of wealth and affluence.
- **The Underworld:** You have influence over those who work outside of the law, whether it is the working classes looking the other way, or those who live on the street ruling gangs and drug cartels, running networks of thieves, or controlling intricate cultural bureaucracy. These individuals live in a world of rumors, whispers, and lies.

Information about utilizing influences can be found in **Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment, page 509**.

Resources

There are many ways to acquire goods, services, property, and luxuries in the **World of Darkness**, but ready access to money is one of the oldest and most reliable. Vampires often maintain some kind of cash flow, though they must do so either through mortal proxies, alternate identities, or other subterfuges, and even then they must be wary of attracting the wrong kind of attention: they cannot afford to trigger an audit from government financial institutions, or become the focus of a securities fraud investigation. The Resources background measures your character's purchasing power, available credit, accumulated assets, and liquid cash reserves.

Resources may be actual cash, but as this background's rating increases, it is more likely that the character has significant investments in stocks and bonds, real estate, or hedge funds than piles of cash sitting around. At the upper end of the background, she may gain money by exerting control over a corporation, criminal syndicate, or religious institution; or she may own a large amount of land, live off a trust fund, smuggle precious objects d'art, control a massive criminal infrastructure, or receive significant tithes from control of the church.

A character with no dots in the Resources background is impoverished. She has enough clothing and supplies to survive, and she may live in a cheap motel or a small apartment (or something similar). Characters without Resources have little or no liquid cash and cannot afford luxury items. They rarely, if ever, pay their debts.

The Resources background provides a guideline for a general standard of living. It shows wealth and buying power in mortal equivalents; most vampires who have Sufficient Resources do not pay taxes, for example, and almost none earn an income from holding down a regular job. The gulf between each dot of Resources widens considerably the farther up the scale you go, but the exact amount of cash your character has on hand should be decided by the

Overtaxing Your Resources

An individual with the Resources background may overtax her resources, allowing her to spend more than her allotted amount of money in a given month. A character who overtaxes her resources may spend up to twice the listed amount of money in a single month, but doing so taxes her investments and requires time to recover fiscally.

When a character overtaxes her resources, her Resource background is reduced by two levels (minimum zero) for the next six games or three months (whichever is longer). The character may cut this recovery time in half by spending 3 downtime actions taking a personal interest in the recovery of her financial investments.

Storyteller. You must also work with your Storyteller to detail exactly where your character's money comes from and how it can be accessed.

The Storyteller should also adjust the details of this background so that it is appropriate for her setting and chronicle. Standards of living can vary markedly between geographic areas, and what's acknowledged as Comfortable in one community might be considered Sufficient in another.

- **Sufficient:** You can maintain a typical working-class residence: a small house or condo. You can afford an economical car, you pay your bills on time, and you can purchase simple luxuries like good-quality electronics or occasional vacations to other countries. Through careful management of your finances, you may spend up to $1,000 in liquid cash per month.
- •• **Moderate:** You can support an upper-middle-class lifestyle and home with the occasional lavish gift or conspicuous indulgences such as multiple vehicles or a time-share condominium in addition to your comfortable home. You can employ a servant or personal assistant, or hire temporary help as necessary. You can spend up to $2,500 in liquid cash per month.
- ••• **Comfortable:** You are a prominent and established member of your community with land investments, a large, luxurious home, and at least one second home in a fashionable vacation destination. You likely have more money tied up in investments and property than you do in ready cash. You can spend up to $20,000 in liquid cash per month without much concern.
- •••• **Wealthy:** You rarely touch cash, as most of your assets exist in tangible forms that are themselves more valuable and stable than paper money, such as gold, diamonds, and gems, or in massive credit reserves based on these holdings. You hold more wealth than many who would claim to be your peers, but it's likely they underestimate your true total net worth. At this level of wealth, banks and government institutions closely monitor how you convert your money to cash. You can easily spend up to $100,000 in liquid cash per month without attracting the wrong kind of attention.
- ••••• **Extremely Wealthy:** You are the model others wish to emulate, at least in popular opinion. You have vast and widely distributed assets, perhaps tied to the fates of nations, each managed by large, specialized staffs and supported with connections to every level of society through a region. Corporations and governments sometimes come to you to buy into stocks or bond programs. If there is something you want, and it is possible to buy, you can purchase it without the cost affecting your bottom line. At this level of wealth, the banks, the IRS, and other agencies closely monitor how you convert your money to cash. You can easily spend up to $250,000 in liquid cash per month without attracting the wrong kind of attention.

Retainers

Whether out of personal gratitude, love, the blood bond, or some other means, you have the fellowship of a mortal who is intensely trustworthy and loyal to you. Unlike the Allies background, your Retainers are always available when you need them. They can be trusted to oversee your personal effects, defend your property, and further your goals.

A Retainer does not have the specialized knowledge of a Contact, nor the broad capacity to perform favors like Allies do, but she is more loyal and resilient than either of the other two. A Retainer will fight for the vampire, if necessary, defending her when she is sleeping or carrying out her will when the vampire cannot do something for herself. For a vampire, a Retainer is usually a ghoul, controlled via the blood bond; even if the Retainer is free-willed, she will put the vampire's needs and survival ahead of her own.

Use the rules for Stock NPCs to build Retainers. They can take any action that an NPC can take, but the Storyteller should remember that Retainers are not perfect. For example, a Retainer spying on the Brujah clan meeting would certainly report back to her master, but would not be able to quote the things she's observed verbatim. If there is ever a question about what a Retainer can accomplish, the Storyteller has the final call.

You may purchase the Retainer background multiple times, representing multiple Retainers, but you must purchase dots separately for each Retainer. No Retainer can have more than 5 dots.

If your Retainer is released or killed, you lose access to that background for one game or two weeks (whichever is longer) for every dot you purchased for that specific Retainer. During this time, the vampire is finding a suitable replacement.

Players should work with their Storytellers to determine how the character secured such a loyal Retainer.

Building Retainers

Your Retainer's test pool for most actions will be equal to her Retainer rating x2. For example, a level 3 Retainer has a test pool of 6 for most actions.

Sample Retainer

Bocephus, the Nosferatu Ghoul
Four-dot Retainer

Specialties: Brawl, Stealth, Dodge and Obfuscate

Blood: ○○○○○, spent at 1/round

Effective Health: ○○○○

Bocephus has a test pool of 8 in most tests. In challenges involving Brawl, Dodge, or Stealth, his pool is 13. Bocephus has access to the first 4 dots of Obfuscate.

Specialties

There are two types of specialties: skill specialties and discipline specialties. A Retainer has a number of specialties equal to the Retainer's overall rating. For example, a 2-point Retainer has two specialties, and may choose to place them both in different skills, or one in a skill and one in a discipline.

- **Skill Specialty**: Choose one skill in which your Retainer will specialize. When the Retainer makes a challenge utilizing this skill specialty, her test pool is increased by 5. For example, if our aforementioned 2-point Retainer selected a skill specialty in Brawl, her test pool for unarmed combat would be 9 (rating 2 x2 = 4 + 5 = 9).
- **Discipline Specialty**: Ghoul Retainers may use one (and only one) of their specialties to learn a discipline that is in-clan for their domitor. A discipline specialty allows the Retainer access to one power per dot of the Retainer. For example, if our 2-point Retainer from the above example was a ghoul, she could choose to select a second specialization in Potence. This gives her access to the first 2 dots of the Potence discipline, because she is a 2-point Retainer. If the player purchases a 3rd dot in this Retainer background, the ghoul immediately gains a 3rd dot of Potence and gains the ability to select a third specialty.

Retainer Finishing Touches

Retainers do not have Willpower and cannot retest failed challenges unless they can overbid. Ghoul Retainers have 5 potent Blood points that may be spent on vampiric powers and 5 mortal Blood points, which cannot be spent. They can spend 1 Blood per round to heal or power disciplines.

Retainers have one effective health level per rating of the background. For example, a 4-point Retainer has four health levels. When a Retainer runs out of health levels, she falls unconscious, or is in too much pain to act effectively. Retainers are not automatically killed, but they may die if they don't receive medical attention.

For more information on retainers, please see **Chapter Twelve: Allies and Antagonists, Stock NPC Generation on page 489**.

Step Seven: Assign Initial Disciplines

Disciplines are supernatural powers granted by the Embrace. These disciplines are the stuff of legend, and over the centuries they have been the foundation of numerous vampiric myths. Vampires can turn into bats and wolves, they can move faster than the blink of an eye, they can lift cars, and they can take incredible damage while suffering no harm. They are majestic and inspiringly beautiful, with shadows that move at their unspoken commands. They can trick mortal minds into holding false memories or move among us completely unseen.

Fueled by blood and will, disciplines are the hallmarks of a true vampire. Young vampires may command a few powers, while ancient and fearsome vampires have mastered a significant number of disciplines through hundreds of years of experience and practice.

Every vampire has a set of disciplines that are "in-clan," or native to their clan's blood. Other clans' disciplines are harder to learn, and are considered "out-of-clan." Learning out-of-clan disciplines requires a vampiric teacher whose blood naturally supports those specific powers. A vampire must drink a point of Blood from her teacher in order to learn the 1st dot of a discipline that is not native to her own blood.

Disciplines at Creation

During character creation, a player assigns 4 dots of disciplines in the following manner:

- Assign 2 dots to a single in-clan discipline.
- Assign 1 dot in each of your character's remaining two in-clan disciplines.

During character creation you may choose to purchase additional dots of disciplines, both in-clan and out-of-clan. Your character does not need a teacher for these purchases.

When you finish creating your character, the Storyteller may assign a lump sum of XP, based on the chronicle's overall power level and the character's background. Speak to your Storyteller to determine if she requires you to have background ties with other characters in the game, representing your character's teachers, for any additional dots of out-of-clan disciplines you wish to purchase with this XP.

For more information about disciplines, see **Chapter Four: Disciplines on page 111**.

Step Eight: Choose Merits and Flaws

Merits

Merits are special abilities or advantages that are rare or unique in the general vampire population. Each merit has a specific cost associated with it. You may purchase up to 7 points of merits; this maximum of 7 merit points includes any merits purchased earlier in the creation process (such as uncommon clans, rare clans, or bloodline merits). Your character can never have more than 7 points of merits across all categories.

Clan and Bloodline Merits:

If you choose to portray an uncommon or rare clan, or if you choose to portray a member of a specific bloodline, you must buy the associated merit. Bloodline merits are unique, you cannot be a member of more than one bloodline.

For more information on general merits, please see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 248**.

For more information on bloodline merits, please see your clan description in **Chapter Two: Introduction to the World of Darkness, The Clans on page 41**.

Flaws

Flaws are liabilities or disadvantages that pose challenges to a character's nightly existence. Flaws can provide player characters with added depth and personality, making them unique.

Each flaw has a specific value associated with it. When you choose a flaw, add the flaw's value to your initial XP. If you aquire a flaw after character creation, add the flaw's value to your earned XP, up to a total of 7. You may take as many flaws as you like, but you can only gain 7 XP from taking flaws. Flaws taken in excess of 7 do not reward the player with additional XP.

For more information, please see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws on page 235**.

Step Nine: Spending XP

Initial XP

Your character begins with a minimum of 30 initial XP. Your Storyteller may award more than the standard 30 if she wants her chronicle to include more experienced characters.

You may have spent some of your initial XP on merits, and you may have gained more initial XP by purchasing flaws. Any remaining initial XP should be spent now.

With your initial XP, you may:

- Purchase more attributes, skills, or backgrounds.
- Purchase additional dots of Generation. You must purchase the Generation background at the XP cost of the *new* Generation. For example, if you assigned one of your starting background dots to Generation, and would thus be a Neonate, and you wish to play a Pretender Elder, you would need to spend XP as follows: Neonate to Ancilla (new level x2) costs 4 XP, Ancilla to Pretender Elder (new level x2) costs 6 XP = 10 XP to go from Neonate to Pretender Elder.
- Purchase more dots of your in-clan disciplines.
- Purchase up to 3 dots in common out-of-clan disciplines.
- Purchase in-clan elder powers (if your Generation allows them).
- Purchase techniques (if your Generation allows them, and you meet the prerequisites).
- Purchase another dot of Morality.

You cannot purchase more than the 3rd dot of an out-of-clan discipline with initial XP. When purchasing out-of-clan disciplines with initial XP, you can only purchase common disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Celerity, Dominate, Fortitude, Obfuscate, Potence, and Presence. You do not require a teacher to learn out-of-clan disciplines at character creation, as long as you can justify being taught in your character's backstory. (Your Storyteller has final say over whether or not you can justify discipline instruction

in your backstory). For more information on settings see **Chapter One: Introduction, page 18**.

If you do not spend all of your initial XP during character creation, you may bank up to 5 points. Banked experience becomes earned XP. You may not bank more than 5 of your initial XP. If you complete character creation with more than 5 unspent XP, the remainder is lost.

Earned XP

As you play your character at games, you will earn experience points (XP) with which you can enhance your character sheet. You can spend XP to purchase new attributes, skills, backgrounds, merits, and disciplines, improving your character and allowing her to "learn" as she goes through stories and experiences in the game.

XP Chart

The costs for improving attributes, backgrounds, skills, merits, and disciplines are the same for both earned and initial XP.

Generation	Item	Cost
All	Attribute	3 XP each
	In-Clan Discipline	New level x3 XP
	Regain Lost Humanity	10 XP each
	Merit	XP equal to merit rating
	Ritual: Necromancy or Thaumaturgy	Level of ritual to be purchased x2
Neonate	Background	New level x1
	Skill	New level x1
	Out-of-Clan Discipline	New level x4 XP
	Technique	12 XP each
Ancilla	Background	New level x2
	Skill	New level x2
	Out-of-Clan Discipline	New level x4 XP
	Technique	12 XP each
Pretender Elder	Background	New level x2
	Skill	New level x2
	Out-of-Clan Discipline	New level x4 XP
	Technique	20 XP each
	In-Clan Elder Power	18 XP (limit one total, whether in-clan or out-of-clan)
	Out-of-Clan Elder Power	24 XP (limit one total, whether in-clan or out-of-clan)
Master Elder	Background	New level x2
	Skill	New level x2
	Out-of-Clan Discipline	New level x4 XP
	In-Clan Elder Power	18 XP
	Out-of-Clan Elder Power	24 XP
Luminary Elder	Background	New level x2
	Skill	New level x2
	Out-of-Clan Discipline	New level x5 XP
	In-Clan Elder Power	18 XP
	Out-of-Clan Elder Power	30 XP

Remember that there are two items you cannot buy with earned XP: dots of Generation and bloodline merits. These two items must be purchased during character creation with initial XP, and cannot change during the course of a chronicle except under rare circumstances, such as diablerie.

Earned XP may be used to purchase out-of-clan disciplines above the 3rd dot and may be used to purchase uncommon and rare out-of-clan disciplines. To purchase an out-of-clan discipline with earned XP, you must have a teacher. For more information on learning out-of-clan disciplines, see **Chapter Four: Disciplines on page 111**.

XP for Playing

Storytellers should award between 3 and 5 XP per game. For large chronicles that run multiple games per month, XP should not exceed between 8 and 10 XP per month. For more information about awarding XP, see **Chapter Eight: Storytelling, page 348**.

Step Ten: Finishing Touches

Once you have spent your initial XP, your character is complete. It is now time to write down your character's derived qualities. These are items that come from other statistics on your sheet.

- Your character's Generation determines her Blood pool and Blood per round (see **Blood on page 293**).
- All characters start with nine health levels, in three tracks. You have three Healthy, three Injured, and three Incapacitated health levels. For more information about health levels, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, Health and Damage on page 285.**
- All characters begin with 6 permanent Willpower. Merits may alter your character's Willpower, depending upon the situation. Be sure to make note of this and any other alterations to your character sheet based on merits and flaws.

Morality

Vampires constantly struggle against their monstrous natures. The internal conflict between human and Beast is a central theme of Vampire. A character's Morality indicates how the vampire deals with the Beast's predatory urges, demanding hunger, and quick-tempered rage. A character with a high Morality has a strong hold over her Beast, leashing the monster within by following a strict set of ethics.

A character's Morality rating reflects her ability to adhere to a code of ethics, whether those ethics include Humanity's innate distinctions between good and evil, or a Path of Enlightenment's manufactured principles. A high Morality rating indicates that the character lives very strictly according to her ethics. This character is more emotionally stable, but risks losing ground to the Beast even with relatively trivial violations of that code.

A low Morality rating indicates that the character has often violated her ethical code, thus giving the Beast more power over her behavior. Such a character has become jaded, uncaring, and rarely feels remorse or regret for any vile behavior she may perform. Such characters only surrender further ground to their Beasts when they commit extreme violations of their ethical codes, but when they do, they are empowering an already strong and ravenous Beast. They risk losing control forever, and entering a state of permanent frenzy known as *wassail*.

Morality also determines how well your character manages problems associated with the bestial nature of vampires, such as staying awake during the day, rising from torpor, or dealing with mortals. A character with a high Humanity appears virtually indistinguishable from a mortal; she has a healthy flush to her skin, she blinks at normal intervals, and she feels cool to the touch rather than ice-cold. Humans do not instinctively mistrust them or notice their vampiric condition.

A character with a low Humanity rating is extremely pale, she has an obviously feral bearing, her autonomic functions (breathing and blinking) cease entirely, and her flesh is as cold as that of a corpse. Humans and other vampires instinctively feel nervous around such an individual, as the vampire's predatory nature is very close to the surface.

Humanity

Most vampires adhere to the Morality that they were taught as a mortal. This Morality is called *Humanity*, and it reflects the common ethics and values of human culture. This Morality disapproves of killing, stealing, or harming others, and encourages kindness and unselfish behavior as its highest virtues. It is instinctive to the human condition and therefore easier to follow. All characters begin with 5 dots of Morality in Humanity. Players may purchase their Humanity up to 6; this level is referred to as "saintly," (a very challenging rating to maintain). Characters who regularly commit sins may lose Humanity. For more information on Humanity, please see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 299**.

Paths of Enlightenment

A few vampires, those with extreme determination, have left Humanity to follow a Path of Enlightenment. Paths, called "Roads" in ancient times, are artificially created ethical codes that espouse a different set of virtues and sins. These paths are not instinctive to the human condition and require constant vigilance and dedication. It is easier for a character to fall from a Path of Enlightenment, as the character (and the player) must constantly adhere to a set of values that radically differ from standard human belief.

Paths of Enlightenment espouse utterly alien viewpoints and bear little resemblance to innate human values. Characters on a path have strange ethics about stealing, killing, or lying. They do not value kindness, compassion, or mercy, and they tend to disregard common courtesy and polite social interaction. Such values are meaningless and no longer guide the character's behaviors.

Those vampires who successfully place themselves on a Path of Enlightenment are forever changed. Their values and personalities are radically shifted, and their actions, morals, and choices are now guided only by their paths. Such a vampire is barely recognizable as the person she was before she transferred to the Path of Enlightenment. Her new values wholly subsume the individual's original personality and deepest beliefs. A player must purchase the appropriate merit in order for her character to follow an alternate Morality. Paths can be draining and difficult to play. They are best portrayed by experienced players, who are prepared to embody the alien and inhuman qualities of such a vampire.

Paths of Enlightenment are rare in some settings. Check with your Storyteller for more information about what is appropriate to her chronicle. For more information on Paths of Enlightenment, please see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 305**.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Four: Disciplines

Disciplines are supernatural powers granted by the Embrace. Vampires cultivate these powers and bring them to bear against foes and prey. Fueled by blood and will, disciplines provide an incomparable, mystical edge and are the hallmarks of a vampire's clan or bloodline.

By using her disciplines, a vampire can exert the strength of a dozen humans; trick an enemy into submission; force her way into someone else's mind; take the shape of a wolf, bat, or hideous monstrosity — or numerous other things. A recently Embraced vampire might have only a few such powers at her command, while an ancient may have mastered a fearsome breadth of potent feats. Elders can learn awesome powers, fueled by the potency of their blood. Neonates and Ancillae use the flexibility of their thinner blood to combine two or more disciplines and create new techniques that are a mélange of powers.

Each vampiric clan possesses innate powers of the blood: disciplines that are native to that clan. A vampire can learn those powers easily through experimentation and personal study; this process requires you to spend 1 downtime action between game sessions. Learning other clans' disciplines is more difficult; it requires having a knowledgeable teacher and drinking blood from a vampire who innately possesses those disciplines. As drinking blood causes a vampire to become partially bound to the donor, learning disciplines from another vampire requires a great deal of trust.

Learning Disciplines

When you choose your character's clan, the character gains access to that clan's three innate disciplines. If you choose to purchase a bloodline merit, the clan's native disciplines may be altered to reflect the differences between that bloodline and the pure blood of the parent clan.

At character creation, you assign one of your character's native, or "in-clan" disciplines 2 dots and 1 dot to each of your character's two remaining in-clan disciplines. You can then use initial experience points (XP) and XP gained from flaws to purchase additional dots of the character's in-clan

Common Disciplines

In most settings, the "common" vampiric disciplines are Animalism, Auspex, Celerity, Dominate, Fortitude, Obfuscate, Potence, and Presence. When we refer to a character purchasing common disciplines, these are the disciplines we mean. Speak to your Storyteller for more information on common disciplines in her setting.

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disciplines. With the Storyteller's permission, you may also buy the first 3 dots of non-native, "out-of-clan" disciplines, so long as those disciplines are common to the setting. You cannot purchase more than 3 dots of a specific out-of-clan discipline (though you may buy more than one out-of-clan), nor may you buy rare disciplines during character creation.

After character creation, you can freely purchase your character's in-clan disciplines with XP.

To learn 1 or more dots of an out-of-clan discipline:

- The student must find a teacher who possesses the desired discipline in-clan, and has mastered at least the level she wishes to learn.
- The student must drink a point of Blood from the teacher to awaken the potential to learn a discipline not innate to the student's clan. If the student already possesses a dot of the discipline to be learned, she may skip this step. The student cannot learn other powers or disciplines from the ingestion of this Blood.
- The teacher must spend 1 point of Willpower for every power to be taught, and inform the student which discipline (and which powers) he is teaching her.
- The teacher must be in contact with the student and must give her instruction from time to time, but teaching does not consume a downtime action. The student must actively train, and, therefore, must spend 1 downtime action per power to be learned.
- The student must spend the XP to purchase the power or powers.
- The student need only drink 1 point of Blood from the teacher to gain the capability to learn all of the powers of a given Discipline, even if learning from multiple vampires. The individual powers still need to be taught and learned separately. The Blood ingested counts towards the blood bound.

Each dot of Willpower spent by a teacher in this manner refreshes after playing two game sessions or after one month (whichever is longer). After spending 2 Willpower in this manner, the teacher will regain 1 Willpower after two game sessions/one month; she will then regain the 2nd Willpower two game sessions/one month after regaining the first, and so forth.

Once a character has activated an out-of-clan discipline by learning the first power, she does not need to drink more blood in order to learn additional levels of that discipline. Even after the blood bond fades, she still retains the ability learn more. However, she will need further instruction (and more Willpower expenditures) from a qualified teacher who possesses the discipline in-clan. This may be a different teacher than the one who initially taught her in the first place.

Example:

Barnabus the Brujah has 4 dots of Potence and wishes to teach Potence to Tanya the Toreador. Potence is an in-clan discipline for Brujah. Tanya drinks 1 point of Barnabus's Blood, thus activating Potence within her own blood. She now has one month to learn the discipline. Barnabus then spends 1 Willpower, and Tanya spends a downtime action. Lastly, they inform their Storyteller that Barnabus is teaching Tanya the first power of Potence.

After playing in two games, Barnabus recovers his spent Willpower. Tanya wants to learn more Potence, and Barnabus agrees to teach her. Tanya will not need to drink another point of Blood; she has permanently activated Potence in her blood by successfully learning the 1st dot of the discipline.

Barnabus could choose to spend 3 Willpower and teach Tanya the next 3 dots of Potence all at once (assuming Tanya has enough earned XP to purchase those powers). If he did so, Barnabus would be 3 Willpower down for two games (or one month); 2 Willpower down for four games (or two months), and 1 Willpower down for six games (or three months). After that, Barnabus's Willpower would be back to normal.

Barnabus will be unable to teach Tanya the 5th dot of Potence until he purchases it himself.

Necromancy and Thaumaturgy

Thaumaturgy and Necromancy cannot be learned as easily as other disciplines. To purchase a path of Thaumaturgy or Necromancy, your character must possess a specific merit that allows her to do so, such as the *Thamaturgic Training* merit (or a similar clan-specific Thaumaturgy/Necromancy merit) and justify the education in your character's background. If you wish to purchase Thaumaturgy or Necromancy after your character enters play, you must purchase the merit during play. For more information on these specific merits, see Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, Necromantic Training (page 252) and Thaumaturgic Training (page 253).

Elder Powers and Techniques

Characters with the correct generation (8th, 7th, or 6th generation) can learn elder powers. Learning an elder power requires your character to go through the same steps as learning other powers of that discipline.

To learn an in-clan elder power, your character only needs to go through the process of experimentation and personal study. Learning an out-of-clan elder power requires a teacher who has that discipline in-clan and knows the specific elder power in question. A character cannot teach a specific power she has not mastered. Further, the instructor must spend 1 point of Willpower, and the student must spend a downtime action and the required XP, as per the steps of learning any discipline.

Techniques, on the other hand, do not require a teacher. A character who possesses the prerequisite powers for a technique can naturally develop it by spending a downtime action and the required XP, as if the technique were native to the character's blood.

Using Disciplines

The following general rules apply to all discipline use:

- Discipline powers do not cost Blood to activate, unless specifically stated in the description of that power.
- A power's effect can only be focused on one target at a time, unless specifically stated in the description of that power.
- Unless otherwise stated, a power doesn't stack with itself. For example, if you have a power that can be activated to give your character a +1 bonus, you cannot activate that power a second time and double the bonus to gain a +2.
- Any discipline that has a cost to activate, such as Blood or actions, lasts for one hour unless otherwise stated in that discipline's text.
- By default, a vampire must be able to see a target clearly in order to use a power on that target.
  - › Sensory-enhancing powers may allow a vampire to target subjects at a distance (outside the range of normal sight).
  - › Technological assistance is not sufficient to target powers at a distance. The target must be observed with the vampire's own senses or powers. Use of binoculars, sound amplifiers, video cameras, or other such gear cannot be used to target a power.
- Unless otherwise stated, a user can cease using a power by spending a simple action.
- Discipline descriptions are written as though vampires are using these powers. However, unless specifically noted otherwise, the descriptions include ghouls, revenants, or other supernatural characters that can possess and use the powers.
- For the purposes of discipline descriptions, partially supernatural characters (such as ghouls and revenants) are considered "mortal." If a power is described as having a greater effect on mortals, it will also have that greater effect on ghouls.
- The discipline's test pool (noted in the initial description of the discipline) applies to all powers within that discipline, including elder powers. It does not necessarily apply to techniques; refer to each technique to determine its individual test pool.

A number of discipline powers refer to situational modifiers, such as relenting, wound penalties, and line of sight. For more information and an explanation of those terms, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 271**.

Gaze and Focus

Many disciplines require the target to have her attention focused on the user of the power. These powers do not require eye contact, but do require having the attention of the individual you wish to control. Anyone whose attention is focused on you is a viable target for powers that require gaze or focus. This includes individuals that are looking into your eyes, holding a conversation with you, attacking you, or

Optional Rule

Storytellers may wish rare disciplines to be more difficult to teach and learn. At the Storyteller's discretion, she may require 2 downtime actions to learn rare disciplines. Alternately, she may require three games to pass before each point of the teacher's Willpower returns.

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using a power on you, so long as you are the immediate center of her attention. Over the centuries, many individuals have attempted creative ways to avoid making eye contact, but the powers of the blood are not so easily thwarted. Gaze and Focus only requires having the attention of the individual you wish to target.

It is possible for a single person to focus on two or more individuals. If supernatural powers are used to make you pay attention to two different characters at the same time, you might glance back and forth between them or move to a place where you could see both characters at the same time.

Familiarity with the Target

Several powers require you to be familiar with your target. To meet the requirements of familiarity, you must have met your target on at least three separate occasions, and you must have had a conversation with your target for at least five minutes on one occasion. In addition to these requirements, you must have interacted with your target within the past 30 days in order to remain familiar with that target. If you recently met your target at a gathering, spoke to her over the phone, or exchanged letters with her, then you are currently familiar. If you have known the target for 100 years on-and-off, but have not interacted with her within the last 30 days, then she is not currently familiar to you.

Transformative Powers

Powers that significantly alter a character's physical shape, such as turning into a wolf or shifting into a monstrous war-form, are called *transformative powers*. A character cannot combine two transformative powers; you can only be in one altered shape at a time. For example, a character cannot combine the effects of Shape of the Beast with the effects of Black Metamorphosis. You may either transform into a wolf or have shadowy black tentacles, but not both.

Some powers that physically alter a character are not transformative. Using Feral Claws, Heightened Senses, or a cosmetic use of Fleshcraft to change your face alters a vampire very little, and as such, can be used in conjunction with a transformative power. A character in Shape of the Beast might be Fleshcrafted to appear as a red wolf rather than a grey wolf, or she could use Eyes of the Beast while in wolf form. However, the character could not utilize Shape of the Beast while utilizing Horrid Form.

Transformative powers do not prevent you from using non-transformative powers, so long as the new form has the capacity to meet all prerequisites. Thaumaturgy relies on speech, as do many Dominate powers, and most animals cannot shape human words. A character in Mist Form or Tenebrous Form has no face with which to show her vampiric countenance, and, therefore, cannot utilize Dread Gaze.

When you activate a transformative power that changes you from a humanoid into an animal, or into Horrid Form's gargantuan monstrosity, clothing and small personal items disappear. These return when you regain human form. Some transformative powers, such as Divine Image, do not alter a character's basic humanoid shape. Clothing and equipment are unaffected by these powers. By default, a character cannot use weapons while transformed. However, specific transformations do allow you to fight with weapons. This will be noted in the power's text.

Injuries transfer seamlessly between altered forms. If a character with one eye transforms into a wolf, the animal would also have one eye. If a power withers one of your limbs when you are in wolf form, the corresponding limb will be withered when you transform back.

Unless otherwise stated in a power's description, it requires a simple action to end a transformative power. Transformative powers automatically end if you go to sleep, become unconscious, or fall into torpor, but do not end if you are staked.

Focuses

Most powers have a focus effect. Focus effects are bonus abilities granted to characters who possess the correct focus. If your character purchases a power and has the correct attribute focus, she can attain additional benefits when using that power. For example, a character with 3 dots of Stealth can normally use Cloak the Gathering to extend her invisibility to effect up to three nearby allies. If the character using Cloak the Gathering is Intelligence-focused, she gets the focus bonus of that power and can instead extend the effect to up to six allies. Focus bonuses come into play when the person using the power has the correct focus, regardless of whether her targets have the focus or not.

Animalism

"Being a predator requires more than physical brutality.
True savagery is a state of mind."

— Archon Gates

When a vampire is Embraced, her soul is burdened with a dark, primal instinct: the Beast. The Beast makes her a predator, driving her to savage acts in order to survive. Some vampires resist their Beasts, while others delight in their new, animalistic nature. By drawing on this feral instinct and

predatory drive, a vampire can communicate with and control animals, establishing a mastery over more primitive beasts.

Animalism can be used on birds, mammals, marsupials, and fish. It cannot be used on insects, nor on creatures whose minds are too simple to understand rudimentary communication, such as mollusks or worms.

Animalism Test Pool: The character wielding Animalism uses her Social attribute + Animal Ken versus the target's Social attribute + Willpower.

• Feral Whispers

Animals recognize you as a fellow predator and react with suspicion and fear. You can communicate with animals by murmuring to them in growls and using body language. Although an animal is not forced to obey you, it tends to respond favorably to individuals using this power.

System:

You can communicate with animals by murmuring to them in growls and using body language. To ask questions of an animal, consult your Storyteller. The Storyteller should respond from the point of view of a local animal that has been drawn by your howls, chirps, or other inquiring noises. A character who wishes to establish communication must be both visible and audible to the creature. You may speak to a specific animal, or you may use Feral Whispers to interrogate all local wildlife within hearing.

If there are no animals nearby, your queries may go unanswered. Further, if the Storyteller believes you are asking about something animals would not notice (or might not understand), your character may receive a confused or incomplete answer. Asking, "Have any two-legged creatures (human or vampire) passed through here tonight?" will likely receive a reasonable answer. The local chipmunks, stray dogs, or birds could tell you that a pack of six men walked by, and that they were here very recently. However, such animals would be unable to tell one human from another, nor identify the kind of equipment they were carrying.

Focus [Charisma]:

You don't need to growl or gesture to make yourself understood. Your Beast can communicate directly with the minds of nearby animals. However, such animals must be able to see you while you utilize this power. Additionally, you no longer need to rely on the animal's ability to utilize language. When you use this power, you get a mental image of any situation an animal attempts to describe. For example, you would see a memory of the Prince walking to his car, rather than hear a rat's description and interpretation of what it witnessed.

•• Beckoning

By uttering a howl, a series of chirrups, or some other identifiable animal noise, you summon animals to your location. Depending on how you call, you can select the size and type of animal common to the area. Although these animals are not your slaves, they are relatively friendly toward you and will attempt to assist you with whatever you command.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to summon up to five small animals, three medium animals, or one large animal. You determine the type (and size) of the animals. Normally, these animals will arrive over the course of the next 10 minutes. However, if you choose to summon animals that are particularly common in your area, it may take less time. Summoning especially rare animals may take longer (at the Storyteller's discretion). Attempting to summon creatures that do not exist within the locale (such as calling a polar bear in the Egyptian desert) will have no result.

Summoned animals are not granted any unusual power to answer your call and must be able to travel to your location. A coyote cannot open a locked door, but will arrive in the parking lot, while a crow could more easily fulfill a rooftop summons. This power confers no special abilities, intelligence, or courage to the animals summoned.

Summoned animals consider you an alpha of their breed. If you use Feral Whispers to communicate, Beckoned animals will attempt to obey your requests. They will work for you until dawn or until they take damage equal to their NPC rating.

Multiple uses of this power do not allow you to summon additional packs of creatures while still controlling the first. However, if your original group of Beckoned creatures is disbanded (by taking damage, fleeing, or dismissal), you can utilize this power again to summon a second pack. Further, Beckoning cannot be used to control animals that are currently under the effect of another practitioner's use of the Animalism discipline (though you may use Feral Whispers to speak with such animals).

Animals summoned with Beckoning are created using the Retainer rules, with the following additional guidelines:

- *Small Animals*: Use the rules for 1-point Retainers. Small animals may possess one unusual movement ability. This movement ability allows them to climb, swim, fly, or burrow at their normal movement rate. Small animals include small dogs, cats, and squirrels, as well as most birds, fish, or moles.

- *Medium Animals*: Use the rules for 3-point Retainers. This category includes larger dogs, brown bears, coyotes, and bobcats.

- *Large Animals*: Use the rules for a 5-point Retainer. The summoner might Beckon a horse, a stag, or a grizzly bear.

Before going to sleep or entering torpor, you can spend 1 Blood to activate this power. If used in this way, the animals summoned by this power will guard your resting place until they are killed or you wake.

Focus [Charisma]:

When you summon creatures using this power, apply one of the following additional effects. If you summon more than one creature, the chosen effect applies to each creature you have summoned (all are cunning, or can fly, and so forth).

- *Unusual Movement*: You may summon a group of medium-sized creatures that possess the ability to swim or fly at normal speeds (such as a vulture, eagle, or salmon); or you may summon a single large-sized creature that possesses the ability to swim at normal speeds (such as a shark or dolphin).

- *Cunning*: You can Beckon an animal with extraordinary cunning for its breed. This animal is capable of understanding and following more complex instructions. You can give if/then commands, such as "Stay by this door while I sneak inside. Bark once if you see a man approaching, and twice if you see a woman." This animal is a standard example of its type for all other purposes.

- *Swarm*: You summon a large number of small animals. These might be rats, crows, piranha or similar creatures; remember that Animalism cannot affect insects. A swarm is built using the normal Retainer rules, and a swarm is considered a single creature for the purpose of combat. A swarm moves slowly (one step per action), and killing a single animal has little effect on the overall swarm. To overcome a swarm, you must inflict twice the normal amount of damage necessary to defeat a standard Retainer of its size. A large animal has 5 health levels, whereas a large-sized swarm has 10.

●●● Quell the Beast

A vampiric Beast is a fierce creature, eager to seek dominance and act on primitive, violent impulses. However, the Beast can be tamed, or even cowed, by those who know how to master those impulses. Some vampires utilize this power as an alpha would to a lesser creature, forcing her Beast into quiescence. Others soothe their target's emotions, lulling the opponent's Beast into a sleepy peacefulness. Whatever the method, the result is the same, and the vampire must temporarily survive without the sharp instincts of her Beast.

System:

The target of this power must be a vampire or other supernatural creature capable of frenzy.

When you are the focus of another character's attention (as per Gaze and Focus), you can spend 1 Blood, expend a standard action, and make an opposed challenge using the Animalism test pool. If the target was in frenzy when this power was successfully used, she immediately falls out of frenzy.

If the target of your Quell the Beast was not in frenzy, she becomes incapable of entering frenzy for the next hour. Further, her Willpower is sapped, and she must spend 2 Willpower (instead of 1) to retest challenges for the remainder of this turn and for the next full turn.

A vampire's Beast is a critical part of her predatory nature. When it is somnambulant, the vampire is slower to react. If an individual has a Beast trait (or gains a Beast trait) while under the effect of Quell the Beast, she struggles to use Willpower for a longer period of time. For the next five minutes, she must continue to spend 2 Willpower instead of 1 to retest challenges.

Characters with merits or powers that allow them to make retests without spending Willpower can use those merits normally while under the effect of Quell the Beast and do not spend an additional point of Willpower to use those retests.

Quell the Beast cannot be used on yourself.

Exceptional Success:

The Willpower-sapping effect of Quell the Beast lasts for the rest of this turn and for the next two full turns (rather than one).

Focus [Manipulation]:

Instead of having to spend additional Willpower to retest, the victim is unable to use Willpower retests at all for the duration of this power.

●●●● Subsume the Spirit

The Beast is a palpable thing, capable of influencing the minds and spirits of other animals. Not only can you cause lesser creatures to be cowed, you can actually send your consciousness into an animal's body, subsuming it completely. The animal's

body becomes wholly compliant to your will, and you can utilize it as though it were your natural form. While your spirit rides within the body of the animal, your own physical form falls into a comatose state. Although you can utilize the full scope of your intelligence, cunning, and memories, you are limited by the physical capabilities of the animal.

System:

To use Subsume the Spirit, you must spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to stare into the eyes of an animal; this power will not function on blind subjects or subjects who cannot see your eyes. Make an opposed challenge against the animal you intend to control. If successful, your consciousness is transferred into the target's body, and its mind is rendered into a fugue-like state. Because your character's mind is focused entirely on controlling the body she has inhabited, the vampire has no sense of anything occurring to her native physical form. The character's original body falls into a torpid state and can neither defend itself nor act on its own. Your body does retain your Fortitude or other powers that are always active while your consciousness is absent. While Subsuming the Spirit, you always know the direction and distance of your real body, although you cannot perceive its surroundings.

Normal and ghouled animals can be targeted with Subsume the Spirit. Supernatural creatures (such as vampires transformed into an animal or werewolves) cannot be targeted by Subsume the Spirit. Be sure to ask your Storyteller if you have a question about whether a creature is an appropriate target for this power.

Normal animals have no disciplines and cannot spend Blood. However, if your character is controlling a ghouled animal, the ghoul holds up to 5 points of vampiric Blood (as per a standard ghoul). The controlling vampire may spend this Blood pool at a rate of 1 Blood per turn, regardless of the character's generation. You cannot spend this Blood to affect your character's native form in any manner.

A character cannot use any of her own disciplines while using Subsume the Spirit. You can spend the ghoul's Blood to fuel the ghoul's Physical powers: Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence.

While using Subsume the Spirit, a character uses her own Mental attributes and focuses, Social attributes and focuses, Skills, and Backgrounds in challenges. However, you utilize the Physical attribute of the animal for any Physical challenges. This attribute is equal to double that animal's NPC rating. If the animal you are controlling has the power to fly or is adapted to aquatic life (like a fish), you gain its ability to fly or swim at normal speeds.

Subsume the Spirit lasts until the next sunrise, or until you spend a simple action for your character to leave the animal and awaken. Subsume the Spirit ends immediately if the character travels more than 10 miles away from her native body, if the character's native body takes damage, or if the animal she's controlling takes damage.

Animals do not take damage from sunlight even when controlled by a vampire. However, a vampire with Beast traits still risks frenzy. For more information on frenzy, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 301**.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You can use the first 2 dots of your Mental and Social in-clan disciplines while employing Subsume the Spirit. If you are controlling a ghouled animal, you can spend up to 5 Blood to fuel these in-clan disciplines, at the rate of 1 Blood a turn, regardless of the character's generation. Vampires with this focus who have Animalism in-clan can activate Subsume the Spirit while in Subsume the Spirit, thus transferring directly from one animal body to another. Each new use of Subsume the Spirit requires 1 Blood point, a standard action, eye-to-eye contact, and an opposed challenge (as per the standard use of this power).

●●●●● Drawing Out the Beast

Through your keen understanding of your own predatory nature and instincts, you have reached a communion with your Beast. Although none would call the monster tamed, the ability to willfully unleash or restrain your Beast is fearsome and can provide a vampire with a great advantage.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a simple action to immediately cause your character to fall out of frenzy. Alternately, you may spend 1 Blood and expend a simple action to instantly launch your character into a rage frenzy.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You can use Drawing Out the Beast to enter frenzy, even when you would otherwise be unable to do so, such as when you are affected by powers like Quell the Beast. Additionally, while in a rage frenzy, your character receives a +3 bonus to all Physical attack test pools (instead of the standard +1 bonus). Your character still suffers the standard -2 penalty to Physical defense pools while in frenzy.

Auspex

"I touched the knife, and a wave of emotions and memories washed through me. I saw her, Donny. I saw her as they were chopping her apart…"

— Warren Yam, Toreador Primogen of Dallas

A predator's senses must be tremendously acute to track prey in the night. The five senses of smell, touch, taste, sight, and hearing can all be sharpened with the use of Auspex. This improved awareness can even go beyond the physical senses, expanding a vampire's powers of concentration, perception, and consciousness itself beyond the ability of mortals. Such heightened awareness can grasp subtle textures of movement as well as emotional states, transcending ordinary mental acuity. Auspex can also pierce mental distractions and illusions, such as those created by the disciplines of Obfuscate or Chimeristry.

Auspex and Obfuscate/Chimeristry: If you are attempting to use Heightened Senses to pierce supernatural concealment, your target may opt to use her Mental attribute + Stealth as a defensive test pool rather than her Mental attribute + Willpower. If you are attempting to pierce an illusion, your target may opt to use her Social attribute + Subterfuge instead of her Social attribute + Willpower.

If the Auspex user is successful, she pierces the powers of Obfuscate or Chimeristry.

Auspex Test Pool: The vampire wielding Auspex uses her Mental attribute + Investigation versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

• Heightened Senses

You can extend your physical senses beyond human norms. Eyesight and hearing can sharpen to twice mortal limits, while touch, smell, and taste become acute enough to discern even the smallest details with ease. A character can sharpen any or all of her senses, as desired.

System:

Heightened Senses is always active.

A character's heightened vision allows her to see clearly, even in total darkness, and to understand sounds too quiet for normal people to hear. When a character with Heightened Senses comes within two steps of an individual hidden by supernatural concealment, such as Obfuscate, the character with Heightened Senses automatically realizes that someone is nearby, although she does not know who or precisely where to find that someone. Heightened Senses provides only a vague warning that something is out of place.

When something blinds you, your hearing can provide adequate compensation for the loss of vision. Normally, characters who cannot see while in combat must use the Fighting Blind combat maneuver. So long as your character's hearing is unimpaired, you may fight without needing the Fighting Blind combat maneuver.

If you spend 1 point of Blood and take a standard action, your character sharpens her senses even further. If you do so, you will automatically notice any mundanely hidden objects within line of sight, and you may make an opposed challenge using the Auspex test pool to discern the details of any person or object hidden with supernatural powers, as well as illusionary objects, or objects or people disguised by supernatural powers. If you pierce a supernatural power in this way, you ignore uses of the same power generated by the same user for the next five minutes. If you possess more dots of Auspex than the target possesses of the power she's using to generate the concealment (or illusion), the effects of piercing a power persist for an hour instead of five minutes.

Exceptional Success:

If you score an exceptional success when trying to see through supernatural concealment, you will automatically pierce any supernatural concealment (or illusion) created by the same individual for the next hour.

Focus [Perception]:

A Perception-focused character sharpens her senses by spending a simple action, rather than a standard action.

•• Aura Perception

By carefully studying a subject, you can pick out the glowing aura that surrounds all living creatures. The interplay of colors in an aura provides insight into the subject's emotions, motives, and nature. With practice, you can learn to read these colors. On a normal evening, an individual aura might be comprised of many shifting hues; strong emotions predominate, while momentary impressions or hidden motivations flash past in streaks and swirls. The colors change in sympathy with the subject's emotional state, blending into new tones in a constantly changing pattern. The stronger the emotions involved, the more intense an aura's hues become.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend a standard action to make an opposed challenge against your target. If you succeed, your character can read the details of a target's aura. Typically, this scrutiny is visual, but any appropriate physical sense may be used.

If you are successful, you can discern your target's creature type (vampire, ghoul, vampire possessing a mortal, and so forth), general mood, any immediate violent tendencies, and whether or not the target has diablerized within the past year. This power does not allow the user to read minds or to discern the truth.

If you fail the opposed challenge, your target's aura is too murky to make out clearly. Details are vague, and no particular color or pattern seems dominant.

The Blood cost to activate Aura Perception is waived if the target relents to the challenge.

Exceptional Success:

For the next hour, you continue to perceive the target's aura without further Blood expenditure or challenges. If her mood shifts or she becomes aggressive, you'll have advanced warning. Mechanically, if your target starts a combat, you may take your simple action before she can take any action. This forewarning does not give you an additional action, but allows you to take your simple action early.

Focus [Perception]:

If your target is within three steps, your character spends no Blood to activate Aura Perception, whether the target is willing or not. If the target is unwilling, you must still make an opposed challenge to use this power.

●●● Spirit's Touch

Living creatures leave behind traces of thoughts and emotions like a rippled wake of water. With this power, a character can read the psychic impressions on recently handled objects or locations that have strong emotional events tied to them. A touch and a moment of concentration can unlock a flood of images and sensations, possibly giving insight into the past.

Note that you can only use this power on objects or places, and not on people, vampires, animals, or other living creatures. The visions received by the use of this power are seldom clear or detailed, and register more like a "psychic snapshot." Still, a clever vampire can learn a great deal from a glimpse. Although most visions will reveal the last person to handle the item or be present in a location, a long-time owner may leave a stronger impression, and a long-ago trauma may overwhelm more recent events that transpire at a location.

To get a psychic impression, you must physically hold an item (or touch parts of a location) with your bare skin. As you do so, you enter a shallow trance and glean information from the spiritual residue on the object. You are only marginally aware of your surroundings while using Spirit's Touch, although a loud noise or jarring physical sensation will break the trance in an instant.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to touch an object. You can then ask the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every five minutes your character concentrates on the object or location:

- Show me the last person who handled the object.
  - › Your character receives a vision of the last person to use the object. The vision generally shows the last significant individual, not simply the most recent person who touched the item.
- How did the individual die?
  - › This question may only be asked when Spirit's Touch is used on a dead body (or part of a dead body). Your character receives a vision of the last few moments of the target's life.
- When (or how) was the object last used?
  - › Your character gains an image of the item's most recent use and target (a knife stabbing, with the victim's appearance; binoculars looking down, seeing the Prince's car; etc.). If the object was recently involved in an emotional event, such as a murder or a robbery, your character gets a brief glimpse of the emotion, and how it relates to the item.
- Are there any strong emotions attached to this object?
  - › If someone loves or hates the object, or if any deep emotions are relevant to the object's use, your character will receive such information. This information may be quite old, depending on the object's nature and associations.

Some objects or locations have particularly strong emotional connections. Your Storyteller may elect to provide one or more answers for free when a character uses Spirit's Touch on such an emotionally charged target. Characters using any level of Obfuscate who handle an object or visit a location do not leave psychic impressions.

For the purposes of this power, corpses (including the corpses of supernatural creatures and the ashes of vampires) count as objects and may be targeted by Spirit's Touch. Vampires who have not met Final Death do not count as corpses.

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Focus [Perception]:

When you activate Spirit's Touch, you may ask three questions instead of one.

●●●● Telepathy

Since the ancient days, mortal man has longed to hear the secrets sheltered in another person's mind, to speak and receive communication from the soul as well as the lips. Telepathy is the pure communication of thoughts, feelings, and desires, and those who can perform such a feat are powerful, indeed. By projecting your senses outward, you can pierce the minds of others, drawing forth their very thoughts. You can link your consciousness to another mind, sending or receiving concepts in the flicker-flash of thought.

System:

To activate Telepathy upon a willing target, simply spend 1 point of Blood. No challenge is required, and the target can be located anywhere within the same city (or 50-mile radius of your character's location). This application of Telepathy specifically does not require line of sight. Telepathy allows the character and her target to send and receive mental messages and simple images.

If you attempt to use Telepathy on an unwilling target, spend 1 point of Blood and make an opposed challenge against the target, who must be in line of sight. If you succeed, your character can send one image or a brief message (something you could say in less than 10 seconds) to the target. Alternately, your character may pull one image or specific piece of information out of the mind of an unwilling target. The information you gain in this way must answer one of the following questions (your choice):

- What are you currently thinking about?
- What does that person or thing you just described look like?
- Where is the person or object you were just talking about located?
- Do you like or dislike the person you're currently talking to?
- What are you planning to do in the next few minutes?

If a willing character becomes unwilling during a telepathic session, the character using Telepathy must immediately spend 1 point of Blood and succeed in an opposed challenge or be ejected from the now-unwilling character's mind.

When communicating with a willing target, a single use of Telepathy lasts for an hour, but you can only mentally communicate with one person at a time. If you activate Telepathy on a second target, the first contact immediately ends.

An individual cannot utilize other powers (such as the Dominate powers of Command, Mesmerism, or Forgetful Mind) in conjunction with Telepathy.

The telepath has the option to make herself known when communicating. Otherwise, the target can determine the identity of the telepath by succeeding in an opposed Awareness challenge.

Exceptional Success:

You can ask two of the above questions (rather than one) with each successful challenge when pulling information out of a target's mind.

Focus [Wits]:

You can maintain Telepathy with up to three willing targets, allowing you to carry on a conversation with all participants at the same time. Participants may talk to you or to each other through this telepathic contact. You must spend 1 Blood per target. To bring new individuals into a link, spend the Blood required. You may eject someone from the link without breaking your communication with any others involved.

●●●●● Psychic Projection

No longer confined to the physical plane, you can project your senses and awareness outside of your body. Thus untethered, your consciousness roams various planes of thought, allowing you to view the world as though you were an incorporeal spirit. Without the concerns of mass and matter, you easily pass through any physical barrier and move at the speed of thought to any place under the gaze of the moon.

System:

To activate Psychic Projection, you must spend 1 point of Blood and expend a standard action meditating. This expenditure allows the character to project her awareness outside of her physical form. While a character is in Psychic Projection, her body lies in a torpor-like state. If her body is damaged, the Psychic Projection automatically ends, and the individual's consciousness returns instantly to her physical form.

A character's Psychic Projection is an idealized version of her normal appearance. While this image may be clothed in golden robes, shine with a halo of silver light, or have shaggy fur, it's always recognizable as your character. A psychic form travels at roughly 50 miles per hour and can pass through solid objects, but cannot interact with the physical world in any way. The only powers you can use while in Psychic

Projection are the first 4 dots of Auspex; you cannot use other disciplines, elder powers of Auspex, or techniques (even those based on Auspex) while in this state.

A psychic form is invisible to those without Heightened Senses or similar supernatural abilities. You can spend 1 Blood to manifest (your torporous body expends this Blood), making your psychic form visible, as though materially present for one turn. While the character is still intangible and cannot physically interact, a manifested psychic form can be seen and heard normally and can be targeted by Mental and Social powers by those in the material world. Individuals with Heightened Senses or similar supernatural abilities can see the vague outline of an individual in Psychic Projection even when that individual has not manifested, but the observer cannot make out details, see gestures, or hear the projected character's voice unless she manifests.

Two individuals who are both in Psychic Projection can interact with one another normally, and may even engage in combat through punching or other unarmed Physical attacks. A successful blow from another psychic individual doesn't inflict damage; it instead costs the victim 1 Willpower. If the victim runs out of Willpower, her Psychic Projection immediately ends and cannot be reactivated for 10 minutes. Remember that only the first 4 dots of Auspex can be used in Psychic Projection; a character cannot use other powers (even against other projecting individuals) and possesses no equipment other than simple clothing while in this state.

Focus [Wits]:

In addition to Auspex, you may utilize the first 2 dots of any Mental or Social in-clan discipline you possess. This is an exception to the rule against using other disciplines while in Psychic Projection. Your character uses these powers normally when targeting others in the psychic plane. If your character manifests, she can also use these disciplines on targets in the material world while she is manifested.

Potence, Celerity, and Fortitude cannot ever be used while in Psychic Projection, nor can powers that require touch, unless used against other Psychically Projected individuals.

Celerity

"It was like the guy was teleporting. Ay, boss, you can't expect me to shoot a mook that's faster than my ammo!"

— Benito Giovanni

Throughout history, myths have described vampires as having preternatural speed and reflexes. They move in a blur, travel across surfaces that shouldn't be able to hold their weight, and strike between heartbeats when fighting. Celerity is the discipline of extraordinary speed and precision. When in need, a vampire can expend her Blood to fuel her actions, moving with startling quickness.

Celerity allows you to take additional actions. These extra actions resolve in a series of special rounds known as Celerity rounds. After resolving the everyman round of actions for all characters (performed in initiative order), the Storyteller progresses the combat into the first Celerity round. Each Celerity round is processed in initiative order. After all character actions on the first Celerity round are complete, the Storyteller progresses to a second Celerity round, and so forth, until all players involved have expended all of their actions.

The everyman round and all subsequent Celerity rounds comprise a single turn. Once all Celerity rounds have been resolved, the Storyteller begins a new turn, starting with a new everyman round and moving through Celerity rounds once more.

You can only take Physical actions during a Celerity round. Your character may move, attack, or activate a Physical power, but cannot engage in any Mental or Social challenges.

You must spend 1 Blood point to activate Celerity for the turn. That expenditure activates all Celerity powers you possess. Activating Celerity doesn't require an action and can be done at any time (even before your turn in the initiative order). Some Celerity-based techniques and elder powers require the expenditure of additional Blood or the use of an action to activate. If so, that requirement will be denoted in the individual power.

Each dot of Celerity represents an additional increase in physical speed, and each dot stacks with all mechanical bonuses granted by other dots of this discipline. If a character has Rapidity (Celerity •••), she has the bonuses granted by Rapidity, and also the bonuses granted by Alacrity (Celerity •) and Swiftness (Celerity ••), which she must possess to reach Rapidity.

Using Celerity at the Rapidity level or beyond is a breach of the Masquerade, should it be seen by mortals.

There is no standardized Celerity test pool.

Celerity and Temporis: A character who has purchased any amount of Celerity cannot purchase Temporis. Likewise, a character who has purchased any amount of Temporis can never purchase Celerity.

Focus [Dexterity]:

Anytime you activate Celerity, your character gains +2 to Dodge-based defensive test pools.

• Alacrity

You are capable of an incredibly fast response time. By activating Alacrity, you have the ability to make incredibly rapid movements, increasing both reaction speed and reflexes.

System:

When you spend Blood to activate Celerity, your initiative increases by the sum of all of the Celerity powers you possess, including Celerity elder powers and Celerity-based techniques.

•• Swiftness

Your body responds so quickly that the world around you seems to slow down. You can use this extra time to draw a bead, increasing your accuracy with ranged weapons.

System:

When making a ranged attack, you gain a +5 bonus to determine whether or not the attack scores an exceptional success. Additionally, when dodging, you receive a +5 bonus to your test pool for the purpose of comparing attributes to determine if your attacker has achieved an exceptional success.

••• Rapidity

You can move faster than humanly possible. Before a normal human can move or breathe, you are already acting a second time.

System:

When you activate Celerity, you gain an extra round of actions (one simple action and one standard action). Resolve these actions during the first Celerity round.

•••• Legerity

At this speed, you can move faster than the human eye can track clearly. You are a blur to those without this power, and your incredible speed allows for plenty of time to focus, aim, and fire.

System:

All of your Dodge-based defensive test pools receive a +2 wild card bonus while Celerity is active. This bonus stacks with the +2 Dodge bonuses granted by the Dexterity attribute focus. Additionally, when you score an exceptional success with a mundane ranged attack (one not related to any supernatural discipline) while Celerity is active, your character inflicts 2 additional points of damage instead of the standard 1 additional point.

••••• Fleetness

You can become a whirlwind of velocity, moving with preternatural speed. Your attacks are a blur of constant motion. You flit back and forth, appearing almost to blink in and out of focus as you fight.

System:

When you activate Celerity, you gain an extra round of actions (one simple action and one standard action). Resolve these actions during the second Celerity round.

Chimerstry

"Eternity is as ephemeral as breath, as fleeting as dream.
Seize what you can while you can, and never let go."

— Vassily Taltos

Chimerical illusions are shaped from the stuff of dreams, a quasi-substantial essence that members of the Ravnos clan call *maya*. Items made with this power are not real, but they are also not entirely insubstantial, as they are formed of the physical substance of dream. A chimerical gun has the appropriate weight and heft. A chimerical flag will sway in the wind and will cast a shadow. However, if a chimerical item is disbelieved, it loses all physical qualities — but only to the individual who successfully disbelieves.

A Chimerstry construct cannot physically deflect anything more substantial than a bright light or a slight breeze. Items or creatures made with this power cannot cause harm. Chimerical armor doesn't stop bullets, and a chimerical sword can't cut anything.

One of the most important things to remember about Chimerstry is this: illusions can add to the world, but they can never subtract from it. A character could create a chimerical wall and hide behind it, but could not use this power to create a hole in the ground, as Chimerstry cannot "subtract" the dirt that is present. A character cannot use Chimerstry to make items or people invisible, nor to duplicate the powers of Obfuscate. However, you can use Chimerstry to create a chimerical bucket to put over an item and thus hide it. This power cannot alter a character's overall appearance, as Mask of a Thousand Faces does, but it can change the color of a trenchcoat from red to blue.

Chimeristry is made of semi-tangible maya, mixed with the mind's willingness to believe what it can perceive. An illusionary wall can block your progress, but it is not substantial enough to support more than a few ounces of weight. An individual is blocked by a chimerical wall in large part because her mind will not allow her to pass that barrier. However, if a falling person grabs hold of an illusionary rope, it will fail to support her weight.

Disbelieving Chimerstry:

Recognizing that something is chimerical is not the same as disbelieving the illusion. Disbelieving a construct requires an active attempt to destroy the chimerical creation, indicated by a contest of wills with the illusion's creator. It is possible to realize that an illusion is false, but fail to disbelieve it. The subject's subconscious mind simply cannot agree that this construct isn't real. In this manner, if a character sees a chimerical sword pass harmlessly through an object, she may realize the sword is an illusion. However, the sword will still exist, and will still look and feel real unless she chooses to actively disbelieve and then defeats its creator in a contest of wills.

If a character suspects that something is formed of Chimerstry, she can make an active attempt to disbelieve that illusion. To do so, she must expend her simple action and enter a contest of wills with the illusion's creator. Make an opposed challenge using your Social attribute + Willpower versus the Chimerstry user's Social attribute + Subterfuge. If the attempt to disbelieve succeeds, the illusion becomes a semi-transparent shadow of itself. Characters cannot interact with items they have successfully disbelieved. For example, after disbelieving a chimerical wall, a character can see through it clearly and can move through the wall without impediment. After disbelieving an illusory sword, the character is unable to pick it up; it will pass through her hand if she tries.

If a character successfully disbelieves an illusion, other individuals will not notice any change in that illusion. Even if the character sees someone walk through an illusionary wall, she must make a separate test and successfully disbelieve it in order to walk through the wall herself. If she fails to disbelieve, she must treat that wall as if it is real, and must bash it down or go around it in order to pass. If a character who has successfully disbelieved a chimerical illusion then does something to demonstrate that it is not real, such as walking through a chimerical wall, it provides an excellent opportunity for other observers to realize that the illusion is not real and call for their own challenges. If an individual fails an attempt to disbelieve an illusion, she cannot attempt to disbelieve that illusion again for five minutes.

If an illusion's creator disbelieves her own illusion, it immediately ceases to exist. The user must treat her illusions in all ways as though they are real or the maya fades.

Chimerstry and Auspex: A vampire using Auspex can attempt to use her sharpened senses to pierce an illusion created by Chimerstry. The Auspex user must use her simple action to make a test using her Mental attribute + Investigation versus the Chimerstry user's Social attribute + Willpower. The Chimerstry user may opt to use her Social attribute + Subterfuge as a defensive test pool, rather than her Social attribute + Willpower. If the Auspex user is successful, she disbelieves the illusion.

Chimerstry and Sunlight: If exposed to natural sunlight, Chimerstry is instantly dispelled. Technologically produced sunlight or ultra-violet light does not dispel Chimerstry.

Chimerstry and Recordings: Chimerstry has enough material substance to be recorded by electronics, but such recordings do not last. At first, such recordings are perfect, but the quality of the captured illusion quickly deteriorates. After 10 minutes, a recording of Chimerstry loses its substance, acquiring defects and deterioration. Chimerical noises sound tinny and fake; snapshots or visual recordings look like poorly-crafted CGI.

Chimerstry Test Pool: The Chimerstry creator uses her Social attribute + Subterfuge versus the target's Social attribute + Willpower.

• Ignis Fatuus

Maya is a delicate substance, drawn like a gossamer thread from the substance of mortal dreams. You can weave a simple illusion from this delicate material, making it real enough to fool a single sense.

System:

By spending 1 Blood and using your standard action, you create an insubstantial sensory illusion. Illusions created with Ignis Fatuus can only affect one of the following senses: sight, hearing, smell, or taste. With this power, you might cause a loud bang as a distraction, give a letter the sweet scent of perfume, or read by the light of a chimerical candle. These illusions are incapable of movement or change once they have been created. Illusions created with Ignis Fatuus last for up to one turn per level of the Subterfuge skill you possess.

A character using Ignis Fatuus in combat can distract and confuse her opponents with false sensory input. To do this, you must pay the costs of this power and then make an opposed challenge using the Chimerstry test pool. If successful, your target is momentarily distracted and loses her simple action the next time her initiative comes up. This use of Ignis Fatuus relies on surprise and, therefore, cannot be used on a specific individual more than once per combat.

Exceptional Success:

If you achieve an exceptional success with Ignis Fatuus, your target loses both her next standard and simple actions.

Focus [Charisma]:

Those affected by your use of Ignis Fatuus cannot utilize combat maneuvers for the rest of the turn, including all rounds in that turn.

●● Mirage

Your control over the threads of maya has increased to the point that your illusions can fool all senses at once. Although you must anchor these more substantive illusions in reality, they have a far greater depth and stability.

System:

Expend your standard action to alter the appearance of an inanimate object. Mirage cannot be used on creatures or individuals.

Remember that Chimerstry can be used to add to an item, or to cover what is there, but it cannot be used to subtract something from the item or environment. You cannot use this power to decrease an object's size, but you may increase its size by up to 10 percent. You can alter the way the object looks, smells, sounds, tastes, or feels — or all of the above. You can make a ragged chair look and feel like an opulent throne, cause a glass of water to smell and taste like fine wine, or change a rolling gurney into a mahogany table covered with candles. This illusion will last for up to an hour.

Users of Mirage must completely cover the object they are altering; any part of the foundation that is not covered will be visible through the illusion. For example, you may make a gurney look like a mahogany table, but you cannot make a file cabinet look like a table — the solid body of the file cabinet would show between the table's legs. You could, however, make the file cabinet look like a table with a tablecloth hanging to the ground, thus covering the entirety of the file cabinet.

Mirage cannot be used to modify the appearance of living or undead individuals, as that is the purview of Obfuscate. It can be used to make simple alterations to clothing, such as coloration, material, or general quality.

Focus [Manipulation]:

Anyone attempting to disbelieve your use of Mirage suffers a -3 penalty to her test to disbelieve.

●●● Apparition

No longer confined by the boundaries of reality, your illusions are independent fabrications of dream. They move as you direct them, either on a repeating loop or following your continual, step-by-step instructions. You can give your illusions a semblance of life, causing illusory people to move or speak, illusory water to drip and ripple, and illusory music to change from song to song.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to create an independent illusion that appears real to every sense. This illusion can move either in a predetermined loop, or, with continued concentration by the creator, can change as you wish. A fireworks display can shift and change color, an illusory policeman can appear to walk his beat around a block, and so forth. Illusory objects seem to fulfill their standard functions; an illusory gun can cock its hammer or shoot an illusory bullet (which causes no harm), and an illusory engine can be taken apart and put back together.

Further, your Apparitions will automatically react when they interact with external forces or obstacles. A chimerical flag will blow in the wind, and a chimerical person will walk around a solid object placed in its path.

When you create an Apparition, you determine a simple pattern of actions for that illusion to enact, as per the beat cop's casual walk around the block. Thereafter, you may expend a simple action to alter your illusion's activity for one round, perhaps causing the beat cop to stop and have a brief conversation with someone (expending a simple action for every round you make the cop remain still and speak or listen). If you expend a standard action instead of a simple action, you may add, remove, or otherwise make a permanent change in the Apparition's pre-established patterns, such as causing the beat cop to stop and whistle a brief tune every time he reaches a certain corner in his circular route.

Such alterations to the Apparition's pattern are accomplished silently, through an act of concentration by the illusion's creator. Note that your character does not receive any special ability to see or hear through her own Apparition. If the beat cop's creator cannot hear the questions being asked by the individual speaking with her illusory policeman, she cannot direct the policeman to answer correctly.

Apparition cannot be used to make an illusion with a total mass larger than 10 cubic feet, although the mass can be shaped in any manner you choose. Illusions of creatures or individuals can move, as appropriate for their creature type. For example, an illusionary cop can pace back and forth down a street.

Apparition lasts for one hour, unless the power is ended by its creator, or the creator dies.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You can spend a simple action to set up a triggered response for your Apparition. You might create an illusionary child, reading a book in the corner of your haven, and give it instructions to look up and say "hello" when anyone walks into the room or when a specific person enters the room. Each Apparition can only maintain one such trigger at a time, but the prearranged actions will occur every time the trigger is tripped. Using the above example, the illusionary child will say "hello" to everyone who walks into the room until you alter the pattern.

●●●● Permanency

The illusions you create almost take on a life of their own, existing without your concentration and maintaining a continued existence by drawing on the essence of the dream. You may gift your lesser illusions with this capacity, providing them a durability that can outlast even your own existence.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to make an already-created Mirage or Apparition permanent. The illusion will last until you choose to dispel it, until it is irrevocably unable to continue, or until it is subjected to sunlight. A permanent illusion is irrevocably unable to continue if it is believably destroyed, such as by throwing a chimerical gun into a pool of molten metal, or if the beat cop's route is completely blocked by a massive tractor-trailer.

Focus [Charisma]:

When activating Permanency, you may spend three full turns concentrating to avoid paying this power's Blood cost, or you may spend an additional Blood to activate Permanency without using an action.

●●●●● Horrid Reality

Belief is a tangible thing, capable of near-miraculous things. You can turn dream into reality, lending genuine verisimilitude to your imaginary creations. Your phantasms gain a tangible reality and are capable of interacting with the real world in concrete ways — even causing harm to your enemies, as you choose.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend your standard action to augment one of your already existing Apparitions with Horrid Reality. For the next five minutes, that illusion cannot be disbelieved and is imbued with the power to physically interact with people. An illusion given credence with Horrid Reality cannot interact with inanimate objects, but can cause lasting harm to mortals, supernatural creatures, and animals.

Apparitions that have been augmented by Horrid Reality may be used to attack, either by secondary means (such as firing a chimerical pistol) or as a primary attacker — the illusionary beat cop lunges and strikes with his nightstick. In either case, the character who created the augmented Apparition is the actual attacker, and the attack occurs on that character's initiative in a round.

To attack with an Apparition augmented by Horrid Reality, expend your standard action and make an opposed challenge against a single target, using your Social attribute + Subterfuge versus the target's Physical attribute + Dodge. If successful, your target takes damage from the item or creature created with this power. Horrid Reality cannot be used to inflict victory conditions other than damage.

Damage inflicted by the use of Horrid Reality reflects the illusion's apparent mode of attack, and deals either 3 points of normal damage or 2 points of aggravated damage. An illusionary police officer shooting a pistol or using a nightstick inflicts a maximum of 3 points of normal damage, while an illusionary flamethrower inflicts a maximum of 2 points of aggravated damage. Fortitude (and similar powers) can reduce damage inflicted by Horrid Reality.

Even if the illusion appears to affect several people or objects, such as the illusion of a flamethrower, Horrid Reality can only deal damage to one target at a time. This limitation does not prohibit normal issues caused by such an Apparition. If you engulf three individuals in a Horrid Reality flamethrower's spout, choose one individual to potentially harm. The other two may still frenzy from being engulfed by the Apparition of fire. They cannot, however, take damage from this attack.

Individuals, creatures, or objects created with this power have a maximum number of health levels equal to your dots in Subterfuge, minimum 1. You may create an object with fewer health levels (an illusionary piece of paper wouldn't be believable if it had 5 health levels). Chimerical illusions cannot directly prevent you from being harmed. A Chimerical wall cannot stop a bullet.

Once Horrid Reality has been used to augment an Apparition, the augmented illusion can attack a target repeatedly; this is an exception to the rule prohibiting a character from using a Social power on the same target immediately after failing. If you fail a Horrid Reality attack against an opponent, you can try again against that same opponent, or someone else, on the next turn.

When you use an item created by Horrid Reality or create an illusory individual, the attacks are precisely timed with the creator's will; this is why Apparitions augmented with Horrid Reality cannot be used by anyone other than their creator. If you give an augmented illusory weapon to another individual, it loses its potential to cause harm.

An augmented Apparition cannot attack during Celerity rounds, even if it is a weapon wielded during Celerity rounds.

Harmful effects of Horrid Reality are fleeting, as they are based in the substance of dream. Damage caused by Horrid Reality can knock an individual unconscious or into torpor, but it cannot kill. After five minutes, the effects of Horrid Reality fade; injuries erase and unconscious or torpored individuals awaken.

Exceptional Success:

Attacks from your Horrid Reality inflict either 4 points of normal damage or 3 points of aggravated damage, as appropriate for the illusion's mode of attack.

Focus [Charisma]:

If you expend both your simple and standard actions for your Horrid Reality to attack, you can apply a combat maneuver, so long as the maneuver would logically apply to the mode of attack. For example, your illusory beat cop may try to Grapple your foe or Pierce her Heart with a wooden stake. This effect does not bypass the normal requirements for using a combat maneuver; your target must be in the Incapacitated wound track before you can attempt to stake her with Horrid Reality. The effects of staking (or grappling) are fleeting and, like damage from Horrid Reality, will fade after five minutes. A character grappled by an augmented Apparition can escape by spending a simple action and making an opposed challenge using her Physical attribute + Brawl or Melee versus your Social attribute + Subterfuge.

Daimoinon

"You have been suckered by the illusion of 'good' and 'evil.' I assure, you, there's no such thing."

— Cybele

Subtle, potent, and wholly evil, the powers of Daimoinon are the signature discipline of the Baali. This discipline was perfected in the deepest sacrificial pits and the more torturous dungeons of the Dark Ages, and carries forward those horrors into the modern age. These are the black gifts of evil, torn from the tongues of sorcerer-kings and unlocked within the vicious, corrupted hearts of betrayers.

Characters who learn Daimoinon open themselves to the whispers and subconscious persuasion of infernal entities. Every thought and ambition becomes suspect, and it is difficult even for that individual to judge whether she is acting of her own free will. Each dot of Daimoinon that a character learns corrupts the individual's soul. Whenever a Daimoinon power is used, infernal taint washes over the user's aura and then disappears.

Learning the first 4 dots of Daimoinon indicates that the character is corrupted by the infernal, and it is unquestionable that she is utilizing a wholly and unarguably demonic power. A character must make a deliberate pact with an infernal creature to learn the 5th dot of Daimoinon: either by conquering that entity and becoming its master or by revering it and joining its cause as a willing ally. Regardless of how this pact is achieved, the character is wholly and irredeemably an infernalist. Only those who complete such a pact may acquire the 5th dot of Daimoinon.

Daimoinon Test Pool: The Daimoinon initiator uses her Mental attribute + Academics versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

• Sense the Sin

The most dangerous enemy is, of course, the one within your own spirit. By speaking with an individual, the user of this power can discover her deepest vices, revealing her spiritual weaknesses to the user's keen perception.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to gaze into your target's soul. You must make an opposed challenge against your target, using the Daimoinon test pool. If you are successful, you discover how many Beast traits the target currently possesses, as well as the current level of her Morality. Additionally, you discover exactly how your target gained each Beast trait she possesses: specifically, when, where, under what circumstances, and for what reason.

Exceptional Success:

You can read your target's spirit for the rest of the night, without further challenge. Anytime you see her, you may reexamine her soul and discover if anything you learned initially has changed. If so, you discover the nature of that new alteration, as per a standard use of Sense the Sin.

Focus [Perception]:

If your target currently has no Beast traits, you instead learn the approximate date of the last time your target gained Beast traits, and why those traits were earned.

•• Fear the Void Below

Those who learn the powers of Daimoinon soon begin to see the souls as of others as items to be chained, traded, and utilized for their own ambition or amusement. With this power, the user binds a target's given word or promise to her primitive terror of ultimate destruction. Those who make such a compact know instinctively and utterly that breaking a promise bound by this power means sacrificing a part of their souls to the void below.

System:

When another character makes a promise to you, you can spend 1 Blood and use a standard action to bind that promise with Fear the Void Below. If your target then breaks the promise bound by this power, she must contest against the infernal entities of Hell or be punished by their retribution. Activating this power requires an opposed challenge using the Daimoinon test pool. The target must make the promise of her own free will, and she cannot be coerced through threat or by use of supernatural powers. Further, breaches of this promise must be willing and cannot be similarly coerced.

If an individual bound by Fear the Void Below is Dominated (or otherwise supernaturally forced) to break her promise, Fear the Void Below is not triggered. If the target thereafter breaks the promise of her own volition, Fear the Void Below will still take its toll, as per the normal effects of this power. Further, if an individual bound by your Fear the Void Below is supernaturally forced to break the promise, you are immediately aware of the circumstances under which the target has been forced to break their word.

An individual who willingly breaks a promise bound by Fear the Void Below must make a static challenge using her Mental attribute + Survival against a difficulty equal to your Mental attribute + Academics. Because this is a static challenge and your character is not directly involved, you cannot use retests. Your victim may retest, as per a normal static challenge. If your victim fails this challenge, she loses a point of Willpower and must immediately repeat the challenge. Losing again incurs another lost point of Willpower and another static challenge. This chain of static challenges continues until the target wins a challenge (either by tying or winning the appropriate tests) or until the target runs out of Willpower. If the effects of Fear the Void Below remove a character's last point of Willpower, leaving her at 0, infernal spirits descend. The target's soul is drawn out of her body and dragged forever into hell. The character immediately dies. Such a character can never be resurrected (not even temporarily), nor can any supernatural power or ability make contact with the damned soul.

A promise bound by Fear the Void Below must be explicit. The target must speak out loud, saying something as direct and clear-cut as "I promise to never tell anyone your name," or, "I swear never to attack you," or, "On my word of honor, I will always tell you the truth." Fear the Void Below cannot be used to enforce vague statements, confirmatory assertions, or general agreements such as, "Sure," "I agree," or, "Whatever you say."

Fear the Void Below cannot be used to enforce promises made to multiple people, such as those made in a public speech, only promises that are made directly and individually to you. For example, if a politician announced her campaign promise to "put a chicken in every pot," you cannot enforce that pledge. You could, of course, meet with the politician later and ask her to make you that promise personally — and then use Fear the Void Below on that personally-made obligation.

Once used, this power will persist for two games or one month, whichever is longer. After that duration ends, the subject is free to break her promise without any fear of reprisal, and the instinctive fear of doing so will dissipate and no longer haunt her.

Focus [Intelligence]:

If your target breaks her promise, she loses 1 point of Willpower before making her first test against Fear the Void Below.

••• Conflagration

Not all of the powers of Daimoinon are subtle. Some are intended to strike fear into the innocent, and to fulfill the threat of pain and destruction against those who defy your will. By invoking this power, the user calls up searing green fire from the realms of her infernal patrons, exulting in the cruelty of the damned.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to launch a bolt of hideous green flame at your target. This fire is clearly infernal in origin. To strike your foe with fire, you must win an opposed challenge using your Mental attribute + Academics versus the target's Physical attribute + Dodge. If you are successful, your target takes 2 points of aggravated damage as she is consumed by the damned flame.

Conflagration is a Mental power and, as such, cannot be used during Celerity rounds.

You may repeatedly activate Conflagration against a target; this is an exception to the rule that prohibits a character from using a Mental power on the same target immediately after failing. If you fail a Conflagration challenge against an opponent, you may try again against that same opponent (or someone else) during the next turn.

The infernal flames of Conflagration are fleeting, and fires ignited by the use of this power dissipate within three rounds.

Exceptional Success:

The target takes 3 points of aggravated damage instead of the standard 2.

Focus [Intelligence]:

You can use Conflagration during Celerity rounds.

●●●● Psychomachia

With this frightening power, the Daimoinon user combines her ability to read the spiritual faults of a victim with her ability to summon up the energy of the infernal planes. Psychomachia gives life to an individual's deepest psychological wounds, pitting their target against the most dangerous, shameful parts of her own subconscious.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to make an opposed challenge against your target, using the Daimoinon test pool. If successful, an illusionary manifestation of your target's anguish and sin appears within arm's reach of the subject of your power. This incarnation may be the subject's abusive father, a long-dead lover, a childhood bogeyman, or some other manifestation of her inner wounds. Whatever its form, the malefic anima immediately turns upon your target and seeks to do her harm.

The target of Psychomachia can interact with and be wounded by her malefic anima as if it were a normal creature. You can also see the Psychomachia manifestation, but you cannot interact with it. Other individuals cannot see or interact with this spiritual incarnation and have no means of determining if it is there or targeting it with attacks or powers.

A malefic incarnation created by Psychomachia is a 5-point Stock NPC with 10 points of Blood. It possesses the powers Feral Claws and Heightened Senses, but does not have access to other Auspex or Protean powers. It has skill specializations in your choice of two of the three standard Physical disciplines (Potence, Celerity, and Fortitude). Additionally, you may select three other skill focuses for the manifestation to possess. Psychomachia cannot be activated during Celerity rounds, but a malefic incarnation that possesses the Celerity focus can take Physical actions during Celerity rounds.

When Psychomachia ends, the manifestation dissipates into foul-smelling, sulfurous smoke, which only you and the target can sense. This occurs after five minutes, when the malefic incarnation takes 5 points of damage, or if your target is torpored or rendered unconscious.

You can only have one Psychomachia manifestation in existence at any one time. Using the power a second time, even if on another target, dissipates the first incarnation of this power.

Exceptional Success:

Your Psychomachia has two additional Stock NPC focuses. These may be used to purchase disciplines or skills.

Focus [Perception]:

When you create a Psychomachia, your manifestation additionally possesses 1 point of Willpower, which it can spend normally. Further, you may give your creation up to 3 more points of Willpower by spending an equal amount of Willpower when you create the malefic anima. This is an exception to the rule that prevents stock NPCs from having or using Willpower.

●●●●● Condemnation

The user of this power levies a curse upon a victim, invoking the name of her demonic ally to invest the curse with infernal authority. Legend states that some Baali wield curses so foul that the victim is willing to commit suicide rather than face inevitable doom.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to loudly curse your target. Make an opposed challenge against your target, using the Daimoinon test pool. If successful, you curse the subject with one of the following rebukes:

- The victim cannot spend Blood to boost her Physical attribute.
- The target suffers a -2 penalty to one attribute of your choice.
- The target suffers a -5 penalty to test pools involving a skill of your choice.
- Anytime the target fails a static challenge, she automatically suffers the results of a critical failure.

Curses levied by Condemnation last for the rest of the night. No character can be under more than one use of Condemnation at a time. If a new curse is applied, the old one fades.

Characters who possess Condemnation are infernalists.

Focus [Perception]:

When you successfully use Condemnation, choose and apply two of the above effects rather than one.

Dementation

"Madness is not the end. It is not the beginning. It is a twisted path that leads from darkness to darkness, and truth to truth."

— Anna Nevermore

The Embrace ravages the minds of Malkavians, twisting and shattering their psyches, but also expanding their consciousness to a point where there is very little distinction between madness and insight. They become visionaries, catalysts of change and insanity, carrying both wisdom and pandemonium in their wake. Their signature discipline, the power of Dementation, carries this madness forward, spreading it throughout the world. The discipline unlocks the doors of the subconscious and frees the ego, ravaging a victim's logic and supplanting it with chaos.

Derangements: A character must have a Derangement in order to purchase any dot of Dementation. If she does not already have a Derangement, then purchasing the 1st dot of Dementation causes the character to permanently gain a Derangement that cannot be removed. A character does not gain XP for acquiring this Derangement. For more information on Derangements, see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 266**.

Dementation Test Pool: The Dementation wielder uses her Social attribute + Empathy, versus the target's Social attribute + Willpower.

• Passion

Like the Maenads of old, you can heighten emotions to a fever pitch, driving any fears, desires, desperations and urges of your target to the surface. Alternately, you can diminish those emotions, dragging the mind down into cold, rational emptiness.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, expend your standard action, and engage your target in an opposed challenge using the Dementation test pool. If you succeed, you choose either to heighten or dampen her emotions for the next hour.

If you choose to heighten your target's emotions, then she experiences a rush of feeling – desperate desire, anxiety, joy, or worry – everything to extremes. She must spend 1 Willpower each time something startling or unsettling happens. If she does not spend this Willpower, she reacts with extreme emotion, either running away or lashing out at the source of her concern.

If you choose instead to dampen your target's emotions, then the target feels a draining loss of emotional cognition; her mind slows and her reactions – both emotional and otherwise – become dull and tepid. She feels no emotional response to stimuli such as love, hate, or fear. She is simply and disconcertingly empty. A character with dampened emotions must spend 1 Willpower in order to start a combat or react with any strong conviction. The target is not required to spend Willpower in order to join an already existing combat or to defend herself.

You may end the effects of one application of Passion by applying the opposite effect. An individual whose emotions have been dampened is restored by using Passion to heighten her emotions, and vice-versa.

Exceptional Success:

For the next three turns, your target cannot spend Willpower to resist the consequences of this power.

Focus [Charisma]:

You can also apply Passion in the following ways: By either speaking to your target calmly or by detailing possible dangers, you can either end the effects of a fear-based power currently affecting that target or make the target more vulnerable to fear-based effects. Speak with your target for three full turns, spend 1 point of Blood, and make an opposed challenge. If successful, you either end the effects of powers like Dread Gaze or give your subject a -2 penalty to defense test pools to resist supernatural fear for the next hour.

•• Haunting

Nightmarish visions, flitting barely-seen images, surreal echoes, and misunderstood conversations haunt your victim, transforming the world around her into a dreamlike haze. Nothing seems quite right, and strange sensations crawl across the target's skin. Her subconscious desires may surface, and her inner fears and regrets return to face her through dark, hallucinatory whispers from the past.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, expend your standard action, and engage your target in an opposed challenge using the Dementation test pool. If you succeed, your target's subconscious dredges up disturbing visions, sensations, and sounds that only she perceives. Your target suffers a -3 penalty to all attack test pools for the next three turns as she tries (and fails) to

separate fantasy and reality. After three turns, the subject becomes more capable of distinguishing what is and is not a hallucination. For the remainder of an hour, the penalty is -1. Penalties from Haunting do not apply to defense test pools.

Using this power on an individual with a derangement gives her 1 Derangement trait. Multiple uses of Haunting do not stack.

Exceptional Success:

Your victim suffers a -3 penalty to her attack test pools for five turns, and afterward suffers a -1 penalty to all attack test pools for the rest of the night. In addition, using this power on an individual with a derangement gives her 2 Derangement traits, instead of 1.

Focus [Charisma]:

While under the effects of Haunting, your target loses access to her Mental attribute focus. If she has more than one Mental focus, your target chooses which focus is temporarily removed.

●●● Eyes of Chaos

There is wisdom to be found between the cracks and broken fragments of reality, and there are lessons to be learned by watching the universe as it slowly falls apart. With this power, you can discern complex patterns, discover inconsistencies, and track the strange and ethereal connections of fate.

System:

This power is always active. A character using Eyes of Chaos receives a +5 wild card bonus to any mundane uses of the Investigation skill or to any Academic skill tests focused on trying to break a code, determine a missing piece of information, or piece together clues. Additionally, when making these types of challenges, you can perform the test without physically interacting with your environment; a simple glance around the area (one standard action) is sufficient to perform a thorough search.

A character utilizing this power might spend a few moments scanning a room and be drawn immediately to the discovery of a pistol concealed in a shoe box under the bed, she might glance at a crossword puzzle and solve it in an instant, or she might count all the ceiling tiles in the room as she walked rapidly past them.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You can utilize Eyes of Chaos by expending a simple action, rather than expending a standard action.

●●●● Voice of Madness

Your voice can carry the siren call of insanity and the whispered pandemonium of sheer madness. By speaking aloud in a resonant tone, you can summon forth the regrets, fears, pain, horror, and suffering of your target's entire life and unlife, unleashing her id and giving her inner demons free rein.

System:

To use Voice of Madness, you must gain your target's attention and spend at least five turns (15 seconds) describing the derangement you wish to inflict. When you finish this description, spend 1 Blood and make an opposed challenge against your target. If you succeed, you inflict the derangement of your choice on your target for the rest of the evening and 1 Derangement trait. If the individual has pre-existing Derangement traits, this trait may cause an immediate psychotic break. For more information, see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, Derangement Traits, page 267**.

For example, you might approach the Ventrue Primogen and say, "I saw two Brujah hovering around your car last night. What were they doing? Are you sure you can trust the Brujah?" If you succeed in the challenge thereafter, you could give your target the Phobia derangement, citing "Brujah" as the trigger.

An individual can only be affected by this power once per Dementation user. If the same character attempts to inflict a second derangement before the first expires, the older derangement is replaced by the newer one. If a second Dementation user successfully targets someone already under the effects of this power, both derangements apply.

Exceptional Success:

The derangement inflicted by Voice of Madness lasts for two games or one month, whichever is longer.

Focus [Manipulation]:

Rather than spending five turns talking to your target, you can inflict a derangement with but a single phrase and a single standard action. You might inflict the same derangement outlined above simply by passing your target and saying to her, "Are you sure you can trust the Brujah?" A character does not need to fully explain the derangement in roleplay in order to apply the effects of this power, but a player should be sure to explain the derangement out of character to the targeted player, so that she can properly portray the effect.

●●●●● Total Insanity

By using this power, utter madness – the full shattering of the mirror – is unleashed within your victim's mind. You draw forth every insecurity, every forgotten slight, every panic or fit of anger, and then cause those emotional wounds to magnify a hundredfold and wreak havoc on your target's mind.

System:

The target must have her attention focused on you in order for Total Insanity to function. Once you have your target's attention, spend 1 Blood, expend your standard action, and make an opposed challenge against that target. If you succeed, you drive her insane for the next hour.

Total Insanity fills your target's mind with conflicting derangements, making it difficult for her to act with any rational logic. Your target should work with the Storyteller to determine exactly how this insanity affects her, but for mechanical purposes, the user of Total Insanity selects one of the following effects to apply to her victim:

- *Fear:* The victim is terrified of anything that is even remotely threatening and will seek to run away and hide in a safe place until Total Insanity fades. The victim will not fight unless cornered and, if forced to fight, will flee at her first opportunity.
- *Confusion:* The victim suffers a -5 penalty to all attack test pools for the duration of Total Insanity as she tries to separate fantasy and reality. This penalty does not apply to defense test pools.
- *Fugue:* The target withdraws mentally, sitting quietly and talking only to friends she trusts. If forced out of her shell, she will either attack or flee from the person who provoked her (target's choice).

Exceptional Success:

The effects of Total Insanity last for two hours, instead of one.

Focus [Charisma]:

The target loses all of her Mental and Social attribute focuses for the duration of Total Insanity.

Dominate

"His eyes met mine,
and I swear I heard a voice whispering to me.
The next thing I knew, officer, I was here."

There are many legends describing a vampire's ability to put people under her spell by staring deeply into another person's eyes. Practitioners of Dominate utilize their strength of will, channeling the force of their personality. With a modest exertion, such a creature can bend minds, implant suggestions, and even control another person's actions. With a piercing gaze and a forceful word, Dominate can cause the strongest mortal mind to crumble and push even other vampires to submit.

To use this discipline, the vampire must first capture her victim's attention. The Dominate user then issues verbal orders or communicates through simple, obvious hand gestures. The target can't comply if she can't understand the vampire's commands. Typically, this requires a common language or common physical symbols, such as a pointed finger to indicate a person should "Leave!"

Dominate cannot be used to force a target to do something directly self-destructive. Commands such as "shoot yourself in the foot" will automatically fail. However, the Dominate user can issue orders that are not automatically harmful, but might lead to a dangerous situation. A character could Dominate someone to shoot at a group of police officers. This action would almost certainly lead to trouble and possibly get the target harmed, but it is not directly self-destructive.

It is possible for an order issued with Dominate to be initially non-harmful and then become directly harmful later. If this happens, the Dominate breaks just before its implanted orders become directly harmful. If a character forced her target to "walk straight ahead until I say stop," the target would be forced to move forward. However, she would stop before stepping in front of a bus or walking off a cliff. This power grants the target no supernatural ability to sense when something is dangerous. Therefore, if the victim did not know there was a cliff ahead and could not sense it, the victim would continue walking forward until she realized the danger — which may very well be too late.

Unless specifically stated, Dominate doesn't impart any special ability to complete extraordinary commands. If a target is ordered to do something that she cannot accomplish, the target will make an effort to obey the command, but may not succeed. If you use Dominate to give the order to "sleep," your target would lie down and try. But, as most people can't simply will themselves to sleep in an instant, it's unlikely the target would truly be able to obey.

Gaze and Focus: To use Dominate on a target, that individual must have her gaze or her attention focused on the Dominate user. For more information on Gaze and Focus, see **page 113**.

Dominate Test Pool: The Dominate wielder uses her Mental attribute + Intimidation versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

• Command

Superiority is inherent to the blood, to the very vitae that brings a vampire unlife. With a word or a gesture, you can exert your will upon an individual and force her to obey. A single word, even one embedded in a sentence, can become an imperative command. Some vampires use this power subtly, while others revel in publically forcing others to submit to the authority of their blood.

System:

To Command an individual, expend a standard action and speak a simple one-word order (or give a brief gesture) to a target. If you are successful in an opposed challenge using the Dominate test pool, your character forces her target to obey her will. The Command must be immediate; the subject will spend her next turn (but only one turn) attempting to obey your order.

Such dictates must be clear and straightforward: run, agree, fall, yawn, jump, laugh, stop, go, scream, or follow are good examples. The target of a Command will attempt to take context into account. If you point at a door and Command your victim to "Leave!" she will attempt to leave via the door you indicated (as opposed to using a different door or jumping out of a window). A Command may be part of a sentence in order to conceal the power's use, such as by saying, "I'm afraid I must ask you to leave this house at once!"

If a Command is confusing or ambiguous, the subject may respond with less accuracy or perform her task poorly, as she struggles to understand what's been asked of her. Command cannot rob your target of the ability to defend herself.

Exceptional Success:

If you achieve an exceptional success while using Command, the target does not realize that she's been Dominated. Mortals will simply rationalize away any strange behavior. A supernatural creature will be momentarily confused, and will not realize she's been forced to act against her will for a period of three turns after the Command ends. After this confusion passes, a supernatural victim may realize she has been Dominated, if the circumstances allow.

Focus [Intelligence]:

An individual who has been successfully given a Command must follow your order for three turns (instead of one).

•• Mesmerism

Through the use of this power, a vampire acquires a near-spellbinding command of her mental facilities. A Mesmerism user can create a hypnotic suggestion within her target's mind. Complex commands and subconscious desires can be implanted, controlling the victim in subtle but powerful ways.

This power implants a subliminal trigger in the target's mind. This trigger will activate only under specified circumstances, and forces the target to perform certain pre-programmed actions when those conditions occur.

To implant a Mesmerism, you must gain your target's focus and speak a simple set of instructions aloud. The Mesmerism user may dictate anything from simple directives ("hand me your car keys") to complex ones ("take detailed notes at the Brujah clan meeting, and bring those notes to me afterwards"). You may indicate that the Mesmerism activity must occur immediately, or you may establish within the Mesmerism a specific stimulus that will trigger the target to perform these actions at a later point.

Mesmerism directions must be spoken aloud, and the target must understand your instructions.

Unlike a Command, a Mesmerism does not need to be an immediate action. The instructions can reside in a target's mind, untriggered, for some time. However, once the dictates are triggered and the target has performed the actions (or after one hour has passed while attempting to complete your orders), the Mesmerism is complete and any lingering compulsion ends. An untriggered Mesmerism will remain for up to one month.

An individual can only have one active Mesmerism from a given Dominate user. If you attempt to implant a new suggestion in the mind of a victim currently under a previous Mesmerism from you, the new application of this power erases your earlier instruction. A victim may have multiple Mesmerisms lurking in her psyche at the same time, provided each Mesmerism was implanted by a different individual.

If two mesmerists implant conflicting orders in a target, the victim will follow the newer Mesmerism first. The victim will perform those tasks until completed (or for an hour). Once that Mesmerism has ended, the subject will attempt to fulfill the older Mesmerism. Note that the older Mesmerism's duration begins at the point it was triggered, so the victim may have only a few minutes of duration left in such a situation.

Mesmerism cannot rob your target of the ability to defend herself. A character forced to count loudly to one million can still dodge, run away, or even attack, so long as she keeps counting. However, she probably could not effectively hide (or use her Obfuscate to vanish) while calling out numbers.

System:

To implant a Mesmerism, you must first gain your target's focus. Then, you must expend a standard action, speak the instructions of your Mesmerism, and make an opposed challenge against your target. If you are successful, the Mesmerism – exactly as you stated it – has been implanted. Note that, like Command, a Mesmerism will always break if the subject realizes that performing these actions will lead to direct harm.

Once the Mesmerism has been triggered (whether immediate or delayed), the target will attempt to carry out her instructions until the activity is reasonably complete or for one hour, whichever comes first. This subliminal order may lay dormant in the target's mind for up to one month, after which the compulsion fades and the Mesmerism ends.

Mesmerisms cannot string together multiple unrelated actions. You cannot use Mesmerism to force another character to, "Tell me where your ghoul lives, and give me your car keys, then go punch that Brujah, and finally, sit in the corner for the rest of the hour." You may imply more than one action in a single command, such as, "Show me where your ghoul lives." In this case, the recipient will likely lead you to the location (which could require leaving the building, getting into a car, and driving there).

In all cases, your Storyteller is the final arbiter of what is or is not appropriate for a Mesmerism.

Example:

Tanya the Toreador has annoyed Vincent the Ventrue. He puts the following Mesmerism into her mind: "When you see a glass of red wine, pour it over the front of your dress."

Tanya later sees Mallory the Malkavian drinking a glass of wine. Immediately, Vincent's Mesmerism kicks in. Tanya picks up Mallory's wine and begins to tip it towards her dress. However, Mallory sees what's happening. He turns to Tanya and uses Mesmerism on her, saying, "Give me back my wine." Mallory's newer Mesmerism interrupts Vincent's older one, and Tanya is forced to return Mallory's glass of wine.

After fulfilling Mallory's Mesmerism, Vincent's older Mesmerism re-exerts itself within Tanya's mind. Tanya lunges for Mallory, attempting to spill the very confused Malkavian's wine on her dress.

Exceptional Success:

When the target fulfills your Mesmerism (or when the duration of the power ends), your victim will not remember following your instructions. She will remember all actions she took of her own free will, but will not recall what she was forced to do by your Mesmerism. If the Mesmerism takes more than a few turns to fulfill, your target may notice strange holes in her memory.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Your Mesmerisms may remain dormant in your target's mind for up to three months instead of one month, and the effects, once triggered, will last for up to two hours rather than one.

●●● Forgetful Mind

Your skill with mental manipulation gives you the power to modify and shape the memories of other individuals. By holding your target's attention and speaking to her clearly, you can place her in a hypnotic state. While she is somnambulant, you may ask questions, cause her to describe something she has experienced, or give her specific details with which to alter or overwrite her memory of an event.

It's a relatively simple matter to rifle through a victim's psyche and erase swaths of memory, but unless you offer something in its place, the deletion will leave a blank spot in the victim's recollection. The Dominate user can instead create false memories, describing a plausible story for the victim's subconscious to absorb.

The user of this power can tell the target to incorporate new information into (or remove details from) her original memory. The target will do so seamlessly, justifying the information within the context of her overall remembrance. Unless someone else points out critical paradoxes in the memory, the target will rationalize away any contradictions.

Forgetful Mind does not grant the user any telepathic ability to "see" an event in the target's mind. The events are remembered from the subject's point of view and are verbally described to the best of the subject's ability. If the subject does not know a detail about the event, then she cannot describe that detail under Forgetful Mind.

System:

To activate Forgetful Mind, expend a standard action and make an opposed challenge. If you are successful, your target enters a trance for a small amount of time while the user of this power offers details to alter, erase, or completely overwrite the target's memory. If the target is threatened in any way, she will snap out of this trance, ending the

application of Forgetful Mind. For this reason, it's not possible to use Forgetful Mind in a combat situation.

A successful use of Forgetful Mind allows you to erase or alter up to 10 minutes of memory. A more substantial period of time may be altered (in 10-minute increments) with repeated application of this power.

A character can also use Forgetful Mind to detect false or missing memories and (under the correct circumstances) restore them. When you use Forgetful Mind on a target, you must log your action with the subject's Storyteller. Include your character's Dominate test pool and the number of Dominate powers possessed (including elder powers but not techniques) at the time you performed the Forgetful Mind.

Restoring lost or altered memories is difficult, and takes a great deal of patience and dedication. If another character attempts to restore the subject's altered memory, she must first tell the subject's Storyteller how many Dominate powers she possesses (including elder powers but not techniques). If she has fewer powers than you, then she is incapable of overpowering your Dominate enough to even make an attempt to restore the original memory. If the Forgetful Mind user inserted memories carelessly, or the Storyteller wants to progress plot, she has the option to fast-track the wearing down of the mental walls to allow for a reversal of the altered memories.

If she has equal or more powers than you, she may make an opposed Mental challenge against the highest Dominate pool you currently have applied to that subject. If she is successful, all memories altered by that Dominate user are restored to the subject. This process requires 1 downtime action to be spent by both the subject and the individual restoring the memories.

A vampire cannot use Forgetful Mind to alter or restore her own memories.

Exceptional Success:

When you score an exceptional success, your character is considered to have 1 more dot of Dominate for the purpose of determining whether or not this application of Forgetful Mind can be undone by other characters in the future or for determining if you can undo alterations to your target's memories.

Focus [Wits]:

You may alter up to one hour of the target's memory with a single application of Forgetful Mind (rather than 10 minutes).

●●●● Conditioning

It takes little effort to control an individual's actions for a brief moment or to twist her memories of a few minutes' time. You are capable of far more insidious feats. By taking your time and applying a more dedicated amount of effort, you can permanently alter a portion of your subject's personality, adding habits or removing them. This takes a significant amount of exertion, but once accomplished, you will have reshaped your target into something more amenable to your purposes.

System:

Through sustained exertion and focus, you can implant a semi-permanent Mesmerism (as per the above Dominate power) deep in your subject's mind. Conditioning a target takes three hours of diligent and uninterrupted focus, during which time your subject must be conscious and aware. The target may be restrained, but she cannot be unconscious, drugged, or otherwise unaware. Once your character has completed this prerequisite, make an opposed challenge against the subject. If successful, you implant a Mesmerism that can be triggered repeatedly.

Mesmerisms implanted through Conditioning must have a clearly defined trigger. A Conditioned character acts normally, with no alterations of her standard behavior, until such time as her Conditioning is triggered. Once activated, the target must fulfill the behaviors demanded by the Conditioning (or attempt to for one hour, whichever comes first). Just like Command or Mesmerism, a Conditioning compulsion will automatically break if the target realizes that performing these actions will lead to direct harm. When this happens, the current compulsion to act will cease, but the Conditioning itself will remain (and can be triggered again in the future, as per normal).

For example, you might Condition a target to drink mortal blood every time she hears the word "vagrant." If your target hears the word, and there is a source of mortal blood nearby, she will always attempt to do so. The initial compulsion will end as soon as she finishes drinking, but could start again if someone else says the word. If the Conditioned individual is stranded in the middle of a desert, with no source of blood available when she hears the word, she will spend an hour looking for a source of mortal blood. Thereafter, the compulsion will fade (until the next time she hears the word).

A successful compulsion implanted with Conditioning is permanent until broken by the subject; it cannot be removed or overwritten. A mortal who goes one year without having her Conditioning triggered may make an opposed challenge (using the subject's Mental attribute + Willpower versus the Dominator's Mental attribute + Intimidation). If successful, the target breaks the Conditioning. If she fails, the target

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must wait another year before she can attempt to break the Conditioning a second time, and another year after that before she can try a third time.

Supernatural characters may attempt to break their Conditioning if they avoid having the compulsion triggered for three months. If the victim fails that opposed challenge, then she must wait another three months before making another attempt, and so forth.

A character's Conditioning cannot be triggered more than once per hour. The compulsion placed by Conditioning does not count towards a character's Mesmerism limit; a target may be the victim of your Mesmerism and Conditioning powers at the same time. However, even as you can only implant one Mesmerism at a time on your target, you can also only implant one Conditioning compulsion at a time. A subject may have multiple Conditioning compulsions, provided each one comes from a different user of Dominate.

Focus: [Intelligence]:

If you are Intelligence-focused, a mortal target must avoid having her Conditioning triggered for three years before making an attempt to break that Conditioning (instead of the standard one year). Supernatural creatures must go six months without having the Conditioning triggered before attempting to break it (instead of the standard three months).

●●●●● Possession

The strength of your will is such that you can Dominate another individual's psyche, controlling her thoughts and actions, inhabiting her psyche, and completely taking over your target's physical form. You cannot access the victim's thoughts or memories while in this state; her mind is suppressed, as though deep in sleep, and she knows nothing of your activities. While you are in command of the subject's body, you can take any physical action she is capable of performing.

System:

To use Possession, you must use your standard action to stare into the eyes of your subject; this power will not work on blind subjects or subjects who cannot see your eyes. Make an opposed challenge against the person you intend to Possess. If successful, your consciousness is transferred into the target's body, and her mind is rendered into a fugue-like state. Because your character's mind is focused entirely on controlling the body she has inhabited, the vampire has no innate sense of anything occurring to her native physical form. The character's original body falls into a torpid state and can neither defend itself nor act on its own (although your body does have access to any Fortitude you possess while your consciousness is absent). While in Possession, you always know the location of your real body, although you cannot perceive its surroundings.

Mortals and partially supernatural creatures, such as ghouls or kinfolk, can be targeted with Possession. Fully supernatural creatures, such as vampires and werewolves, cannot be targeted by Possession. Be sure to ask your Storyteller if you have a question about whether an individual is an appropriate target for this power.

Mortals have no disciplines and cannot spend Blood. However, if your character is possessing a ghoul, you may use the ghoul's Blood pool, and can spend 1 Blood per turn (regardless of your character's Generation). A ghoul can hold up to 5 points of vampiric Blood in her pool. You can spend this Blood to fuel any of the ghoul's Physical powers. You cannot spend this Blood to affect your character's native form in any manner.

A character cannot use any of her own disciplines while in Possession. Also, you cannot use any powers the subject possesses, except for Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence.

While in Possession, a character uses her own Mental attributes and focuses, Social attributes and focuses, skills, and backgrounds. If you possess a subject that has its own character sheet, use that subject's Physical attribute (rather than your own) for all Physical challenges while in Possession. If you use Possession on a Stock NPC, the subject's Physical attribute is equal to double that NPC's rating. You cannot utilize the target's attribute focuses, nor any powers that are not intrinsic to vampires or ghouls.

Possession lasts until the next sunrise or until you spend a simple action for your character to return to her native body. Possession ends immediately if the character travels more than 10 miles away from her native body, if the character's native body takes 1 point of damage, or if the body she's possessing takes damage.

Possessed bodies do not take damage from sunlight, but if the vampire's native body is exposed to sunlight, it will take damage. However, a vampire with Beast traits still risks frenzy. For more information on frenzy, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 301**.

Exceptional Success:

If you achieve an exceptional success, your character's mind can maintain control of the possessed form for up to three days without further challenges. Possession will end after the third sunrise, instead of the first. Note that your Possession will still end if the character travels more than 10 miles away from her native body, if the character's native body takes damage, or if the body she's possessing takes damage.

Focus [Wits]:

You can use the first 2 dots of your Mental and Social in-clan disciplines while employing Possession, but you cannot use elder powers or techniques. If you are in Possession of a ghoul, you may spend up to 5 Blood to fuel these in-clan disciplines, at the rate of 1 Blood a turn, regardless of your character's Generation. Vampires with this focus who have Dominate in-clan can activate Possession while in Possession, transferring directly from one subject body to another. Each new use of Possession requires a standard action, eye-to-eye contact, and a successful opposed challenge, as per the standard use of this power.

Fortitude

"He stood alone in the center of the road. When that 18-wheeler hit him, you could hear the impact for miles.
I'll never know how the Gangrel stayed in one piece.
The truck sure didn't."

— Jezebel, Malkavian Neonate

Vampires are supernaturally resilient. Their bodies change with the Embrace and can survive blows, slashes, bullet wounds, and falls much more readily than mortal physiology. Vampiric blood has healing properties, knitting together flesh and bone with the merest effort of conscious thought.

However, some vampires are true juggernauts, shrugging off even agonizing physical trauma and brutal injury. Their bodies have become resistant to wounds, ignoring pain that would send a normal mortal into fatal shock.

Each dot of Fortitude represents an additional increase to a character's physical resilience, and each dot stacks with all other mechanical bonuses granted by other dots of this discipline. If your character has Resilience (Fortitude •••), she also has the bonuses granted by Endurance (Fortitude •) and Mettle (Fortitude ••), which she must possess to reach Resilience.

Fortitude powers are always active, and do not normally cost Blood to activate unless specifically stated in the description of that power. Some techniques and elder powers may require Blood (or an action) to activate; refer to each power for specifics.

There is no standardized Fortitude test pool.

Focus [Stamina]:

Stamina-focused characters gain 1 additional health level in each wound category when they first purchase Fortitude. Such a character has 4 Healthy wound levels, 4 Injured wound levels, and 4 Incapacitated wound levels.

• Endurance

You are beyond pain or fatigue, ignoring such hardships. Your body simply does not feel such minor inconveniences.

System:

You can easily ignore pain. Your character is immune to torture and doesn't suffer wound penalties.

•• Mettle

Your body can take more damage than others, suffering only light injuries even under circumstances that should do serious harm.

System:

Each time your character takes aggravated damage, you may convert 1 point of aggravated damage to normal damage.

••• Resilience

Wounds that would slow or maim other vampires mean nothing to you. You can shrug off such detrimental injuries.

System:

Each time your character takes damage, you may ignore 1 point of normal damage. You can use this power in conjunction with other powers that convert aggravated wounds into normal wounds.

You can use Mettle to downgrade a point of aggravated damage into normal damage, then you can use Resilience to ignore that point of normal damage.

•••• Resistance

You can endure horrific punishment, resisting even the most serious wounds and continue fighting. This is an impressive feat of endurance, clearly above and beyond mortal ability.

System:

Each time your character takes aggravated damage, you may convert 1 point of that aggravated damage into normal damage. You can use this power in conjunction with other powers that convert wounds.

This power stacks with Mettle, allowing you to convert 2 points of aggravated damage from each attack into normal damage. It further stacks with Resilience, allowing you to then ignore 1 of those points of normal damage.

●●●●● Aegis

Your body seems as hard as iron and as resistant to pain as steel itself. Only persistent and monumental force can truly cause you harm.

System:

Each time your character takes damage, you may ignore 1 point of normal damage. You can combine this effect with Resilience in order to ignore 2 points of normal damage per attack. You can also use this power in conjunction with powers that turn aggravated wounds into normal wounds.

Melpominee

"Song is the handmaiden of love, and the courtesan of power. Little wonder, then, the envy we Daughters inspire."

— Amandine duMont

The Greek muse of tragedy, Melpomene, was said to inspire madness and great emotion through her music. Sirens, too, used song to drive sailors mad, causing them to wreck their ships on reefs. In myth, music has great power, and the discipline of Melpominee proves the truth of those legends. Through sound and song, the user of this discipline twists emotion and even stirs insanity, affecting the very depths of a listener's soul.

Deaf subjects, or individuals otherwise unable to hear the vampire, are still affected so long as the singer's voice naturally reaches their location. The effects of Melpominee cannot be captured by recordings nor carried by microphones, bullhorns, or other electronic or mechanical means; such recordings and enhancements portray only the performance of the song, without any supernatural effects.

Melpominee Test Pool: The Melpominee wielder uses her Social attribute + Subterfuge versus the target's Social attribute + Willpower.

● The Missing Voice

A practiced Melpominee user can alter her voice beyond human measure, encompassing octaves both within and outside the normal vocal range. The practitioner can mimic other voices, create unusual sounds, and sing accomplished arias with ease.

System:

Expend 1 Blood and use a simple action to modify your voice. With the Missing Voice, you may utilize any sound the human voice can produce (within any octave or vocal range, from the deepest basso to the highest soprano). You can also increase your volume beyond standard human range, resonating over other noises like a living megaphone. Further, if you have 3 or more dots of Performance: Singing, you can identically replicate any voice you have studied for at least five minutes, regardless of that individual's sex or vocal tone.

Note that Missing Voice does not provide any fluency with foreign languages; you may duplicate a foreign accent, but cannot comprehend languages you do not already understand.

Focus [Appearance]:

Your Missing Voice is an exception to the rule that Melpominee cannot be captured by recordings or carried by electronic or mechanical means. Your character may use Missing Voice to speak in someone else's voice over a telephone or to fool voice-activated security systems.

●● Phantom Speaker

With concentration, you can cause your voice to emit from a location other than your own. Many practitioners of Melpominee use Phantom Speaker to harmonize with themselves, achieving spectacular performances through the use of this power.

System:

By spending 1 Blood and expending a simple action, you cause your voice to generate from thin air. Using this power allows you to make your voice emanate from any location within your line of sight or from any location with which you are familiar. When you use Phantom Speaker, you do not have to move your lips or otherwise show any signs of speaking. If you choose, you may allow one willing person to respond in kind; her voice will softly emanate just within your hearing. A character who has the Auspex power Heightened Senses and is within three steps of the location where a Phantom Speaker emanates will overhear a conversation held through Phantom Speaker.

You can have only one application of Phantom Speaker in operation at a time. However, you can carry on two conversations simultaneously, one through Phantom Speaker, and one spoken normally. You cannot use other powers or supernatural effects through Phantom Speaker, except for the Melpominee power Missing Voice.

For the definition of a familiar character, see **page 114**.

Focus [Charisma]:

Rather than using Phantom Speaker on a target or location you can see, you can use it on any individual you are familiar with, regardless of range. Your voice emanates from just

behind the target, allowing you to communicate with her. Further, if you wish, you may allow your target's voice to echo back to you.

●●● Madrigal

The heights and depths of your songs carry powerful emotions. With magnificent arias or oration, you raise others to the heights of passion; black melancholy flows from your melodies of despair.

System:

To use Madrigal, you must spend 1 Blood and then sing for at least three turns. All those in hearing range of this power feel an intense emotion of your choice, related to the subject of your performance. This emotion is overwhelming, summoning a rush of memories, images of events that caused similar feelings in the individual's past. Individuals affected by Madrigal receive a +2 bonus to their test pools to resist emotion-based powers originating from disciplines other than Melpominee, such as Entrancement, Dread Gaze, or Passion.

Using this power on an individual with a derangement gives her 1 Derangement trait. For more information on Derangements, see **Chapter Five, Merits and Flaws, page 266**.

The effects of Madrigal last for 10 minutes, plus an additional 10 minutes for every dot the user has of the Performance: Singing skill.

Focus [Appearance]:

For the duration of Madrigal, your targets receive a +3 bonus (rather than a +2) to their test pools to resist non-Melpominee emotion-based powers, such as Presence.

●●●● Siren's Beckoning

By beckoning to the turmoil and emotional wounds within a subject, you awaken insanity within an individual's soul.The sound of your voice overwhelms a listener's mind, as your song shatters her hold on reality.

System:

To use Siren's Beckoning, you must spend 1 Blood and use a standard action to sing. Choose a number of individuals within hearing range equal to your Performance: Singing skill. These individuals immediately enter a fugue-like state, stopping all other activity in order to listen to your performance. So long as you continue to spend your standard action singing each round, your listeners will remain utterly captivated by the song. If you use your simple action to walk, they will follow at a slow pace, unaware of events happening around them; they will not notice breaches of the Masquerade or other general events. However, if a beckoned individual is attacked, put in danger (you cannot lead them over a pit nor in front of a speeding car), or targeted by an offensive power, your Siren's Beckoning will immediately break.

All those who wish to resist your Siren's Beckoning must make an opposed challenge using their Social attribute + Willpower versus your Melpominee test pool.

Using this power on an individual with a derangement gives her 2 Derangement traits. If this causes the individual to experience a psychotic break, that break will not occur until after Siren's Beckoning ends. For more information on Derangements, see **Chapter Five, Merits and Flaws, page 266**.

Focus [Charisma]:

Mortals do not count toward your maximum number of targets for Siren's Beckoning.

●●●●● Death of the Drum

Sound can be a deadly and explosive force, and the power of harmonics can shake apart even the most stalwart materials. By pitching your voice to the exact frequency of an enemy's physical form, you can cause severe injury to your target.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend a standard action to sing, shriek, or otherwise audibly evoke Death of the Drum. Make an opposed challenge against an opponent, using the Melpominee test pool. If you are successful, your victim takes 3 points of aggravated damage.

You can activate Death of the Drum against a target repeatedly; this is an exception to the rule that prohibits a character from using a Social power on the same target immediately after failing. If you fail to use Death of the Drum against an opponent, you may try again against that same opponent (or someone else) on the next turn.

Exceptional Success:

Your use of Death of the Drum deals 4 points of aggravated damage, rather than 3.

Focus [Charisma]:

You can also target objects with Death of the Drum. Most solid items will shatter after a single round of song, but the Storyteller may require multiple rounds of singing to break exceptionally tough or thick substances.

Mytherceria

"Wisdom is a razor's edge.
It slices through the center of existence, cutting the world in two.
All things fall on either side: to know not, or to know."

— Béatrice L'Angou, Kiasyd, Guardian of Melbourne

Mytherceria is a discipline of twisted perceptions. These powers blur the line between reality and dream, drawing both on the vitae of its user and on the fae vitality present in the natural world. Mytherceria is a discipline of riddles and puzzles, enigmas and conundrums, and many of its powers provide effects that befuddle a target's mind. Mytherceria also encompasses a heightened talent for acquiring obscure knowledge, and for creating and solving riddles.

Mytherceria Test Pool: The Mytherceria wielder uses her Mental attribute + Academics versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

• Fae Sight

Mytherceria opens your mind to another world: a world of dream and imagining. Your ability to view reality with the eyes of the fae shifts your perceptions, providing information that cannot be gained through normal observation and inspection.

System:

This power is always active. You can read an object's purpose and age at a glance, tell forgeries from originals, and correctly identify the materials used in an item's creation. You can also perceive information about an item's creator, including how many dots of the Craft skill she used, her basic creature type, and how long ago the item was fashioned. Lastly, you can discern any obscure meaning, symbology, historical or political references, and encoded information worked into the item's artistry.

Further, you recognize creatures, individuals, powers, and enchantments of fae origin. While you cannot learn their capacity or extent, your Fae Sight allows you to discern that such effects are present.

Focus [Perception]:

If an object has hidden latches or compartments, you discover them. You can discern the code or pattern necessary to unlock and open a door or compartment by spending three full turns studying the lock. If the lock requires a key, and you expend three turns in study, you will thereafter recognize on sight whether or not a particular key will fit that lock.

•• Darkling Trickery

Like the faerie stories of old, you can plague a victim with minor adversity and fae pranks, making her life more difficult for a short period of time. While under the effects of this power, the target may misplace small items, become confused about direction, discover her shoes are tied together, or other small misfortunes — courtesy of the fae.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, expend a standard action, and engage your target in an opposed challenge using the Mytherceria test pool. If you are successful, you cause your target to be plagued by annoyances and setbacks for the next hour, as the fae play pranks on her, causing no end of trouble. Out of combat, the victim's car keys may disappear, her cell phone may run out of power, or she may stand up and find her shoe strings tied together. In combat, any time your victim spends a point of Willpower to use a combat maneuver, her attack will automatically fail. This power has no effect on attacks augmented by combat maneuvers that were enacted without spending Willpower.

Exceptional Success:

This use of Darkling Trickery lasts for the rest of the night, rather than for an hour.

Focus [Perception]:

All of the target's attacks that are augmented by combat maneuvers automatically fail, even if the maneuver was enacted without spending Willpower.

••• Ay Befriend

In medieval times, it was common practice to declare peaceful intentions toward a visitor or newly met comrade by claiming she was someone "I shall befriend." The faeries keep this custom and are well-disposed to those who remember the proper way to greet them, declaring forthrightly your friendship in the ancient way: "Prithee, piskies, Ay Befriend!"

Changelings and fae folk have their own interests and society, but they are willing to lend a hand — if properly compensated for such efforts. By using this power, you call upon the smallest of these creatures, promising a reasonable reward if they will aid you for a short while.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to summon a small troupe of piskies, a type of fae. Piskies are humanoid, but of small size and varied appearance, dressed in simple

clothing made of leaves and other natural flora. These creatures are invisible to anyone except individuals with Fae Sight. Normally, the piskies will arrive over the course of the next five minutes, so long as they are capable of reaching your location. Piskies can fly, but have no magical ability to move through walls or solid objects.

So long as you pay the piskies up front with a measure of gold, gems, or other precious small objects, they will be relatively loyal, though mischievous. You can ask these piskies to perform 1 downtime action during the course of a game session, or in addition to your own downtime actions between game sessions. If requested to perform a downtime action, such as bringing you an item, carrying a message, cleaning up an area, or discovering some useful information, during a game session the piskies will perform the task with lightning speed and complete it within the hour. If you utilize Ay Befriend between games, you gain a single untraceable, unwatchable downtime action. In either case, the piskies will not risk themselves or engage in combat.

You cannot utilize Ay Befriend more than once per calendar week, whether during or between game sessions.

Focus [Intelligence]:

You may use Ay Befriend once at game and also once as a downtime during the course of a calendar week. You cannot use this advantage to gain 2 actions at game, or 2 actions during a calendar week.

●●●● Changeling Ward

The language of the fae is a tangled web, capable of snaring thoughts like a spider does a fly. Viewing such written wards disorients most minds, causing confusion and mild stupor at best: utter amnesia if the mind is particularly weak.

System:

To inscribe a Changeling Ward, spend 1 Blood and expend three full turns tracing letters and symbols on a target object; you must have something to write with. You can draw these sigils onto a movable object, a door, or the floor of a room, but the area to be inscribed must be larger than six inches in diameter. Once drawn, the Changeling Ward is invisible to anyone who does not possess Fae Sight; to those who can see it, the ward appears as a softly glowing symbol written in silvery moonlight.

Mortals who touch the object or cross over a stationary ward automatically become confused for the next five minutes and will wander away from the area in the general direction from which they entered. Supernatural creatures must make a static Mental attribute + Willpower challenge against a difficulty equal to your Mytherceria test pool or suffer a similar effect. Further, individuals with Derangements gain 1 Derangement trait. If this causes the individual to experience a psychotic break, that break will not occur until after the effects of your Changeling Ward end. For more information on Derangements and Derangement traits, see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 266**.

After a mortal emerges from the fugue of a Changeling Ward, she has no recollection of the time that has passed, nor any memory about why she came to this location (or touched the object) in the first place. She will justify her actions without any real need for logic. Within one day, she will have forgotten that she was ever there (or saw the object) at all.

After a supernatural creature emerges from her confused state, she has a faint understanding that time has passed, but no real comprehension of how long she was under the effect of the ward. She remembers her activities just before encountering the Changeling Ward, but such actions seem dream-like and distant. The target remembers nothing that occurred while she was under the effects of this power.

If an individual is attacked, put in danger, or targeted by an offensive power, the effects of Changeling Ward immediately end.

Once inscribed, a Changeling Ward will persist for a year and a day, or until the Mytherceria user removes it, or until the object is damaged by at least 1 point of damage. If a supernatural creature resists the effect of a Changeling Ward, she is immune to the effects of all other Changeling Wards created by the same character for the next hour.

A character is immune to the effects of her own Changeling Wards.

Focus [Perception]:

Supernatural creatures suffer the same after-effects as mortals and partially supernatural creatures. Further, if a creature emerges from the effects of your Changeling Ward before the normal duration ends, she becomes confused and suffers a -3 penalty to all non-defensive actions for the next three turns.

●●●●● Riddle Phantastique

You have opened your mind to the dream and become enlightened. Your altered impressions may be disconcerting to those who do not share your knowledge, but you know well there is a difference between madness and the dream. When you wish, you may share your insights, tearing away the veil from a listener's thoughts and opening her to the twisting truths of reality. Through penetrating philosophical questions, mathematical formulai, Zen koan, or other such paradoxical quandaries, you unravel your target's mind.

System:

To inflict the Riddle Phantastique, spend 1 Blood and expend your standard action speaking a riddle to your target. If you are successful in an opposed challenge using your Mytherceria test pool, the subject is enthralled as the complexities of your twisted logic ensnare her mind. She cannot take actions other than attempting to solve the riddle. Other uses of Mytherceria cannot affect the target while she is in this state.

For five minutes, the victim behaves as if affected by Changeling Ward. At the end of that time, she must make a static Mental + Academics challenge against a difficulty equal to your Mytherceria test pool. Because this is a static challenge, the target is not testing against the Mytherceria user, and, therefore, the user cannot retest, although the target can. If the target succeeds, she answers your riddle correctly and emerges from her enthralled state with no additional effect. If unsuccessful, she fails to answer the question, and takes 3 points of aggravated damage that cannot be reduced or negated, as she emerges from her enthralled state.

If someone who is enthralled by Riddle Phantastique is attacked, put in danger, or targeted by an offensive power, the target may choose one of two actions:

- Escape from the effects of this power temporarily: The character can defend herself normally, but cannot take any offensive or utilitarian actions, nor converse meaningfully with anyone. Her sole intent to flee the area. Once the character is no longer in danger, she will return to her fugue-like state and continue her attempts to answer the riddle as per the normal use of this power.
- Admit defeat, give up on the riddle, and end Riddle Phantastique early: If a character does this, she immediately suffers 3 points of aggravated damage, which cannot be reduced or negated, as per the effect of failing to answer this riddle after its elapsed time.

Exceptional Success:

If the target fails or admits defeat, she suffers 4 points of aggravated damage.

Focus [Intelligence]:

The target suffers a -3 penalty when attempting the challenge to solve your riddle.

Obeah

"Trust is treason. Love is loss. Life cannot shield you from those who disappear or forget. Everyone leaves you in the end."

— Iofel Inocanza

The gentle power of Obeah was once respected and valued, as were its inceptors, the Salubri. However, over the centuries, both the clan and the power have been tarnished, and now any sign of the Obeah discipline is likely to be treated with the utmost disdain and suspicion. The power itself can cure both psychological and physical wounds — but vampires have every reason to believe that Obeah, and the clan that created it, were fueled by infernal powers and addicted to diablerie.

In modern times, vampires believe this lie — or have every reason to continue promoting the falsehoods. Old lies and ancient betrayals still bind most elders to this assertion, and they persecute and destroy anyone discovered to possess the powers of Obeah before they have a chance to speak the truth.

Use of any Obeah power beyond the first causes a third eye to manifest upon the user's forehead. This eye opens and glows throughout the use of these powers and disappears thereafter.

Obeah and Valeren: A character who has purchased any amount of Obeah can never purchase Valeren. Likewise, a character who has purchased any amount of Valeren cannot purchase Obeah.

Obeah Test Pool: The Obeah wielder uses her Mental attribute + Medicine versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

• Sense Vitality

Life permeates the world, cycling with the ebb and flow of inevitability. With this power, you can tap into that source, feeling the pulse of the universe and tangibly perceiving the vital energy of individuals nearby.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use a simple action to activate Sense Vitality. For the next hour, you gain the instinctive ability to perceive the health of any creature that comes within 10 steps of you. You automatically realize the following information:

- Whether the target is alive, dead, or undead
- The target's current number of wounds and number of remaining health levels

- The location and severity of any injuries the target currently suffers
  - Whether the target suffers from any diseases or other maladies, and if so, which ones
  - Whether the target has any drugs or poisons in her system, and if so, which ones
  - The disposition of all organs, bones, musculature, and other physical structures of the target's body. You realize if any organs have been removed or shifted, and you can sense the signs of older, healed injuries or genetic anomalies.

Sense Vitality overcomes supernatural effects that obscure an individual's health level, such as Misleading Wounds or similar powers.

Focus [Perception]:

Obeah focuses on defense and healing. By spending 1 Blood and using a simple action, you can also use Sense Vitality to receive a +5 bonus to any challenges using the Medicine skill or when you are attempting to diagnose a corpse's cause of death.

●● Anesthetic Touch

You have a healer's touch, and can cause pain to flee or fear to lessen in the heart of your patients. Any subject who voluntarily submits to your Anesthetic Touch can be rendered immune to pain, and any mortal creature affected by your power falls into an immediate healing sleep.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to target a willing subject within one step. For the next hour, the target feels no pain and suffers no wound penalties. If your target is mortal, you put her into a state of peaceful sleep, where she will feel no pain for the next 10 hours. Further, mortal creatures will heal 3 points of normal damage after resting a full eight hours under the effects of this power. Anesthetic Touch can only be used on willing targets.

Individuals under the effect of Anesthetic Touch are immune to the effects of Burning Touch, unless the character using Burning Touch also has the elder power Fiery Agony.

Focus [Wits]:

You may spend 1 Blood and use a simple action to use Anesthetic Touch on a willing target within your line of sight.

●●● Corpore Sano

Your vitae is an alchemical substance, carrying healing properties like those said to be possessed by sacred figures of myth. By laying hands on the injuries of others, you can cause them to heal at an incredible rate.

System:

Spend 1 Blood point and use your standard action to target a willing individual within one step. The target immediately heals 1 point of normal damage. Corpore Sano can only be used once per turn. You may use Corpore Sano to heal yourself.

Focus [Wits]:

In addition to the normal properties of Corpore Sano, you may also choose to spend 1 Blood in order to heal a point of aggravated damage.

●●●● Shepherd's Watch

Like a shepherd guarding her flock from wolves and other predators, those who seek your protection can find peace and shelter in your presence. An aura of gentle vigilance surrounds you, lending a sense of hope and calmness to those who remain close by.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to activate Shepherd's Watch. Shepherd's Watch protects you and all individuals you choose, including creatures and people, so long as they are within two steps of you. While this power is active, no one with hostile intent can come within five steps of you or those you choose to guard. If an individual standing within five steps chooses to attack or use a hostile power targeting you or those you are guarding, the attempt automatically fails. The attacker is immediately and automatically pushed five steps away from her target as though by a gentle, supernatural hand.

Shepherd's Watch does not prevent individuals using ranged weapons or powers from attacking you or those you protect. If an individual protected by your Shepherd's Watch attacks or targets someone with a hostile power (whether targeting an individual inside or outside of your aura), she immediately loses the protection of Shepherd's Watch. Such a character cannot be protected by the power for the next hour.

Once Shepherd's Watch is activated, and you have chosen the individuals you are protecting with this power, you cannot add other individuals to that protection unless

you reactivate Shepherd's Watch. There is no limit to the number of individuals you can protect with this power, so long as they remain within five steps of your physical form.

Every turn after the first, you must spend 1 point of Blood to keep Shepherd's Watch active. If you stop spending Blood, or take any action other than speech or simple movement, this power immediately ends.

Focus [Wits]:

Characters protected by your Shepherd's Watch also gain a + 3 bonus to Dodge- and Survival-based defense test pools.

●●●●● King's Blessing

By laying your hands upon the sick or injured, you heal the subject's body of any affliction or malady, bringing her to a state of full health. When this occurs, a gentle feeling of peace spreads throughout your target's soul, rendering it temporarily joyful and in harmony with the world. Some vampires see this as a blessing; others see it as infernal trickery intended to hide the user's true nature.

System:

Spend 3 points of Blood and touch a willing target for one minute to activate King's Blessing. Thereafter, you heal any physical maladies your target currently suffers, so long as you wish to cure those issues. King's Blessing can be used to heal wounds, regrow lost limbs, rectify genetic defects, counteract poisons or drugs, cure disease, and remove unwanted alterations to the physical form, such as those caused by Vicissitude. King's Blessing can only be used on willing targets. Characters who cannot spend 3 Blood in a single turn can fulfill this requirement over multiple turns, so long as the Blood is spent consecutively.

Focus [Perception]:

Your use of King's Blessing can also bring peace to those with psychological ailments or wounds, and can even cure derangements. After fulfilling all other costs of this power, you can also remove one derangement from an individual. Note that this power cannot permanently remove a Malkavian's primary derangement, though it does relieve the derangement for a short time. A Malkavian does not gain Derangement traits, regardless of how often the primary derangement is triggered, for one hour. For more information on Derangements and Derangement traits, see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 266**.

Obfuscate

"Dead? Really? Who told you that?
Perhaps they just weren't watching closely enough."
— Anatole, Prophet of Gehenna

As creatures of the night, vampires often rely on their ability to remain hidden, keeping themselves unnoticed through stealth or misdirection. Obfuscate is the power of fogging another's mind, lowering her perception, and making her miss small details or notable inconsistencies. With this power, a vampire can change her physical appearance, steal or conceal valuable items, and even cloak a small group of individuals from sight. So long as an Obfuscated individual does nothing to draw attention to herself or interact with her environment, such as by speaking to someone or manipulating a visible object, she remains unnoticed.

Obfuscate affects all five senses. It can visibly change or conceal an individual's physical appearance and also mask minor incongruent sounds, alter the user's voice, disguise the individual's odor, or even make a ratty denim jacket feel like rich leather, all to support an Obfuscate-based disguise.

Obfuscate and Animals: Animals can occasionally sense when a vampire who currently possesses any number of Beast traits is nearby, even if that vampire is hidden or altered by Obfuscate. This doesn't allow the animal to pierce the vampire's Obfuscate, but it will cause the animal to become noticeably nervous, skittish, and aggressive.

Obfuscate and Auspex: A vampire using Auspex can attempt to use her sharpened senses to pierce an individual's Obfuscate. The Auspex user must test using her Mental attribute + Investigation versus the Obfuscate user's Mental attribute + Willpower. The Obfuscate user may opt to use her Mental attribute + Stealth as a defensive test pool rather than her Mental attribute + Willpower.

If the Auspex user is successful, she pierces the powers of Obfuscate.

Obfuscate and Machines: Obfuscate works by clouding the minds of observers and, therefore, has no effect on machines. An obfuscated character will still be picked up by a metal detector, can be caught on a stationary or automatic video camera, and will have her weight felt by elevator sensors. However, any individuals utilizing such machines may omit the Obfuscated character. A paparazzi taking pictures might pause between shots of a crowd, or an airport guard with a hand-held metal detector might hold it away from the Obfuscated individual without even noticing. An individual in an elevator would not bother to look at the sensors, so long as the elevator did not mechanically trigger an alarm.

Obfuscate does cloud the minds of those observing a location through the use of electronic equipment (remotely or otherwise), so long as they are watching live (or near-live) recordings. An airport guard looking at a video monitor will not notice an invisible character caught on her security camera, even if there are a few seconds of natural lag or even a full minute's delay, between her display and the actual events. However, if that same guard rewinds her recording to view something that happened 10 minutes or more in the past, she'll see the image of the Obfuscated vampire as captured by the recording device.

Obfuscate Test Pool: The Obfuscate user's Mental attribute + Stealth versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

• Conceal

Your Obfuscate power allows you to blur objects in your possession, causing them to be ignored even if you are being searched. Such items appear or disappear on your person as you wish, staying cloaked from view so long as they are not actively in use.

System:

Expend a simple action to conceal a weapon or other object you possess; the item must be no bigger than a large sword. Objects hidden with Conceal remain invisible as long as they are physically on your person. Conceal cannot be used to hide living or undead beings (or parts thereof). Conceal cannot be used to hide negative space; it can hide a chair, but not a doorway.

If another individual is looking at an item when you Conceal it, the observer automatically sees through this use of Obfuscate. However, if the observer looks away for more than a few seconds, one turn in combat, she will lose track of the object and it will be concealed.

Conceal can be used to maintain the invisibility of up to three objects at once. You may end an object's Conceal at any time.

If you interact with a Concealed object, use it to attack someone, or otherwise draw attention to the object, it will become visible. If you place other characters in a position where they must logically acknowledge the object's existence, the Conceal will fail and the object will become visible to all. For example, no one will notice a shotgun hanging in a back-holster, but if you reach back and obviously draw that shotgun, it will appear. People might not notice you carrying a book, but if you are struggling under the weight of a hand-held anvil, it will become visible to all.

Focus [Intelligence]:

You can Conceal up to 10 objects at one time, so long as they remain on your person. You can Conceal objects up to six feet long, rather than three. You still cannot Conceal living or undead beings.

•• Unseen Presence

With concentration, you can shield yourself from notice, fogging the minds of anyone who might otherwise realize your presence in the room. Your powers of Obfuscate are such that you may use this power to stealthily spy on others – or escape a difficult situation – while remaining completely unseen.

System:

Expend a standard action to become invisible, taking with you all inanimate items on your person. Unseen Presence cannot be used to make another character invisible, even if the character is unconscious or dead. While under the effects of Unseen Presence, small sounds, fragrances, or other minimal effects of your presence will be ignored by others. If you talk, touch someone, produce an outlandish odor, or take any action that requires a challenge, your Unseen Presence will immediately end.

If another individual is looking at you when you activate Unseen Presence, the observer automatically sees through this use of Obfuscate. You will be invisible to anyone who was not looking at you when you used Unseen Presence, and if an observer looks away for more than a few seconds, one turn in combat, she will automatically lose track of you.

If you interact with the environment, speak with another character, or draw attention to yourself, your Obfuscate will break and you will become visible. If you place other characters in a position where they must logically acknowledge your existence, the Unseen Presence will fail, and you will become visible to all. No one will notice an individual casually standing in a room, even if they must walk around her, as long as they can do so easily. However, if that invisible vampire blocks the exit to a room when others wish to leave, her invisibility will fail.

Focus [Wits]:

You can talk in a low voice or use your standard action to interact with an unattended object, without breaking your Unseen Presence. You might quietly tell your allies to "watch out" or confuse onlookers by opening a door without breaking Obfuscate. Your Unseen Presence will still break if you shout, interact with a character, interact with something in another character's control, or take an action that requires a challenge.

●●● Mask of a Thousand Faces

By shifting other's perceptions and fogging their minds, you cause observers to see you differently. You may use this power to become a bland, indistinct individual, easily forgotten in a crowd, or you may choose to become a specific type of person, such as a policeman or a waitress. With some study, you can even cause your physical form to reflect that of another individual you know, taking on her features, clothing, vocal sound, and other distinctive qualities. This power changes your clothing as well, altering it as you wish (within certain limits of believability). Note, however, that this power confers no ability to mystically know an individual's physical quirks or habits, vocal occlusions, memories, or social graces; only the details of a person's appearance are conferred.

System:

Expend a simple action to wrap yourself in the veil of Obfuscate, changing all sensory aspects of your appearance: visual, as well as audible and olfactory. You may use Mask of a Thousand Faces to appear as a generic-looking and generally forgettable person, or to specifically mimic the appearance of someone you've studied.

Mask of a Thousand Faces can be used to mimic anything that generally matches your form. A vampire in human form could look like an old man, a child, or a soccer mom, but she cannot appear to be a horse. Similarly, a vampire who uses Shape of the Beast to transform into a wolf can use this power to appear as a large dog, but not as a man.

To believably mimic a specific individual's appearance, you must have at least 2 dots of the Subterfuge skill, and you must study that individual from multiple angles, for at least five minutes learning her facial expressions, how she moves, and other distinctive qualities. You might be able to mimic someone's face after studying a photograph, but your disguise will not fool people who have previously met your target, as you do not know enough to successfully replicate that person. To believably mimic another character's voice, you must have at least 3 dots of the Subterfuge skill, and you must listen to her talk for at least five minutes as she uses a variety of words and phrases. Listening to a recording of that voice is not enough for a true replication; your disguised voice would not have the variety necessary to fool anyone who has ever spoken directly to your target.

Mask of a Thousand Faces can be used to change the appearance of your clothing and equipment in minor ways, so long as your equipment does not change significantly in size or shape. A dinner jacket could be made to appear as a windbreaker, or a ribbon around your neck could appear to be a fancy tie, but this power cannot make that dinner jacket look like a floor-length trenchcoat, nor could it make a pistol look like a pencil. Mask of a Thousand Faces cannot be used to make an object invisible or partially invisible. You might make a hoodie and jeans look like a suit and slacks, but you cannot reduce them to appear as if you were wearing a bikini. Mask of a Thousand Faces can only affect objects that you are holding or that are on your person.

Focus [Wits]:

You can dramatically change the appearance of your wardrobe and equipment. You are capable of feats such as making a cell phone look like a shotgun or causing a hoodie and jeans to appear as though you are wearing a ball gown.

●●●● Vanish From the Mind's Eye

Your control over the power of Obfuscate is so great that you and your items fade from plain sight, even when you are actively being observed.

System:

If you activate Conceal or Unseen Presence while someone is watching, Vanish from the Mind's Eye allows you to make an opposed challenge against any observers, using your Obfuscate test pool. If you succeed, your power takes hold despite their alertness, and you or the object you are targeting becomes invisible at the end of the everyman round.

To use Vanish From the Mind's Eye against multiple observers, you must test against each observer. If you spend a Willpower to retest, you gain a retest against each observer. If you succeed against some observers but not others, only those who fail the challenge will be unable to see you. Those who succeed can continue to see you (or the object you're attempting to Conceal) as though you had not used Vanish From the Mind's Eye. As with other Obfuscate powers, if an individual who has seen through your Obfuscate looks away for more than a few seconds, one turn in combat, she loses track of the item or individual covered by Obfuscate.

Once you've purchased Vanish From the Mind's Eye, characters with Heightened Senses cannot pierce any of your Obfuscate powers unless they have the 5th dot of Auspex. Additionally, characters without 5 dots of Auspex do not automatically notice your presence, no matter how close you stand.

Vanish From the Mind's Eye can be used every turn, even if you failed to vanish in a previous turn. This is an exception to the rule that prevents a character from immediately retrying a failed Mental challenge.

Exceptional Success:

If you score an exceptional success against someone attempting to see through your Vanish from the Mind's Eye, that observer cannot contest any of your other uses of Vanish From the Mind's Eye, Mask of a Thousand Faces, Conceal, or Unseen Presence for the next hour. This prevents her from using normal means to retain sight of you, but does not prevent her from using Auspex (if she possesses that power) to foil your uses of Obfuscate.

Focus [Intelligence]:

When you lose a Vanish From the Mind's Eye test, you gain a retest for this attempt to use the power, without having to spend Willpower. If you fail to vanish from multiple observers, you gain this benefit for each challenge you failed, allowing you to retest against each observer. These retests act in all ways like a Willpower retest.

●●●●● Cloak the Gathering

As a master of the power of Obfuscate, you may extend your mental protection to others, cloaking them with your ability. With concentration, you can shield them all from view or provide disguises.

System:

When you use a standard action to activate Unseen Presence, Mask of a Thousand Faces, or Vanish from the Mind's Eye, you may choose to extend the effects of those powers to nearby allies. By using Cloak the Gathering, you may extend one of the above Obfuscate powers to a number of willing individuals equal to your number of dots in the Stealth skill, minimum one.

Individuals feel a sudden, distinct chill when Obfuscate is used in an attempt to cloak them, but the targets have no mystical ability to know who is trying to use the power, nor to what extent. If any of your targets do not wish to be affected by Obfuscate, the power automatically fails to work on that individual. The power continues to work normally on other willing targets. If a character affected by your Obfuscate becomes unwilling at any point, the Obfuscate ends immediately for that individual.

A character can always see through her own uses of Obfuscate, regardless of whom she is affecting. Further, other characters concealed by a single use of Cloak the Gathering can see each other normally. If one of your allies breaks her Obfuscate or moves more than 20 steps away from you, the power ceases to function for her but remains active for you and all other characters covered by this use of Cloak the Gathering. If you break the Obfuscate, however, your Cloak the Gathering ceases to function for all.

When this power is used to augment Vanish from the Mind's Eye, you only need to test once per observer, as though you had simply vanished yourself. If you are successful, you Obfuscate the entire group.

You can use Cloak the Gathering to extend more than one Obfuscate power, but you cannot extend the same power to more than one group at a time. For example, you might make five people invisible and make five people look like various circus performers, but you cannot use this power multiple times to make 10 or 15 people invisible.

Cloak the Gathering can only be used on sentient creatures and confers no ability to conceal animals.

Focus [Intelligence]:

You may extend your Obfuscate powers to a number of willing individuals equal to twice your number of dots in the Stealth skill.

Obtenebration

"Where can you go, when the night conspires against you?
Where will you hide, while the shadows whisper your name?
Come with me. There is no other choice."

— Romero de la Salle

The masters of Obtenebration can command darkness itself, ordering it to carry out their will. While the untutored believe these are simple tricks of shadow, the truth is far more dangerous. Obtenebration is wholly unnatural, calling on the essence of the Abyss and drawing it into the physical world. This darkness mutes sound, absorbs light, and seems almost tangible. It is willful, as well, twisting and writhing with a sentience of its own, unless tightly controlled by its wielder.

Spirits of all kinds fear the Abyss, and ghosts will flee from it rather than be driven murderously insane by its touch.

All powers of Obtenebration, including elder powers and techniques, are automatically dispelled if exposed to sunlight.

There is no standardized Obtenebration test pool.

● Shadow Play

At your command, the shadows in an area fill with the energy of the Abyss, moving and shaping as you require. These shadows animate, move about, flicker, and even achieve a limited form of perverse sentience, reaching out to brush icy cold fingers against anything that comes too close.

System:

This power grants the vampire control over natural shadows present in an area. Spend 1 Blood and expend a simple action to animate nearby patches of darkness for the next five minutes. Your animated shadows are not truly intelligent, but they have a form of rudimentary cunning, which allows them to follow your simple instructions.

Your shadows are semi-solid and capable of moving objects weighing up to one pound. Animated shadows have one standard action each turn and can use that action to move up to three steps, to perform a simple action, or to attack. Your animated shadows always move and attack as a group.

If directed to attack, the shadows wrap themselves around a single target, attempting to draw out her breath. The shadows' attack test pool is 8. Undead are not affected by this attack, but living individuals take 1 point of damage per successful attack, which cannot be reduced or negated, as they desperately gasp for breath. Your animated shadows are independent creatures, and directing them to attack does not require an action. If you are affected by a Mental or Social power, your shadows are similarly affected. If you cannot break your target's Majesty, your shadows are also unable to attack. These shadow-helpers do not normally take damage from Physical attacks, but are dispelled if exposed to bright light or to fire. Even a single point of fire damage, such as one from an incendiary bullet, is enough to send your shadow spawn back to the Abyss.

A character can only have one application of Shadow Play active at a time.

Focus [Appearance]:

You can instruct your shadows to cling to your body, making you extremely intimidating to behold. While this power is active, your terrifying countenance makes you immune to the exceptional successes of Dominate and Presence.

•• Shroud of Night

By calling upon the eternal depths of the Abyss, you evoke a swath of thick, preternatural blackness, which absorbs all light and distorts sound. Those within it feel an aching chill, hear murmured weeping, and sense the soft pressure of an ocean's waves rolling through their bodies and out into...nothingness.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a simple action to summon forth a cloud of viscous shadow, the utter essence of the Abyss. You can call this darkness into existence anywhere within your line of sight. The Shroud of Night has a six-step diameter and obscures all light within it, thus creating an utterly unnatural-looking area of pitch darkness.

Anyone trapped in your Shroud of Night is blinded, unless she has some preternatural method of seeing through the formless void. Individuals within the shroud must use the Blind Fighting combat maneuver to attack. Characters with powers such as Eyes of the Beast can see through a Shroud of Night, and characters with other sensory powers, such as Heightened Senses, can compensate for lost sight, allowing them to attack normally.

Within a shroud, most living beings, such as animals or people, suffer 1 point of normal damage on your initiative each turn, as the Abyss steals their breath and saps their will to live. This damage cannot be reduced or negated. Undead are immune to this effect, as are Stamina-focused living characters.

You are immune to the effects of your own Shroud of Night; you see normally through the Shroud, and you are not disconcerted by its touch. After creating a Shroud of Night, you may use a simple action to move your Shroud three steps in any direction. Alternately, you can use a simple action and spend 1 point of Blood to increase your shroud's radius by two steps, after it has been summoned into existence by the first use of this power.

Focus [Manipulation]:

Your Shroud of Night manifests a much stronger conduit to the unnatural energies of the Abyss. Undead remain unaffected by the damaging effects of your shroud, but living creatures take 3 points of normal damage per turn, instead of the standard 1 point. Even living creatures who are Stamina-focused cannot so easily shrug off the effects; they take 2 points of damage each turn within your shroud. Additionally, all individuals within your shroud suffer a -2 penalty to attack test pools (Physical, Mental, and Social). Characters using supernatural powers to bypass the blinding effect of your shroud are not immune to this -2 penalty. Characters using the Blind Fighting combat maneuver do not suffer this -2 penalty.

••• Arms of the Abyss

As your mastery of Obtenebration grows, your ability to summon the Abyss becomes ever more frightening. You can call forth tentacles of Abyssal darkness, creatures bound to the shadows themselves. These servants strike and coil at your command, serving your every wish.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend your simple action to cause dark tentacles to rise from shadows within your line of sight.

These tentacles are a tangible manifestation of the primal sentience within the Abyssal void. When you activate this power, you create one Arm of the Abyss for each Obtenebration power you possess, including techniques, to a maximum of five. Arms of the Abyss cannot move from the spot in which they are summoned.

Each Arm of the Abyss acts independently of the rest, functioning as an entirely sentient creature. An Arm of the Abyss has one standard action each turn. It can use this action to attack any target within two steps. Arms of the Abyss have an attack test pool of 8, and a successful attack inflicts 1 point of normal damage. However, instead of inflicting damage, you may choose to have an Arm of the Abyss Grapple its target. In this manner, an Arm of the Abyss can use the Grapple combat maneuver without spending Willpower. In mass combat, Arms of the Abyss can provide the assist attacker tactic to a nearby ally. If this occurs, the Arms of the Abyss give that ally a +1 bonus to her attack test pool, similar to a Stock NPC. Arms of the Abyss cannot provide the assist defender tactic.

Arms of the Abyss have no mind and cannot be targeted by Mental and Social powers. However, if you are incapable of attacking a target, your arms are also incapable of taking hostile action. For example, if you cannot break your target's Majesty, your Arms of the Abyss are also unable to attack.

An Arm of the Abyss has 4 health levels. Arms are immediately destroyed if exposed to sunlight.

Focus [Manipulation]:

Your Arms of the Abyss have an attack test pool of 10. If you possess even 1 dot of Potence, your Arms of the Abyss inflict 2 points of normal damage, rather than 1. If you possess even 1 dot of Fortitude, your Arms of the Abyss have 6 health levels, instead of the normal 4.

●●●● Black Metamorphosis

By wrapping the darkness of the Abyss around your body, you meld your corpse with the sentience of the ancient depths. Bands of darkness ripple across your pale flesh, and flailing tentacles manifest from your ribcage, transforming you into a creature of the Abyss.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to transform into a monstrous creature of shadow. The raw material of the void envelops you in undulating bands, and four tentacles (similar in appearance to Arms of the Abyss) rise from your ribcage.

The additional limbs provided by Black Metamorphosis cannot attack independently, but add to your own actions. Once each turn, on your initiative, you can make a Brawl attack using the arms provided by Black Metamorphosis, without using an action. This attack can target anyone within five steps. Attacks made with Black Metamorphosis use your normal Brawl test pool and inflict your normal Brawl damage. Black Metamorphosis attacks may be modified by your Potence powers, including elder Potence and Potence-based techniques, but cannot be modified by any other discipline powers. Black Metamorphosis cannot be used to attack during Celerity rounds.

Attacks made by Black Metamorphosis can be modified by the Grapple combat maneuver, although you must still pay the normal cost to use that maneuver. Black Metamorphosis cannot be modified by any combat maneuvers other than Grapple.

Black Metamorphosis is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers. You may end this transformation at any time by expending a simple action. Black Metamorphosis' transformation is close enough to human to allow you to use weapons.

Focus [Appearance]:

While in Black Metamorphosis, you can sense your surroundings perfectly, even during the depths of night, or while within the unnatural darkness of other Obtenebration effects. You are immune to all of the effects of Shroud of Night, even the -2 penalty inflicted by Shroud of Night's focus effect. Additionally, your terrifying countenance makes you immune to exceptional successes generated by Dominate and Presence powers.

●●●●● Tenebrous Form

By invoking this power, you do not merely summon forth the might of the Abyss; you actually allow the void to enter your spirit and manifest within your soul. Your physical form transmutes into a body of shadow: a rippling, liquid shape of utter void. While in this form, you can slither through holes and cracks, and you can see through all forms of darkness.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend both your simple and standard actions in order to transform into a flowing creature of liquid shadow. While in Tenebrous Form, you cannot spend Blood, activate powers, or physically attack, but you are also immune to Physical attacks from sources other than fire and sunlight. You can be injured by non-Physical attacks, and you can be harmed by flaming weapons, such as a torch

or a road flare; however, incendiary ammunition passes through your form too quickly to inflict damage. You take 1 additional point of aggravated damage from fire, flaming weapons, or sunlight while in this form.

While in Tenebrous Form, you are not truly intangible. You are capable of slipping through small openings, sliding under doors, and oozing through holes, but you cannot pass through solid objects.

A character in Tenebrous Form can talk and move normally. Additionally, you can move at normal speed along any solid surface, including up a wall or across a ceiling. Though you cannot actually fly, you don't take damage from falling while in Tenebrous Form. You can be touched if an individual passes her hand through your form, and you may touch other characters by extending a shadowy limb or by slithering against them. Touching or being touched may require a Brawl attack.

Tenebrous Form is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You may spend 1 Blood while in Tenebrous Form to manifest a pair of red, glowing eyes. Doing this allows you to use the first 3 dots of Dominate and Presence while in shadow form, as long as you already possess those powers. This is an exception to the rule that prevents a character from using disciplines or spending Blood while in Tenebrous Form.

Potence

"Son, I'll punch you so hard that when someone pulls you out of the ground, they'll have to crown him King of England."

— Vance St. Benedict,
Cardinal of the Sabbat

All vampires are capable of short bursts of preternatural strength, simply through the expenditure of blood. Practitioners of the Potence discipline have tapped into the primal quality of their blood in order to make such strength permanent. The inhuman might of Potence is incredible and clearly supernatural. With this discipline, a vampire can easily break bones or shatter stone. Armor is meaningless to her, as are obstacles. Anything in her way will simply be demolished or hurled aside.

Each dot of Potence represents an additional increase to a character's physical strength, and each dot stacks with all other mechanical bonuses granted by other dots of this discipline. If your character has Vigor (Potence •••), she also has the bonuses granted by Prowess (Potence •) and Might (Potence ••), which she must possess to reach Vigor.

Potence powers are always active, and do not normally require Blood to activate. Some techniques and elder powers may require Blood or an action to activate; refer to each power for specifics. The Potence powers cannot be used outside of hand-to-hand and melee combat range, unless the power specifies that you can do so.

There is no standardized Potence test pool.

Focus [Strength]:

Strength-focused characters who have at least 1 dot of Potence add +2 to all Brawl and Melee attack test pools.

• Prowess

Your blows achieve remarkable concussion, smashing through protective gear and shattering mortal bones with a single strike.

System:

Your character's Brawl and Melee attacks are armor piercing. You ignore your opponents' armor bonuses.

•• Might

Your strength is clearly supernatural. You attack with mighty force, overwhelming your enemies with incredible blows.

System:

When you succeed making a Brawl or Melee attack, your character automatically inflicts 2 points of damage.

Normal Success: Your character inflicts 2 points of damage at this level of Potence.

Exceptional Success: Your character inflicts 3 points of damage.

••• Vigor

With such monumental brawn, you can heft hundreds of pounds with ease, wielding enough power to crush metal support beams or knock over brick walls.

System:

When making a Brawl or Melee attack, you gain a +5 bonus to determine whether or not the attack achieves an exceptional success.

●●●● Intensity

This level of strength allows you to tow cars short distances, mangling iron and steel with ease. Your strikes deliver titanic damage to enemies unfortunate enough to stand in your way.

System:

Any time you achieve an exceptional success with a Brawl or Melee attack, your character automatically inflicts 2 additional points of damage, rather than the standard 1 additional point she would normally inflict when she scores an exceptional success.

Normal Success: Your character inflicts 2 point of damage at this level of Potence.

Exceptional Success: Your character inflicts 4 points of damage, rather than the standard 3, when she scores an exceptional success.

●●●●● Puissance

The strength you can muster is monumental, leveling phenomenal amounts of force with each blow. Such power is beyond supernatural; it is the stuff of legend.

System:

When you succeed making a Brawl or Melee attack, your character automatically inflicts 3 points of damage. This amount includes the extra damage granted by Might. Note that Intensity still adds an additional point of damage, but only when you achieve an exceptional success.

Normal Success: Your character inflicts 3 points of damage at this level of Potence.

Exceptional Success: Your character inflicts 5 points of damage, rather than 4 points. This amount reflects the bonus from Intensity.

Presence

"Her smile brought me a fiendish joy.
Her silence drove me to angelic despair.
Can you understand what it is to love that deeply?"

The beauty and elegance of vampires has inspired generations of mortals to write poetry, songs, and stories, each struggling to relate the magnificence of these seductive undead. A vampire's natural aura of command, intimidation, or sensuality draws the attention like nothing else, and practitioners of the Presence discipline have mastered this ability. Such creatures can inspire or terrify, seduce or bring about tremendous despair as they withdraw their attention from an unfortunate paramour.

Through the use of Presence, vampires practice subtle manipulation. Where Dominate is a hammer, Presence is an iron hand in a velvet glove. This discipline sways the emotions and may not even be noticed, if the effects are applied cunningly enough. Presence doesn't alter thought processes or change a subject's personality; it simply enflames the target's affections and sentiments, compelling her with newborn emotions.

Presence targets don't lose their sanity, nor are they prone to believe ridiculous things simply because the vampire said they are true. Still, inspiration, eloquence, or gifts of wealth or power, when used in combination with this discipline, can earn permanent conversions to the vampire's cause.

Presence Test Pool: A Presence wielder uses her Social attribute + Leadership versus the target's Social attribute + Willpower.

● Awe

You get noticed, even in the busiest room. Your beauty and charisma draw the attention of others like moths to a flame. Even those who do not agree with your cause or your purposes will stop and listen, willing for a moment to give you the benefit of the doubt.

System:

To activate Awe, spend 1 Blood point and expend a standard action. For the remainder of the scene, you seem larger than life, more impressive than usual, and everyone within conversational distance will pay attention to you and will feel a strong desire to be near you. Characters affected by Awe are not compelled to like, trust, or stop attacking you, but they must pay attention to you. A target affected by Awe is automatically considered to be focused on you, as per the Gaze and Focus rule on **page 113**.

Characters may ignore all uses of Awe for one hour, even if they come from multiple individuals, by spending a point of Willpower.

Focus [Appearance]:

Characters who wish to overcome your Awe must spend 2 Willpower, rather than 1, to ignore your Awe for the next hour. No matter how many characters in the area have this focus, expending 2 Willpower will ignore all focused uses of Awe.

•• Dread Gaze

A vampire's Beast is a terrifying thing, feral and predatory. Using Dread Gaze allows the Beast to surface, focusing its rage on another individual. A vampire's bloodthirsty nature is apparent in her features as the Beast hisses or roars in dark, primal wrath. Those targeted by this fearsome power often quail before it, fleeing in terror from the fury of the Beast.

System:

Expend a standard action as your character bares her fangs and hisses or roars at her target, and then make an opposed challenge against your target. If you are successful, she is overcome by fear. She will not willingly come within five steps of you for the next five minutes, and actively seeks to avoid your presence and your anger.

A character who has been affected by your Dread Gaze will not attack you unless she has no other option. If forced into a confined place with you, the victim may fight you in order to escape, but will move away and stop fighting at the earliest opportunity.

Exceptional Success:

For the rest of the evening, if you make any aggressive movement towards the individual who has been subjected to your successful Dread Gaze, this power will re-exert itself, and your victim will be forced to back away, suffering the effect of Dread Gaze for another five minutes.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You can expose the fury of your Beast without revealing your vampiric nature. Instead of bearing your fangs and hissing, you glare at your target. Your eyes seem bright and piercing, brows knitted and features writ in anger; your motions are predatory — but your visage is not a breach of the Masquerade. Observers will notice that you appear aggressive toward your opponent, but they will have no reason to think you are a vampire.

••• Entrancement

A gentle smile can sway the hardest heart. You are the highlight of the gathering, a star in a cloudy sky, the sole recipient of attention. Few others can match your beauty and poise, and those who are lucky enough to gain your attention will do anything to keep it.

System:

To activate Entrancement, spend 1 Blood, expend a standard action and make an opposed challenge against your target. If successful, you bend your target's emotions and capture her heart. She becomes immediately receptive to you, rationalizing any disdain or negative feelings she had for you before you used this power. While the target is not your slave and will not blindly obey your commands, the subject admires you greatly and is willing to work toward your goals, within reason.

Both during the effects and after this power fades, the subject will rationalize the effect of Entrancement. Those who already felt positively toward you will simply remember that you were particularly alluring; those who moderately disliked you will begrudgingly blame the brief change of heart on your incredible persuasive skills. Only an individual who actively reviled you and wished you harm will clearly see that her actions were manipulated. Others, watching the Entranced individual, may see more clearly that she is under the sway of your emotional control — but it will be difficult to convince the Entranced individual that such is true.

Entranced characters cannot bring themselves to harm you, physically or politically, and will generally be as nice to you as reasonably possible. Entrancement is not mind control, and characters you've Entranced are not obligated to follow your instructions to the letter. They will generally try to make you happy, and they will take your side in arguments or conflicts, so long as they are not put in danger by doing so. An Entranced character will not blood bind herself to you or risk her life to defend you, but she will lend assistance as long as the situation isn't dangerous.

If you attack someone you've Entranced, this power's effect ends immediately.

Exceptional Success:

If you achieve an exceptional success, the target of your Entrancement suffers a -3 penalty to resist or overcome your other Presence powers for the duration of this effect. This benefit applies to all powers of Presence, including elder powers and Presence-based techniques.

Focus [Appearance]:

When you use Entrancement successfully, the effects last for three hours instead of one.

•••• Summon

Your powers of persuasion are so strong that you can mystically compel others to come when you beckon, even if they are miles away. The mere memory of your beauty and inspiring personality haunts them, and they feel the soft, insistent call of your spirit summoning them to your side.

System:

To Summon another individual, spend 1 point of Blood and expend a standard action. Make an opposed challenge against a familiar target. For more information on familiarity, see **page 114**.

Once you have begun a Summons, you cannot leave the area where you initiated the power, or the Summons will immediately end. If you succeed, the target of your Summons automatically realizes she has been affected by the use of a power, as well as the identity of the individual performing the Summons, and the location where she is to meet with you. If your target doesn't trust you, she can spend a brief period of time, up to 10 minutes, taking precautions before answering your Summons.

A summoned target will come as quickly and directly as possible, but she also retains her survival instincts. The target will not walk off a cliff or enter a situation that she realizes may be an ambush.

If it is not possible for a character to present herself to you physically without entering a dangerous situation, the target must come as close as possible and contact you in some other way, such as via a phone call, forcing a human to deliver a note, or sending an animal messenger. If the target is not aware of an overt risk to her safety, she will respond to your Summon in person, even if you have sinister plans.

Summoned mortals will continue following your call across any distance, no matter how much time it takes to reach your side, so long as you remain on the premises where you initiated the Summon. They will eventually present themselves to you, even if they have to travel for days. Supernatural creatures travel as far as possible until they reach you or until the next sunrise, whichever comes first.

Exceptional Success:

The target of your Summons doesn't know the power has been used, and, therefore, also cannot sense the identity of the individual summoning her. She will move to present herself at your location without realizing why — or where she's headed. Your Summon still ends if the target can't approach you without walking into an obviously dangerous situation.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You can Summon your Retainers, ghouls, and individuals who are blood bound to you without expending Blood or a standard action. You can use this aspect of Summon even when you are staked or in torpor. This is an exception to the rule that prevents powers from being used while staked or in torpor.

●●●●● Majesty

You have mastered the ability to channel your vampiric Beast's emotions, focusing its rage into a dark, regal bearing that seems almost palpable. The force of your personality causes meeker hearts to quail, and fearful individuals to bow or grovel before you as you demand their respect. Hearts break and even the most stalwart tremble as you pass, overwhelmed by the authority and sovereignty of your countenance. You take on the aspect and mien of ancient rulers, expressed however is appropriate — be it through intimidation and command, worshipful subservience, sexual magnetism, or purity and grace.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action to activate Majesty. For the next hour, you appear to be the apotheosis of your character's best nature – astonishingly beautiful, terrifyingly evil, regal beyond reproach, or otherwise – as reflects your character's personality. The feeling of a character's Majesty can vary, depending upon the user's personality and current mood.

Majesty manifests as a domineering emotional presence, amplifying your character's nature. While this power is active, others cannot show you disrespect, and while they may disagree with you, they must do so with utmost courtesy.

Anyone who wishes to attack or be rude to your character must make an opposed challenge, using her Social attribute + Willpower versus your Social attribute + Leadership. If the aggressor fails this challenge, she cannot make another attempt against your Majesty for at least 10 minutes. She becomes trapped in the effects of your Majesty and will continue to treat you with respect and courtesy even if she leaves your locale. After 10 minutes have passed, the aggressor may again attempt to break your Majesty. This effect also applies to powers that don't directly target the Majesty user, but instead target the area encompassing the Majesty user. If a character wishes to engulf a room in fire and one of the characters in the radius has Majesty active, the aggressor must test against that Majesty to do so.

If you attack an individual affected by your Majesty, or if you use a power on such an individual, your Majesty immediately breaks for that person. She is rendered immune to your Majesty for the next hour and can treat you as she would normally, even attacking you, as she sees fit. This breaking of Majesty only affects the specific individual; others in the area who are affected by your Majesty are not freed simply by witnessing your aggression toward their friend.

During a mass combat scene, if you use the assist defender tactic to force someone to attack you instead of their intended victim, your Majesty automatically breaks for that attacker, as you have acted aggressively towards her. If you

attack a character who is aided by the assist defender tactic, your Majesty is broken for both the new target and the original target, unless you choose to forgo your attack when the other players declare their use of the assist defender tactic. For more information, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, Mass Combat, page 281**.

Focus [Appearance]:

While your Majesty is active, you ignore the Majesty of other characters.

Protean

"To hunt, to soar, to fear neither man nor beast.
This is what it means to be a vampire."

— Beckett, Noddist Scholar

For hundreds of years, vampires clung to the shelter of cities, hiding themselves among mortal man. The wilderness was too untamed for all but the most savage and the most hardy. The Protean discipline, developed first among the Gangrel, allowed a vampire to find shelter in the soil of the earth, or to travel as swiftly as a bat could fly or a wolf could run. Protean was essential to vampiric survival in the Middle Ages, and even in modern nights, it remains one of the most cinematic and renowned disciplines of the children of Caine.

There is no standardized Protean test pool.

• Eyes of the Beast

With but a moment of concentration, you can shift the composition of your eyes to more greatly resemble those of an animal. Your ability to see in darkness increases, but this refraction also gives your eyes an eerie, animalistic glow.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use a simple action to activate Eyes of the Beast. For the next hour, your eyes glow a soft, feral red. While this effect lasts, you can see perfectly even in pitch darkness. So long as your character is not physically blinded, you can fight in darkness without needing the Fighting Blind combat maneuver.

Focus [Perception]:

Your Eyes of the Beast are always active, and you do not need to spend Blood to activate this power. Unlike the standard activation of this power, your eyes do not glow unless you choose to make them glow. Causing your eyes to glow, or to stop glowing, requires the expenditure of a simple action.

•• Feral Claws

By activating this power, your fingernails lengthen and harden into sharp, powerful claws. These claws are supernatural and capable of rending flesh, stone, or even thin sheets of metal. You can retract these claws with a mere effort of will, returning your hands to their normal state.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use a simple action to activate Feral Claws. Your fingernails sharpen, harden, and lengthen into clearly visible, bestial claws. Slashing a foe with your Feral Claws inflicts aggravated damage. You may sheath Feral Claws at any time by spending a simple action. A character attacking with Feral Claws uses her Physical attribute + Brawl versus the target's Physical attribute + Dodge.

If your claws break, you can regrow them by reactivating this power.

Focus [Wits]:

You can grow or sheath Feral Claws at any time without expending an action. Additionally, when you activate Feral Claws, your muscles subtly rearrange themselves to make slashing more efficient. When fighting with Feral Claws, you receive a +1 bonus to your Brawl attack test pools.

••• Earth Meld

Before the advent of rapid transportation and widespread civilization, the power to meld with the earth in order to sleep safely, hidden from the sun, was absolutely essential for vampires to survive. By using this power, a vampire can mystically meld with the soil at her feet, and remain hidden there until she wills herself to rise.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to sink into the ground. You must be touching the earth (clay, soil, or any other soft-consistency ground) in order to use Earth Meld.

While joined with the earth, the vampire exists in a semi-solid form and cannot take actions or use any powers. Earth Melded characters are semi-conscious, but are not aware of their surroundings. Melding with the earth shelters a character from the sunlight during the day, or from fire searing the ground overhead, and further makes the vampire immune to most forms of physical harm.

Significant disruption to the ground where a character is melded ends this power prematurely. If someone spends three standard actions causing such disruption, the vampire immediately ejects from the ground. An ejected vampire

returns to full wakefulness immediately, showering dirt in a wide radius as she erupts violently from the soil. Using tools to disturb the ground can reduce the number of actions needed to disrupt an Earth Meld. For example, a character with a shovel might be able to eject a melded vampire with two standard actions, whereas a character with a pipe bomb could eject her with a single standard action.

Earth Meld allows a vampire to sink into dirt or substances with similar consistency, such as sand or gravel, but cannot be used to meld with (or pass through) concrete, rock, metal, plastic, wood, or any other ground covering. Earth Meld cannot be combined with transformative powers; melding with the earth returns a vampire to her native state.

Focus [Perception]:

While awake and melded with the earth, you can perceive your surroundings as though you were standing above the ground with which you are merged. If a melded character is asleep or in voluntary torpor, she will awaken as soon as someone begins to disturb the soil of her resting place, although waking up is not automatic and requires all normal tests and expenditures.

●●●● Shape of the Beast

One of the most renowned abilities possessed by vampires, this power allows you to take the form of a wolf or bat, literally shifting your flesh and bone into a new state. Although such a beast is no more alive than the vampire, it is capable of flying, running, or using its animal senses just like a living member of its species.

System:

Spend 1 Blood point and use a standard action to transform into either a bat (your flight form) or a wolf (your fight form). You may end your Shape of the Beast transformation at any time by expending a simple action.

While in your flight form, you gain a +3 bonus to Dodge-based defensive test pools and can fly at your normal movement speed. However, due to the bat's small size, your Physical attribute is reduced to 3 for the purpose of Physical attacks.

While in your fight form, you gain a +2 bonus to Brawl-based attack test pools, and your brawling attacks, biting or clawing, inflict aggravated damage.

Both of your animal forms convert and retain the significant physical qualities and notable appearance-related flaws of your humanoid shape, such as one eye, a shock of white hair, or any other distinctive features. Vampires on paths still seem monstrous when in animal form, and Nosferatu or other disfigured vampires make for ugly animals, indeed.

Shape of the Beast is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers.

Focus [Wits]:

When you purchase Shape of the Beast, you may choose to thematically alter your fight and flight forms, changing their appearance to something appropriate to your character's background or Archetype. The creatures you choose must be predators or scavengers, meat-eaters; they cannot be insects or herbivores, and must be animals that your character could logically encounter in person (no extinct or imaginary animals). Once you select your character's flight and fight forms, you cannot alter them thereafter.

Instead of a bat, you may transform into any small flying animal you wish. Examples include ravens, owls, or vultures. Instead of a wolf, you may transform into any similarly sized land or water-bound predator. Examples include lynxes, komodo lizards, foxes, leopards, hyenas, sharks, wolverines, or small bears. Your Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether a particular animal is an appropriate choice for Shape of the Beast.

All flight forms receive the same bonus and have the same detriments; you gain a +3 bonus to Dodge-based defensive test pools and can fly at your normal movement speed. However, due to your relatively small size, your Physical attribute is reduced to 3 for the purpose of Physical attacks.

When you choose your fight form, you may apply one of the following templates as appropriate for the animal you choose, instead of utilizing the standard bonuses and detriments of the wolf template. You may also apply one of these templates even if you choose to keep the visual appearance of a wolf; these templates simply make your particular wolf more unique.

- **Huge:** You transform into a large, lumbering animal, gaining 2 additional Healthy wound levels.
- **Vicious**: You receive an additional +1 bonus to Brawl-based attack test pools. This bonus stacks with the normal +2 bonus gained when in Shape of the Beast's fight form (+3 total).
- **Fast**: If you expend both your simple and standard actions to move, you can move nine steps in a round instead of the standard six steps.
- **Agile:** You gain a +1 bonus to Dodge-based defensive test pools.
- **Aquatic:** You can swim at your normal movement speed, but your land speed is reduced to one step per action, or, at your Storyteller's discretion, you may not move

on land at all while in this form. While submerged, you receive a +2 bonus to Brawl-based attack test pools. This bonus stacks with the normal bonus from being in Shape of the Beast's fight form (+4 total).

●●●●● Form of Mist

Like the vampires of ancient myth, you have achieved such control over your physical form that you can dissolve into a gentle cloud of mist, dispersing throughout a small area. This mist is visible and noticeable (much like fog over the moors), as well as bitingly cold to the touch. You control the cloud's movements as you would control your own, and you can slip through cracks, small holes, or under closed doors.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action to transform into a cloud of mist. While in Form of Mist, you cannot spend Blood, talk, activate powers, or physically attack, but you are also immune to Physical attacks from sources other than fire and sunlight. You can be injured by non-Physical attacks, and you can be harmed by flaming weapons, such as a torch or a road flare; however, incendiary ammunition passes through your form too quickly to inflict damage.

While in Form of Mist, you are a semi-solid, fluctuating cloud. You can pass through any crack, hole, or aperture that mist could normally transverse. You cannot pass through solid objects or airtight passages, nor can you travel through panes of glass, as you do not condense. You also cannot fly, though you can travel along tilted or raised surfaces, such as up a wall. You take no damage from falling, but cannot control the rate of the fall nor the exact location of your landing.

While in Form of Mist, you move one step per simple action, or two steps per simple action if moving in the same direction as a notable level of wind. If you attempt to move against a notable flow of air, you must make a Physical attribute + Athletics test at a difficulty established by your Storyteller, based on the speed of the wind you are attempting to fight.

While in Form of Mist, you are effectively water vapor, and you do have a tangible physical presence. You can be touched by anyone who passes her hand through your form, and you may touch other individuals by flowing in the target's direction. Touching, or being touched, may require a Brawl attack.

Form of Mist is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers.

Focus [Wits]:

While in Form of Mist, you can move three steps per simple action in any direction, no matter what direction or how fiercely the wind is blowing. Additionally, you can fly at three steps per simple action.

Quietus

"Courage is the blood of one's soul. A brave heart beats with it. A brave soul dies with it. The two cannot be separated."

— Reza Fatir

The Quietus discipline is sacred to members of Clan Assamite, who view its use as a reverent practice. Based on elements of blood alteration, vitae control, and pestilence, Quietus focuses on weakening and injuring a target so that she may be more easily destroyed. Through the use of this discipline, a vampire can become a fearsome assassin, causing death and leaving behind only a trace of blackened blood to tell the tale.

Weapon Application: A single weapon cannot be coated with Quietus powers multiple times. When fighting with multiple weapons that have been coated with different powers, only the poison coating your primary weapon affects your target.

Quietus Test Pool: The Quietus wielder uses her Mental attribute + Athletics versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

• Silence of Death

The first lesson is that of silence. Anonymity and surprise are two of the most powerful weapons in a vampire's arsenal, helping an ambush provide a truly insurmountable advantage. With the use of this power, you can hide your approach, attack, and escape, smothering your victim's desperate pleas for help or mercy.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and use a simple action to create an area of absolute silence. The area affected by Silence of Death is a sphere surrounding your physical form. This sphere extends a maximum of three steps in every direction, though you may choose to make the sphere of effect smaller, if you wish. Once created, you can shrink the size of the sphere by spending a simple action, but you cannot extend it to exceed the three-step maximum.

Sounds originating within the sphere of your Silence of Death are completely silenced. Powers that rely on sound can be blocked by Silence of Death. This might mean such powers fail at origin, because the user is within the silence, or it might mean that these powers fail because the target of such a power is within the sound-dampening sphere. This includes effects such as the Melpominee power Death of the

Drum and the Dominate powers Mesmerism or Command (though Dominate powers can be utilized without sound, and such applications succeed).

Note that some uses of blood magic, such as Thaumaturgy or Necromancy, require the caster to speak. However, those powers do not require their target be able to hear the words spoken. Thus, such powers are not hampered by Silence of Death, even if the user of those powers is within the globe.

Silence of Death lasts for a maximum of 10 minutes, unless you end the power early by spending a simple action.

Focus [Wits]:

Your Silence of Death can extend up to five steps. Additionally, you can invoke Silence of Death on a static location rather than having the power's barrier surround you. Once you have created a static Silence of Death, the barrier remains stationary, even if you placed the Silence of Death on an object which is then moved.

●● Scorpion's Touch

Through meditation, the use of herbal concoctions, and natural soporifics, you can change the properties of your vitae. When you activate this power, your blood becomes a powerful poison that slows injured prey and robs them of their ability to fight.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your simple action to meditate upon the properties of your vitae, and then draw a sharpened blade across your skin, creating a shallow cut in order to coat the edge of the weapon with a layer of your own vitae. This weapon must be used quickly, before the blood dries and loses its supernatural properties. For the next three turns, anyone struck with this weapon is poisoned by your venomous blood.

Individuals struck by a weapon coated with Scorpion's Touch suffer a -2 penalty to all Physical attack test pools. These penalties last for five minutes. Additional applications of Scorpion's Touch do not add further penalties, but do extend the duration of the original penalties by an additional five minutes. For example, a character hit by three such attacks would suffer a -2 penalty to all Physical attack test pools for the next 15 minutes.

An individual successfully struck by a weapon poisoned with Scorpion's Touch suffers these penalties even if the attack did not inflict damage after your opponent applies her defensive powers. The venom only needs to touch its target, not damage.

You are immune to your own Scorpion's Touch, but other individuals wielding weapons coated with your venom risk being poisoned. If someone else uses a weapon coated by your Scorpion's Touch, she receives this power's penalties if she loses any test involved in the challenge. This occurs even if the individual wins the overall challenge. It is possible for both a weapon's wielder and the target of that attack to be affected by your venom in the same action. If the wielder repeatedly loses tests in challenges, she suffers the same extended penalty durations as does someone who was struck multiple times.

You can poison a single sword-sized or smaller weapon with each expenditure of Scorpion's Touch. This item could be a dagger, a sword, one crossbow bolt, one arrow, or something similar. Scorpion's Touch is normally used with edged or sharpened weapons. If used on a non-edged weapon, you must spend a standard action, rather than a simple action, to tear open your flesh by some other means and coat the weapon with vitae. Scorpion's Touch cannot be used to modify bullets or other firearms equipment, as the heat and speed of a firearm destroys the blood coating on any projectile fired.

Scorpion's Touch cannot be used with unarmed attacks.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Weapons coated by your Scorpion's Touch remain toxic for five turns instead of three. Additionally, you may choose to thicken the ichor of your blood sufficiently so individuals other than yourself can wield it safely without risking being affected. Anyone poisoned by your Scorpion's Touch suffers a -3 penalty to all Physical attack test pools.

●●● Dagon's Call

This vicious power allows a vampire to use a target's blood against her, bursting blood vessels and causing organs to bleed internally. These ruptures are intensely painful, delivering swift internal agony to anyone affected by this power.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood, expend your standard action, and engage your target in an opposed challenge using the Quietus test pool. If you succeed, you cause your target's internal organs to rupture and bleed.

A character successfully targeted by Dagon's Call takes 2 points of normal damage in any turn during which she spends Blood. This damage occurs the moment the victim spends her first point of Blood in a given turn. After the first turn, you can spend your simple action on every subsequent turn in order to maintain this power's effect, for up to five turns in total.

Damage caused by Dagon's Call cannot be reduced or negated. Multiple uses of Dagon's Call do not stack. A character affected by two uses of this power still only takes 2 points of normal damage per turn.

Exceptional Success:

Your target takes 3 normal damage, rather than 2, on any turn during which she spends Blood.

Focus [Wits]:

If your target has some of your blood on her person (knowingly or unknowingly), or if your target has ingested your blood within the last 24 hours, you do not need line of sight to use Dagon's Call, so long as the target is within one mile. Individuals who have been affected by your Scorpion's Touch or Baal's Caress are considered to have your blood on them for the purpose of using Dagon's Call.

●●●● Baal's Caress

By continuing her study into vitae transformation, this power's user can alter the properties of a vampire's blood even further, rendering it into an intensely vitrolic ichor. This ichor destroys any flesh it touches, whether living or undead.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your simple action to meditate upon the properties of your vitae, and draw a sharpened blade across your skin, creating a shallow cut in order to coat the edge of a weapon with a layer of your own vitae. This weapon must be used quickly, before the blood dries and loses its supernatural properties. For the next three turns, the weapon gains the Deadly trait, and anyone struck with this weapon takes aggravated damage from the weapon's strike. Note that Baal's Caress does not increase the damage done by a given weapon, but that weapon inflicts aggravated damage, rather than normal damage.

You are immune to your own Baal's Caress, but other individuals wielding weapons coated with your ichor risk being injured. If someone else uses a weapon coated by your Baal's Caress, she takes a point of aggravated damage if she loses any test involved in the challenge. This occurs even if the individual wins the overall challenge. It is possible for both a weapon's wielder and the target of that attack to be affected by your ichor in the same action. If the wielder repeatedly loses tests in challenges, she will take multiple points of aggravated damage.

You can poison a single sword-sized or smaller weapon with each expenditure of Baal's Caress. This item could be a dagger, a sword, one crossbow bolt, one arrow, or something similar. Baal's Caress is normally used with edged or sharpened weapons. If used on a non-edged weapon, you must spend a standard action, rather than a simple action, to tear open your flesh by some other means and coat the weapon with vitae. Baal's Caress cannot be used to modify bullets or other firearms equipment, as the heat and speed of a firearm destroys the blood coating on any projectile fired.

Baal's Caress cannot be used with unarmed attacks.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Weapons coated by your Baal's Caress remain toxic for five turns instead of the standard three. Additionally, you may choose to thicken the ichor of your blood sufficiently so individuals other than yourself can wield it safely without risking injury.

●●●●● Taste of Death

With this level of mastery, a vampire can commute a small portion of her blood into a caustic acid. Thus transmuted, the vampire can spit this toxic blood at an opponent, searing flesh and corroding bone.

System:

Spend 1 Blood point. For the rest of the turn, you may use a standard action to spit toxic blood at your target. Attacks made with Taste of Death are made using a test pool consisting of your Physical attribute + Athletics versus the target's Physical attribute + Dodge.

When you make an attack using Taste of Death, you must choose whether the blood you spit with this power is transmuted into the poison of Scorpion's Touch or the vitriolic ichor of Baal's Caress. Utilizing Scorpion's Touch through Taste of Death causes the victim to suffer the effects listed under that power. Spitting the ichor of Baal's Caress deals 2 points of aggravated damage to your target.

Taste of Death can be used during Celerity rounds.

Focus [Intelligence]:

If Taste of Death is used to carry Scorpion's Touch, anyone poisoned suffers a -3 penalty to all Physical attack test pools, rather than the standard -2 penalty.

If Taste of Death used to carry Baal's Caress, your attack inflicts 3 points of aggravated damage, instead of the standard 2.

Serpentis

"The Serpent was in the garden first, you know."

— Hesha Ruhadze

In ancient Egyptian temples and sleek, modern sky rises, the clan of serpents practices its arts and worships its founder: the vampiric god, Set. Setites consider the Serpentis discipline to be a gift of Set's benevolence, and they treat its practice with reverence, praising Set with each use and invocation of these powers.

Serpentis Test Pool: The Serpentis wielder uses her Social attribute + Subterfuge versus the target's Social attribute + Willpower.

• Eyes of the Serpent

Like the snake-charmers of old, your gaze has the power to soothe and hypnotize. When you use this power, your eyes turn shining gold, capturing the attention of those who meet your gaze. As long as you hold her attention, your subject remains completely immobilized.

System:

Expend 1 Blood and use a simple action to activate Eyes of the Serpent. You must have your target's attention (see Gaze and Focus, **page 113**) and engage your target in an opposed challenge using the Serpentis test pool. If you succeed, the target is paralyzed so long as you hold her gaze with your own. If you break eye contact, utilize any other powers, or if the target is attacked, injured, or targeted by hostile powers, your hypnotic spell breaks.

Exceptional Success:

Your Eyes of the Serpent lasts for three rounds after you break eye contact, so long as your opponent is not attacked, injured, or targeted with an aggressive power.

Focus [Appearance]:

You can utilize other powers while holding a target paralyzed with your Eyes of the Serpent. However, if your target is attacked or injured, this hypnotic spell breaks.

•• Tongue of the Asp

By activating this power, you gain several of the natural and mythical powers associated with serpents. You may speak with, control, and summon snakes. Some who are particularly blessed may even gain a natural advantage in spoken persuasion, much like the Serpent of old.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use a simple action to activate Tongue of the Asp for one hour. While this power is active, your tongue is forked and you may speak to snakes (or individuals in serpent form) with a sibilant whisper so quiet that the sound can go completely undetected by anyone who does not possess Heightened Senses or a similar power. While Tongue of the Asp is active, you can sense your surroundings perfectly even in the depths of night or in unnatural darkness such as that caused by Obtenebration. Normally, characters who cannot see while in combat must use the Fighting Blind combat maneuver. So long as your character's Tongue of the Asp is active, you may fight without needing the Fighting Blind combat maneuver.

Further, by expending an additional Blood and a standard action, you can summon up to five local small serpents or two medium-sized serpents. These snakes take up to 10 minutes to appear, and must be able to naturally travel to your location. They have only animal intelligence, but are loyal to you and will attempt to do your bidding until dawn. Treat small serpents as 1-point Retainers, and medium serpents as 3-point Retainers.

Focus [Charisma]:

When using Tongue of the Asp, you also gain a +1 bonus to any tests based on the sound of your voice, including persuasion-related skills and Presence powers such as Entrancement (assuming you speak to reinforce your use of the power).

••• Skin of the Adder

With but a moment of concentration, you cause your skin to erupt into slick, protective scales, and your limbs and muscles lengthen. While this power is active, you have a hideous, snakelike appearance, but gain significant defense against Physical attacks.

System:

By spending 1 point of Blood and expending a standard action to invoke this power, you acquire defensive scales and become extremely flexibile. While this power is active, you have a +2 bonus to Dodge-based defense test pools. Individuals using Skin of the Adder can also bite without first needing to Grapple their opponents.

Obviously, being seen by mortals while using Skin of the Adder is a breach of the Masquerade.

Skin of the Adder is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers. You can end this transformation at any time by expending a simple action. Skin of the Adder's transformation is close enough to human to allow you to use weapons.

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Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Focus [Charisma]:

Your bonus to Dodge-based test pools increases to +3 (instead of the standard +2). Additionally you receive a +1 bonus to Brawl test pools when attempting to bite your opponent.

●●●● Form of the Cobra

Myth states that ancient priests of Egypt could command their staves to turn into snakes. You can perform an even greater metamorphosis, transforming yourself into a massive cobra, which retains the size and weight of your original form. This reptile shape grants a venomous bite and the ability to slip through small passages, while still allowing you to use any disciplines that do not require hands or speech.

System:

Spend 1 Blood point and use a standard action to transform into a massive, human-sized cobra, approximately 15 feet long. You may end this transformation at any time by expending a simple action. A character in Form of the Cobra is extremely lithe, and cannot be grappled; attackers who attempt to Grapple you automatically fail. Further, you may bite your foes without the need to Grapple first, and your bites are venomous.

Individuals who are bitten by a vampire in Form of the Cobra must resist a virility 15 poison. Poison inflicted by this power damages living characters and destroys the blood of vampires. For more information on poison, see **Drugs and Poison, page 286**. Remember that all vampiric bites, including those by characters in Form of the Cobra, inflict aggravated damage.

Form of the Cobra is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers.

Focus [Appearance]:

You can modify your Form of the Cobra, becoming as large as a massive python, or as small as a viper. Your length and mass may increase up to three times your natural body weight, or reduce to as small as one-tenth your normal size.

●●●●● Heart of Darkness

In Egyptian legends, the hearts of the dead are removed so that they may be weighed against the feather of truth. Those found wanting are thrown into a lake of fire and devoured, while those who are worthy are accepted into paradise. It is within your power to remove the hearts of undead creatures, taking judgment into your own hands.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and one hour performing a complex ritual in order to draw the heart from an unliving (vampiric) body: either your own, or that of another willing participant. No test is necessary to remove a heart.

This power can only be utilized on the night of a new moon.

While most vampiric flesh rots and decays in a single turn after being separated from its body, a heart removed with this power remains intact. The heart can be replaced by another use of Heart of Darkness, so long as the power's user possesses the correct heart to restore. It is not possible to install a fake heart or the heart of another individual using Heart of Darkness.

Anyone whose heart is removed in this fashion is immune to staking. Further, when this character attempts to resist frenzy, she does so as if she had one less Beast trait.

A separated heart may be staked, even if the target vampire is not otherwise wounded. If the heart is staked, then that vampire is immediately paralyzed as though she had been staked normally. Should the heart be exposed to even a single point of damage from fire or sunlight, it is destroyed, and its owner erupts into flame and is reduced to ash, meeting Final Death in a single turn.

Obviously, trying to use this power on a mortal, even a ghoul, is messily fatal.

Focus [Charisma]:

You can perform Heart of Darkness any night of the month, and can do so on an unwilling target, so long as she is in torpor.

Temporis

"No matter how much time passes, or what amusements fill these long, eternal nights, some things can never be consigned to oblivion. Some memories refuse to fade."

— Amor Cathbados,
Inconnu Monitor of Toledo

Those who control the powers of Temporis have the capacity to comprehend the permutations of time, speeding and slowing its effects to suit their desires. Temporis channels the mystical force that makes a vampire immortal, rendering her body immune to the ravages of time. The True Brujah claim that the Brujah Antediluvian created Temporis before he was diablerized, and that his curse stripped its power from those who followed Troile after his destruction.

Users of Temporis tend to become increasingly meticulous and nearly obsessive about the small details of daily life. They also tend to lack emotion to a great degree, growing detached by experiencing the passage of ages, feeling centuries slip like sand through an hourglass. Such beings are callous and cruel, placing little worth on a single individual within the grand tapestry of time.

Temporis and Celerity: A character who has purchased any amount of Celerity can never purchase Temporis. Likewise, a character who has purchased any amount of Temporis can never purchase Celerity.

Temporis Test Pool: The Temporis wielder uses her Physical attribute + Survival versus the target's Physical attribute + Willpower.

• Hourglass of the Mind

Time is a complex entity, moving like a river around a thousand tiny stones. The smallest alteration can cause tremendous shifts. To effectively use Temporis, the wielder's mind must be capable of understanding these currents and eddies, and predicting their outcomes.

System:

Hourglass of the Mind is always active. In addition to granting an extremely accurate time sense, allowing you to keep track of the exact time down to the millisecond, this level of Temporis also grants you a unique sensitivity to any disturbances in the flow of time. Within a one-mile radius, you automatically sense when time is being manipulated, whether through use of Temporis or other supernatural powers that alter time. Additionally, you automatically sense the use of powers that grant extra actions, such as Celerity, when they are used within 1,000 feet of you. Further, you can read an object's age at a glance, and you can tell if Temporis has ever been used on that object by noting that its actual age does not match the amount of time that has passed since the object's creation.

Also, by spending your standard action and making a successful opposed challenge, using the Temporis test pool, you discover whether or not a target possesses Celerity or Temporis; you then discern how many dots of either Celerity or Temporis the target possesses. If you use this power on a non-vampiric creature who possesses powers that can shape time or allow it to take multiple actions, you gain a rough understanding of that creature's capabilities.

Focus [Stamina]:

In addition to knowing your target's total dots of Temporis or Celerity, you also discern the specific powers she possesses, including techniques and elder powers.

•• Nick of Time

With this power, you can steal items from the corners of history. By creating a small anomaly in the natural flow of time, you reach into the past or present and grasp lost objects, discarded junk, and abandoned flotsam, forcibly pulling such items to you.

System:

By spending 1 Blood and expending a simple action, you can utilize Nick of Time to draw a common object to you from some other point in time. These items are things that have been lost or misplaced, and will never be missed by their owners. The item is a common and nondescript example of its type; you may choose to draw forth a desert eagle or a pretty painting, but you cannot acquire the Sheriff's gun or the Mona Lisa. The item must be small enough for a normal individual to easily hold in two hands and not of any particular value.

If you choose to draw forth a weapon, your Storyteller determines the weapon's specific qualities. If the weapon is a gun, it has one full clip of ammunition. For more information on weapons and weapon qualities, see **Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment, page 515**.

Focus [Stamina]:

If you use Nick of Time to pull forth a weapon or combat item, you may select the qualities for that item, rather than have your Storyteller choose them for you.

••• Split Second

With this power, you slow the effects of time around you, allowing you to move in a flicker and almost appear to be in two places at once. Although you cannot attack others while in such a state, you can move, draw weapons, or perform other small actions in the blink of an eye.

System:

Once per turn, you can spend 1 Blood to gain an additional simple action, which cannot be interrupted. This additional action resolves on your initiative, and cannot be used to target other characters or items controlled by other characters; it also cannot be used to activate powers.

Focus [Stamina]:

You gain two additional simple actions with each use of Split Second, rather than one.

●●●● Patience of the Norns

Your ability with Temporis has grown so powerful that you can actually remove inanimate objects from the flow of time, suspending them for a little while as the rest of the world moves on. You can halt a falling object midair, suspend an explosion long enough to escape its fire, or preserve a fragile artifact from decay.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, expend a standard action, and target an inanimate object to activate Patience of the Norns. This object enters perfect stasis, even as time passes around it. When Patience of the Norns affects an object, all processes, whether mechanical, electrical, or chemical, stop functioning for the duration of the effect. Bullets hang motionless in mid-air, fires appear as no more than charred logs, and falling objects freeze in mid-tumble. This suspension lasts for one hour, unless Patience of the Norns is released prior to that duration.

An object frozen by Patience of the Norns cannot be moved or affected in any way. If anything substantial (more firm than a light breeze) touches a frozen object after it has been placed in suspension, the item affected by Patience of the Norns is released and re-enters time with the same properties and velocity it had when it was placed into stasis. Suspension of an object includes the suspension of all its energy and any chemical processes occurring within it. Thus, a suspended bullet has no kinetic energy in relation to the world around it, chemical reactions are held in stasis, and fires cease to emit heat, light, or smoke until such time as the power's duration expires. At the end of this power's duration, all processes, energies, and reactions resume activity as though no time had passed. Fires roar to life, chemical reactions run their course, and objects in motion continue on their original trajectories at their original speed.

Patience of the Norns cannot be used on an object larger than the vampire herself.

Focus [Stamina]:

You can slightly alter an object that has been suspended by Patience of the Norns. Whereas an item in a standard suspension cannot be moved or affected in any way, you can rotate the object, so that any kinetic energy is pointed in another direction, or you can move the object one step per standard action. You must physically touch the item in order to turn or move it. This contact does not break the suspension granted by Patience of the Norns.

●●●●● Clotho's Gift

You are capable of accelerating time as it passes through your body, causing you to move with preternatural speed and precision.

System:

Spend 1 Blood to activate Clotho's Gift for the turn. When you activate Clotho's Gift, you gain two extra rounds of actions; each extra round comprises one simple action and one standard action. Resolve one extra round of actions during the first Celerity round, and resolve the second extra round of actions during the second Celerity round.

Focus [Stamina]:

Each turn, you can use one (and only one) of the standard actions granted by Clotho's Gift to activate a Mental or Social power. This is an exception to the rule that states you cannot use Mental or Social powers during Celerity rounds.

Thanatosis

"Don't worry about the flesh, kid. Secrets rot the soul."

— Archon Lithrac

The corpselike bodies of vampires are intimately tied to death, trapped in a state of eternal, arrested decay. Thanatosis draws on that connection, encouraging and feeding on blight and deterioration. These are the powers of atrophy, decrepitude, putrescence, and rot. In some ways, Thanatosis grants control over the curse itself, temporarily suspending a vampire's immortality and causing even her eternal flesh to suffer rot and decay.

Thanatosis is the signature discipline of the Samedi bloodline, and some say that it is a natural evolution of the Cappadocian powers of Mortis Path. Certainly, the two are related and have many similarities — but the Samedi, by and large, are more aggressive and less bookish.

Thanatosis Test Pool: The Thanatosis wielder uses her Mental attribute + Medicine versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

● Hag's Wrinkles

Perpetual rot makes the character's flesh malleable. You can contract or expand your skin, sending it into wrinkled, rippling waves or pulling it taut over your undead flesh. You can even cause folds to form in your flesh, allowing you to store objects within the leathery ripples, like a kangaroo's pouch.

System:

The bodies of Thanatosis practitioners become rotted and malleable. By spending a standard action to tug or twist your skin, you can open folds and pouches in your flesh. These pouches are capable of storing items up to the size of a large handgun. Accessing items stored in these pouches requires a simple action.

Additionally, you can slightly alter your appearance by over-tightening the skin around your face or by allowing it to hang wrinkled and loose. These changes may be enough to fool uninformed mortals, but they do not alter your appearance enough to fool someone who knows you.

Focus [Wits]:

The flaps and folds of your skin can impede weapons, slip-sliding over your musculature or deflecting blows that would otherwise harm you. You receive a +1 bonus to defensive test pools when targeted by Brawl or Melee attacks. Additionally, you receive a +5 bonus when attempting to escape from a Grapple.

•• Putrefaction

With but a touch, you can inflict decay on your target. You cause putrescent, festering decay to spread from your point of contact.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to rot any organic, inanimate object you touch, to the point of uselessness. A single application of Putrefaction can destroy wood, cloth, plastic, and rubber, but harder items, such as metal, glass, or stone, require two applications of this power to putrefy. Objects larger than a standard door require more than one application of Putrefaction to destroy. This power has no effect on living or undead matter, but can be used to rot true corpses (dead bodies) into unrecognizability.

Focus [Wits]:

You may spend 1 Blood and use a standard action to destroy a wooden stake that is currently piercing your heart. This is an exception to the rule that prevents a character from spending Blood or taking actions while staked.

••• Ashes to Ashes

Under extreme circumstances, it is often best to allow an opponent a psychological victory in order to gain the element of surprise. The Samedi are masters of such deceit. With this power, you can collapse into a thick, sticky white powder that resembles a desiccated heap of ash.

System:

By spending 1 point of Blood and using your standard action, you transform into a pile of ash. While in this form, you cannot spend Blood, move from your location, take actions, or use supernatural powers, but you are immune to Physical damage, fire, and sunlight. You also retain a limited awareness of everything within five steps.

The form granted by Ashes to Ashes does not confer complete invulnerability. The ashes have a certain resistance to being dispersed, but if you are scattered too widely, you can be killed. While using Ashes to Ashes, you have 10 points of Cohesion. If other individuals or factors of the environment, such as high winds or a blaze of fire, conspire to scatter your ashes, you may lose 1 to 3 points of Cohesion per turn, determined at the Storyteller's discretion.

If you reform after losing Cohesion, you lose 1 point of Blood per point of Cohesion you suffered. If you run out of Blood in this manner, you take 1 point of aggravated damage per point of Cohesion lost. This damage cannot be reduced or negated. If your Cohesion reaches zero, you suffer Final Death.

This power makes you appear as though you are a normal pile of ash, but does not alter your aura. Someone looking at a character in Ashes to Ashes with Aura Perception will be able to tell that the pile of ash has a vampiric aura.

Ashes to Ashes is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers.

Focus [Wits]:

While in the form of Ashes to Ashes, you can spend 1 point of Blood to draw in nearby ash that has been scattered, gaining 1 point of Cohesion per turn. Additionally, you can spend 1 point of Blood per turn and move up to one step. This is an exception to the rule preventing you from spending Blood or moving while in ash form.

•••• Withering

By clutching a victim's limb and activating this hideous power, you shrivel the limb and render it useless by infecting it with decay. A target suffering under the effects of this power finds herself in horrible pain, her limbs shrinking and bones snapping within your grasp.

System:

Use a standard action to Grapple a target. If you are successful, spend 1 Blood to inflict Withering on the victim, as well as inflicting all standard effects of a Grapple. Thereafter, the target suffers a -1 penalty to her Physical

attribute. This effect is not considered damage, and is not affected by powers or abilities that negate or lessen damage.

To use Withering on a target, you must first be successful using a Grapple combat maneuver against that target. If your target is already grappled, you can activate this power by spending 1 Blood and using your standard action. (For more information on grappling, see **Chapter: Six: Core Rules, page 280**).

Withering can be used during Celerity rounds, so long as you pay the full cost for each use.

Penalties from repeated use of Withering on a single target accumulate, whether those penalties were applied by one practitioner of Thanatosis or multiple practitioners. If this penalty reaches -5, one of the victim's limbs (chosen by the attacker) becomes useless. If the penalty reaches -10, the target must choose a second limb that becomes useless, and so on, until all of the target's limbs are unusable.

If one or both of a character's legs have been withered, she can only move one step per action by limping or crawling. If either of a character's arms have been withered, she suffers a -5 penalty to Brawl and Melee attacks, unless the character is ambidextrous, in which case, she only suffers a -3 penalty. A character with a withered arm cannot use two-handed weapons. A character with two withered arms cannot make Physical attacks unless she is capable of biting without grappling, or if she has more than two other useable limbs, such as those granted by Black Metamorphosis or limbs created with Vicissitude.

Physical attribute penalties from Withering subside after 10 minutes, but a withered limb is not so easily restored. A mortal whose limb has been withered is permanently crippled. A supernatural creature's withered limbs will recover after two games or one month, whichever is longer.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Your target's limb withers when the penalties from Withering reach -3, instead of the standard threshold of -5. A second limb becomes useless when the penalties reach -6, and so forth. This effect functions even if some of the penalties were applied by other characters using Withering. For example, if another character inflicted -2 in penalties, and you inflict a third -1, you wither one of the target's limbs.

●●●●● Necrosis

A horrific and potent power, Necrosis allows you to rot away your opponent's muscle and bone, rendering her into putrid fat and tissue. The hideous decomposition induced by this power disgusts and revolts even the hardiest constitution as it accelerates the forces of decay and exposes internal organs in a terrifying spectacle of pain.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to activate Necrosis. For the next hour, anytime you successfully Grapple a target or maintain an existing Grapple on a target, you may choose to inflict necrotic rot on your victim. You can only inflict Necrosis once per turn, but you can do so during either everyman or Celerity rounds.

The first time you use Necrosis on a target, you must succeed in using the Grapple combat maneuver against that target. On subsequent rounds, if you are still grappling the target, you may activate Necrosis by using your standard action. (For more information on grappling, see **Chapter: Six, Core Rules, page 280**). Your target take 3 points of aggravated damage as her flesh rots and sloughs away.

The damage normally dealt by a Grapple does not convert to aggravated damage by this power. The damage dealt by Necrosis is not reduced by the effect of the Grapple combat maneuver.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Necrosis deals 4 points of aggravated damage, rather than the standard 3.

Valeren

"Betrayal is a blessing. Hatred is a strength.
Death will not elude those who have profited from our fall.
We will bring about their end."

— Viziael, Archishop of Mogadishu

Fighting to defend their clan in dark and troubled times, warrior Salubri created the Valeren discipline. Over the centuries, rumors spread legends that the Salubri are infernalists and diablerists, and this discipline is now seen with fear and revulsion. Unlike its sister discipline, Obeah, Valeren is definitely not a healing power. It is a manifestation of war, anger, and spiritual *chi*.

As with Obeah, in modern times, most vampires believe that the Salubri and their disciplines are infernal in origin. Old lies and ancient betrayals still bind most elders to this assertion, and they persecute and destroy anyone discovered to possess the powers of Valeren before they have a chance to speak the truth.

Use of any Valeren power beyond the first dot causes a third eye to manifest upon the user's forehead. This eye opens and glows throughout the use of these powers, and disappears thereafter.

Valeren and Obeah: A character who has purchased any amount of Obeah can never purchase Valeren. Likewise, a

character who has purchased any amount of Valeren cannot purchase Obeah.

Valeren Test Pool: The Valeren wielder uses her Mental attribute + Medicine versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

• Sense Vitality

Life permeates the world, cycling with the ebb and flow of inevitability. With this power, you can tap into that source, feeling the pulse of the universe and tangibly perceiving the vital energy of individuals nearby.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use a simple action to activate Sense Vitality. For the next hour, you gain the instinctive ability to perceive the health of any creature that comes within 10 steps of you. You automatically realize the following information:

- Whether the target is alive, dead, or undead
- The target's current number of wounds and number of remaining health levels
- The location and severity of any injuries she currently suffers
- Whether the target suffers from any diseases or other maladies, and if so, which ones
- Whether the target has any drugs or poisons in her system, and if so, which ones
- The disposition of all organs, bones, musculature, and other physical structures of the body. You realize if any organs have been removed or shifted, and you can sense the signs of older, healed injuries or genetic anomalies.

Sense Vitality overcomes supernatural powers that obscure an individual's health level, such as Misleading Wounds or similar powers.

Focus [Perception]:

Valeren focuses on offense and causing pain. Consequently, while Sense Vitality is active, you do not need to spend Willpower to use the combat maneuver Pierce the Heart.

•• Burning Touch

You have a warrior's spirit, and can inflict agony on those you assault. Any target who falls victim to your Burning Touch is consumed by pain.

System:

Use a standard action to Grapple a target. If you are successful, spend 1 Blood to inflict Burning Touch on a victim, as well as inflicting all the standard effects of the Grapple combat maneuver. Thereafter, the target suffers a -3 penalty to all actions until your next everyman initiative. If you are currently grappling your target, you can activate Burning Touch simply by spending 1 point of Blood and using a simple action.

Burning Touch inflicts pain on anyone who is touching you, but individuals who are not grappled can simply flinch away before suffering penalties. If another character is touching or grappling you when you spend 1 Blood to activate Burning Touch, that individual may choose either to let go or to suffer the effects of Burning Touch and receive its -3 penalty until your initiative during the next everyman round.

Powers that allow an individual to resist pain do not overcome the pain caused by Burning Touch, unless specifically noted in that power's description.

Focus [Wits]:

Those who have felt your Burning Touch have its agony seared into their subconscious. The threat of torture from a Valeren wielder gives even the most stoic character a reason to reconsider her stubbornness. Anyone who has been affected by your Burning Touch suffers a -5 penalty to resist Intimidation-based interrogation challenges. This effect cannot be used to augment supernatural powers.

••• Mens Sana

Your vitae is an alchemical substance, carrying healing properties like those said to be possessed by sacred figures of myth. By centering your warrior's chi and focusing your mind, you transmute the blood within your body, causing you to heal at an incredible rate.

System:

Once per turn, you can spend 1 point of Blood to heal 1 point of normal damage. Blood spent for Mens Sana does not count towards the maximum amount of Blood a character can spend per turn. You can only perform this action on yourself; you cannot heal other individuals with Mens Sana.

Focus [Wits]:

You can use Mens Sana twice per turn, healing up to 2 points of damage for the cost of 2 Blood.

●●●● Armor of Caine's Fury

When this power is activated, the user is surrounded by a shining crimson halo. This phantom armor is formed from the vampire's spiritual essence and protects her against most physical injuries.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use a simple action to activate Armor of Caine's Fury. While this power is active, you gain a +3 bonus to all Dodge and Survival defense test pools. If at any point you use a standard action to do anything other than use a Melee attack, a Brawl attack, or move towards a character you intend to attack, Armor of Caine's Fury ends immediately.

Armor of Caine's Fury is not mundane armor, and attacks that normally pierce armor do not pierce or ignore the effects of this power.

Focus [Wits]:

While this power is active, you gain the benefits of a rage frenzy, without suffering any of the drawbacks. Further, you are immune to both fear and hunger frenzy. These effects do not stack with the benefits of a natural frenzy.

●●●●● Vengeance of Samiel

When using this power, the Valeren user's third eye opens and glows with a fierce, brilliant blaze. While under the effects of Vengeance of Samiel, the vampire's blows become unerring, and their wrath is a fierce, nearly palpable thing.

System:

Once per turn, you can spend 1 Blood and use a standard action to make a Melee or Brawl attack against another character. That attack automatically hits, earning a normal success. Powers or effects that completely negate or avoid an attack can be used to avoid Vengeance of Samiel. However, those powers that give a defender bonuses to Dodge have no effect.

Vengeance of Samiel can be used in combination with other powers, such as Potence or Feral Claws, but cannot be used in conjunction with ranged attacks. Also, combat maneuvers cannot be combined with an attack augmented by Vengeance of Samiel under any circumstances.

Focus [Perception]:

Your Vengeance of Samiel gives you an exceptional success on this attack, instead of a normal success. Your target may choose to spend a Willpower to convert this automatic exceptional success into a normal success.

Vicissitude

"A soul is just another bit of clay,
to be twisted between your fingers."

— Sascha Vykos

The Tzimisce are known for their scientific demeanor and their cruel callousness, but more, they are legendary for their ability to twist and shape mortal flesh, bone, and tissue. The Fiends harbor ancient secrets that make other vampires shudder with horror at the sight of their handiwork. These powers require physical contact for the vampire to shape and contour another creature's physical form.

Healing Vicissitude: Supernatural characters affected by Vicissitude can undo the effects of that power through further applications of Vicissitude or by healing the affliction as though it were 5 points of normal damage.

Vicissitude and Transformative Powers: When you activate a transformative power, any alternations made by Vicissitude to your original form do not affect your transformative form, but return when you revert to your original form. For example, if Vicissitude has permanently twisted your ankle, your wolf form does not have that affliction. However, the Vicissitude-twisted ankle returns when you revert once more to your human form.

There is no standardized Vicissitude test pool.

● Malleable Visage

With this power, a fleshcrafter can alter her appearance, shaping her flesh and tissue to match the visage of another individual. The person to be mimicked in this fashion may be someone specific, or the visage may be a random assortment of features, as you desire.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend five standard actions to modify your body. Malleable Visage requires you to physically sculpt your features, pulling and twisting the flesh beneath your hands. This power can be used to alter your features to any appearance within a normal human range. You can alter your face, size, sex, skin, or hair color, as well as adding or subtracting distinguishing marks. You can alter your height by up to one foot up or down, but you cannot become something that is not human, such as an animal, and you cannot rearrange your organs. Malleable Visage can modify your voice, if you spend an additional Blood when you activate this power.

To believably mimic a specific individual's appearance, you must have at least 2 dots of the Medicine skill and you must study that individual from multiple angles for at

least five minutes, learning her facial expressions, how she moves, and other distinctive qualities. You might be able to mimic someone's face after studying a photograph, but your disguise will not fool people who have ever met your target, as you do not know enough to successfully exemplify that person. To believably mimic another character's voice, you must have at least 3 dots of the Medicine skill, and you must listen to her talk for at least five minutes as she uses a variety of words and phrases. Listening to a recording of that voice is not enough for a true replication; your disguised voice would not have the depth necessary to fool anyone who has ever spoken directly to the person you are impersonating.

Alternately, you can use this power to give yourself a more beautiful, if slightly alien, appearance. When used in this way, you suffer a -2 penalty to your Social attribute, but gain the Appearance focus.

Malleable Visage is not a transformative power, but its effects only apply to your normal form. If you use a transformative power, the effects of Malleable Visage do not transfer to your transformed shape.

Focus [Charisma]:

You can shape your flesh using only one single standard action, and you do not have to physically use your hands in order to mold your visage as you desire.

●● Fleshcraft

The flesh of other creatures is putty in your hands, shifting and stretching as you will it. You can perform drastic alterations to the flesh and organs of any creature you touch.

System:

If the target is willing, you can spend 1 Blood and expend five standard actions to change another individual's appearance exactly as you would by using Malleable Visage.

In combat, you can expend a standard action and spend 1 Blood to make a Brawl-based attack augmented by Vicissitude. If your attack succeeds, you viciously smear, twist, or remove hunks of the target's flesh, inflicting 1 point of normal damage. This damage cannot be reduced or negated, and cannot be increased or modified by other powers. You cannot increase the damage from this attack by using Potence, and you cannot upgrade the damage to aggravated damage by using Feral Claws or similar powers.

Like the other powers of Vicissitude, Fleshcraft requires you to physically mold your target's body into the desired shape.

Fleshcraft is not a transformative power, but its effects only apply to your normal form. If you use a transformative power, the effects of Fleshcraft do not transfer to your transformed shape.

Exceptional Success:

When making a Brawl-based attack, you inflict 2 points of normal damage, which cannot be reduced or negated, and cannot be modified by other powers.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You can use Fleshcraft on a willing target by expending three standard actions, instead of the normal five. Attacks using Fleshcraft now inflict a base of 2 normal damage and inflict 3 normal damage when you score an exceptional success while using this power.

●●● Bonecraft

At this level of mastery, you can shatter bone with a touch, lengthening or shortening it as you will. The secrets of anatomy and the physical form are yours to command, and you have the capacity to cause terrible harm — or create twisted playthings of flesh and bone.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend five standard actions to radically alter your form or the form of another character who is either willing or unable to move. Using Bonecraft, you can shift or remove bones, muscle groups, nerve endings, and internal organs, warping a physical body into a drastically different, and potentially anatomically improbable, shape.

When you use Bonecraft on yourself or another individual, assign one of the following effects to your target. No character can be affected by more than one application of Bonecraft at a time.

- **Extra Limbs**: Sacrifice 2 health levels in order to grow one or more extra limbs. Once per turn, you can expend your simple action to cause these extra limbs to attack. Attacks from the extra limbs use your normal attack test pool, but do not receive bonuses from disciplines. For example, you cannot use Potence to augment an attack made by your extra limbs. These extra limbs cannot be used during Celerity rounds.
- **Tough**: Sacrifice up to 3 points of your Physical attribute to gain an equal number of health levels. These health levels are all in the Healthy wound track.

- **Transformed Biology**: Your heart (and/or other organs) are in unusual places. You cannot be staked, and you may be difficult to kill. Separating your brain from your heart still causes you to meet Final Death, but it can be difficult to behead a vampire who keeps her brain in an unusual place.
- **Crippled**: You morph your target into a shape incapable of fighting, or, in some cases, moving. You can rob your victim of her simple action, her standard action, or both.
- **Body Weaponry**: Sacrifice 1 health level in order to transform a part of your body into a weapon. Build the weapon normally, using the rules for creating weapons. Your body weaponry cannot be disarmed, and if it is broken, you can reform it by spending 1 point of Blood.

Health levels and attribute points sacrificed to uses of Bonecraft cannot be regained until the Bonecraft is undone. Like the other powers of Vicissitude, Bonecraft requires you to physically mold your target's body into the desired shape.

Bonecraft is not a transformative power, but its effects only apply to your normal form. If you use a transformative power, the effects of Bonecraft do not transfer to your transformed shape.

Focus [Manipulation]:

When you activate Bonecraft, you may choose to apply two of the above modifications instead of only one. You cannot apply the same modification more than once.

●●●● Horrid Form

Your body is capable of transforming into a horrible, mutated abomination, warping and twisting into an H.R. Giger-like monstrosity. You may develop spikes of bone across parts of your body, cloak yourself in fur or hair, develop numerous eyes, or anything else your twisted mind can imagine.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action to transform into a massive, inhuman monster. While in Horrid Form, you suffer a -3 penalty to your Mental and Social attributes, but you also receive the Strength Physical attribute focus, and a +3 bonus to your Physical attribute when making brawling attacks. Additionally, your brawling attacks inflict aggravated damage, while you are in Horrid Form.

Horrid Form is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers.

Focus [Charisma]:

While in Horrid Form, your bonus to Brawl-based attacks increases to +5, instead of the standard +3. Your Horrid Form is also tremendously frightening to behold. Opponents whose current Willpower is less than yours suffer a -2 penalty when attacking you with Melee- or Brawl-based powers. This penalty always applies to NPCs with no Willpower rating.

●●●●● Blood Form

If you concentrate briefly, you can cause your body to liquefy into a pool of blood. In this state, you can still act and register the world around you. You are a liquid creature in a world of those confined to a solid state.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action to transform into a pool of blood. While in Blood Form, you cannot spend Blood, talk, activate powers, or physically attack, but you are also immune to Physical attacks from sources other than fire and sunlight. You can be injured by non-Physical attacks, and you can be harmed by flaming weapons, such as a torch or a road flare; however, incendiary ammunition passes through your form too quickly to inflict damage. If hit by a flaming weapon, such as a torch or a road flare, you can spend 1 point of Blood to extinguish that flame in the moment it strikes you.

Your Blood Form is semi-gelatinous, but cannot maintain a solid form. It is not human-shaped and cannot appear to walk or talk. While in Blood Form, other characters can attempt to drink you. To do so, an attacker must make a Brawl-based challenge using her Physical attribute + Brawl versus your Physical attribute + Dodge. If successful, the attacker drinks 1 point of your Blood. If you run out of Blood while in this transformation, either from someone drinking your vitae, or from your expenditure of Blood points, you immediately meet Final Death. Characters who have very little vitae left in their Blood pools should be cautious about transforming into Blood Form.

In this form, you can pass through any crack, hole, or aperture that liquid could normally transverse. You cannot pass through solid objects or airtight passages, nor can you travel through planes of glass, as you do not condense. You also cannot fly, though you can travel along tilted or raised surfaces, such as up a wall. You take no damage from falling.

While in Blood Form, you are formed of liquid vitae and do have a tangible physical presence. You can be touched by anyone who passes her hand through your form, and you can touch other individuals by flowing in the target's direction. Touching, or being touched, may require a Brawl attack.

Blood Form is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers.

Focus [Manipulation]:

Rather than a pool of blood, you can transform into a vaguely human-shaped gelatinous blob of blood. This form can remain upright, maintaining its consistency while walking or performing simple activities, and it is capable of speaking.

Visceratika

"Why place statues in graveyards? Stone does not mourn."

— Ferox

Atop the marble spires of ancient cathedrals, hunched stone guardians stare down at the city, keeping a watchful eye on the streets. With the power of Visceratika, you can harden your skin and become one with stone, much like the angelic and demonic gargoyle carvings of old. Members of the Gargoyle bloodline were slaves when they first evinced this discipline, as rituals cast repeatedly upon them somehow became permanent, fusing with their magical nature. It is an enigma within the vampiric world — and more so, since the bloodline can teach its proprietary power to others.

Possessing Visceratika notably toughens and hardens a vampire's skin, tinting it with faint shades of grey. For a Gargoyle, this makes very little difference, as even without learning Visceratika, Gargoyles appear as though they are made of stone. However, when other vampires learn this power, it causes a mild but noticeable alteration of their appearance.

Visceratika Test Pool: The Visceratika wielder uses her Mental attribute + Athletics versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower.

• Skin of the Chameleon

When you activate this power, you naturally blend in with your surroundings. While not invisible, you become less noticeable, and those around you simply don't tend to pay attention to you, even though they realize you are there.

System:

Expend 1 Blood and use a simple action to activate Skin of the Chameleon for one hour. You must be currently unobserved by mortals in order to activate Skin of the Chameleon. Thereafter, so long as you draw no attention to yourself, mortals will assume that you are an expected and legitimate part of their surroundings. They assume you have an authentic reason to be there, and they will not question your presence. If asked afterwards, they will describe you in generalities. Even if your appearance is particularly bestial or horrific, like a Gargoyle or a Nosferatu appears, so long as you take simple steps to avoid attention, such as wearing a hat or turning up collar, and do nothing to make people notice you, mortals in your area will ignore you.

You can interact with mortals while under the effect of this power, so long as you do not startle them or give them any reason to scrutinize your appearance. After such a conversation, the mortal will only remember you as a bland-seeming individual with the proper credentials to be present and very little more. If you use another power, threaten, or attack anyone, or otherwise draw attention to yourself, this power immediately ends.

Skin of the Chameleon fails if you attempt to enter a private location. This power might allow you to wander through a crime scene, but it cannot be used to enter a top secret laboratory or walk unnoticed into someone's home.

Focus [Perception]:

Your Skin of the Chameleon works on supernatural creatures, such as vampires, as well as mortals. Supernatural creatures who encounter you can make an opposed challenge using their Mental attribute + Willpower versus your Mental attribute + Stealth. Characters with Auspex receive a bonus to this test equal to the number of Auspex powers they possess. Elder powers count towards this bonus, but techniques do not.

•• Scry the Hearthstone

Buildings have memories, and stone can carry echoes unperceived by the human ear. By touching any part of a building, such as the wall, ceiling, or floor, you can remotely sense any individuals inside, similar to a bat using sonar.

System:

By spending 1 point of Blood and spending a full turn in concentration, you get a complete sense of a building's layout and inhabitants at that moment. You receive accurate information about the building's design — where each room is, whether there are secret passages or hidden chambers, and so forth. You also learn the location, approximate size, and general type (humanoid or animal) of all living (and undead) things within. This building may be as large as a mansion; to acquire detailed information about a massive superstructure or a skyscraper, your Storyteller may require you to activate this power once every few floors.

Focus [Perception]:

You can utilize Scry the Hearthstone by expending a simple action, rather than a full turn of concentration.

●●● Bond With the Mountain

You have an innate understanding of earth, stone, concrete, and metal, and can shape and mold even the hardest natural substances as easily as you would a handful of clay.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action. By physically grasping a portion of stone or manufactured stone-like material, such as concrete, brick, or other masonry, you can twist or shape it as though it were soft and malleable. By using this power, you can even shape a safe haven for yourself within such material, sealing any gaps behind you after you crawl inside. You can create corridors or openings and pass through them, leaving no trace of such travel behind. A character using Bond With the Mountain can shape three cubic feet of stone with one standard action, and can move through such material in this manner at one step per round.

Those wishing to notice or locate a Gargoyle who is using Bond With the Mountain to shelter inside a wall or other material must succeed in a challenge, using their Mental attribute + Investigation versus the Visceratika user's Physical attribute + Stealth. When a character using Heightened Senses comes within two steps of a person hidden by Bond With the Mountain, the character with Heightened Senses automatically realizes that someone is nearby, although she does not know who, or precisely where, to find that someone. A character who has been forewarned by Heightened Senses in this manner receives a +3 bonus to her challenge to notice and locate the Visceratika user.

Focus [Wits]:

You can shape and move through metal and metal alloys, as well as stone.

●●●● Armor of Terra

Where lesser practitioners of Visceratika can alter their skin to gain the appearance of rock, you can actually modify yours to acquire the hardness of stone as well. When you activate this power, your skin takes on the coloration of granite, marble, or another type of stone, hardening your features into sharp lines and rigid planes.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend your simple action to toughen your skin to the hardness of stone for one hour. While Armor of Terra is active, your armored skin has the Hardened and Ballistic qualities. While affected by this power, your appearance may be considered a breach of the Masquerade.

Armor of Terra is not mundane armor, and attacks that normally pierce armor do not pierce or ignore the effects of this power.

Focus [Wits]:

Your Armor of Terra additionally has the Full Body quality, but unlike the standard drawback of Full Body armor, your altered skin can be hidden beneath normal clothing, or by powers such as Obfuscate.

●●●●● Stone Strength

Like stone itself, you become hard and impenetrable. Stone does not burn and cannot be pierced. With the use of this power, you shield yourself from two of the greatest banes of vampiric existence and borrow strength from the earth to provide defense.

System:

By expending 1 Blood and spending a simple action, you transform your body to the hardness of stone. While in this form, you do not take damage from fire, and flaming or incendiary attacks deal normal damage to you. Further, because your organs are as hard as stone, you cannot be staked. While affected by this power, your appearance is a clear breach of the Masquerade. Once activated, this power lasts until the next sunrise.

Stone Strength is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers. You can end this transformation at any time by expending a simple action. Stone Strength's transformation is a rock-like version of a character's normal (humanoid) form, and characters in this form can use weapons.

Focus [Wits]:

While this power is active, you take half damage from sunlight (round up). This is an exception to the rule that prevents a vampire's powers from reducing the damage she receives from sunlight.

Necromancy

"They say those who enslave spirits place their own soul in chains. But damn, if it ain't good business."

— Don Michael Antonio Giovanni,
Prince of Las Vegas

For centuries, the unwholesome practice of Necromancy has fostered legend and superstition. Experiments conducted in catacombs and graveyards, mortuaries and crypts have codified the paths of Necromancy and given vampires power over the corpses and spirits of the dead. Vampires who study necromantic magic must utilize human corpses, hands of murderers, portions of spirit essence, and other difficult-to-obtain items for use in such depraved and morbid spells. Needless to say, such repugnant practices can have a detrimental effect on one's Humanity.

Necromancy has certain limitations:

- Necromancy relies upon a necromancer speaking magical phrases and making specific gestures. Use of blood magic is easy to notice, and the methods used to activate such powers are rarely subtle.
- All Necromancy paths and rituals are considered Social powers and as such, cannot be used during Celerity rounds.
- Specific Necromancy powers that are resisted with your target's Physical attribute can be repeatedly used against a target. This is an exception to the rule that prohibits a character from using a Social power on the same target immediately after failing. Powers that are resisted with the target's Social attribute cannot be attempted repeatedly. You must wait 10 minutes before retrying such a power, as per the standard rule.

Necromancy consists of multiple paths of study and expands into several individual rituals. To purchase a path of Necromancy and Necromantic rituals, a character must possess a specific merit that allows her to do so, such as the *Necromantic Training* merit, or a similar clan-specific merit. For more information on these merits, see **Chapter Five: Merits, page 252**.

Primary Path:

The first path of Necromancy that a character masters to the 2nd dot is considered her *primary path* of study. To improve any other path of Necromancy, she must first improve her capabilities in her primary path. A character can never become more skilled in other paths of Necromancy than she is in her primary path of study; she cannot learn the 3rd dot of another path until after she has learned the 3rd dot of her primary path, and so forth.

Characters of clans with a specific in-clan path of Necromancy may choose another path as their primary path, so long as they meet the requirements as stated above.

Necromantic Rituals:

Necromancy does not have elder powers or techniques. Instead, practitioners of this art gain access to mystical rituals. Necromancy rituals are formulaic and require a significant amount of time, as well as specialized implements and ingredients. You cannot buy a specific Necromancy ritual until you have purchased the appropriate dot of Necromancy to support that ritual. Learning a level 4 ritual requires you already possess 4 dots in your primary Necromancy path.

The cost to purchase a ritual is equal to the ritual's level times two. Therefore, a level 3 ritual costs 6 XP to purchase.

A necromancer cannot learn more rituals than dots of Necromancy that she currently possesses. For example, Marianna Giovanni possesses 4 dots in the Sepulchre Path, her primary path, as well as 3 dots in the Bone Path, and 2 dots in the Ash Path. Thus, she can learn nine Necromancy rituals.

True Corpse: The term "true corpse" is used throughout the descriptions of necromantic powers. A true corpse is a creature's physical remains: i.e. the dead body of an animal or human. This term does not refer to corpses that have been animated as zombies, nor does it include vampires, wraiths, nor other supernatural creatures.

The Shadowlands: Wraiths and spectres exist in *the Shadowlands*, a land of the dead that overlaps with the physical, tangible world. For more information on the Shadowlands, see the description of Wraith NPCs in **Chapter Twelve: Allies and Antagonists, page 500**.

Necromancy Test Pool: The Necromancy wielder uses her Social attribute + Occult versus the target's Social attribute + Willpower.

The Sepulchre Path

The Sepulchre Path encompasses the study of spirits, ghosts, and intangible entities. Through the practice of this path, a vampire can summon and control wraiths, forcing them to serve the necromancer's will. Unless otherwise noted, powers that affect ghosts, wraiths, and spectres can only be used on the spirits of the dead. These powers cannot be used on psychically projected, Umbral, or otherwise intangible entities.

• Witness of Death

The first trick to learn when dealing with ghosts is the ability to sense and interact with these spirits. By learning this ability, a necromancer can discover and communicate with nearby wraiths.

System:

Once purchased, this power is always active. You can see, hear, and talk to wraiths, communicating with them whether or not there is a common language. Note that, unlike the Medium merit, you can only see the ghost itself, not the wraithly surroundings of the Shadowlands.

Focus [Appearance]:

You also recognize and identify wraith powers, spells, and visible effects of vampiric Necromancy, as well as necromantically enchanted items (but not wraith fetters, if those items are not otherwise enchanted). You have no ability to see invisible uses of magic, only to recognize magic that clings to those things you can perceive. You cannot identify powers or spells you do not possess, but you do recognize such things as necromantic in origin.

•• Torment

Recalcitrant spirits cannot evade your power, nor can they long survive your wrath. By focusing the power of your necromantic magic, you can engage in ectoplasmic battle across the barrier of the Shadowlands.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action as your character gestures toward her target. Then, make an opposed challenge with the Necromancy test pool against a target wraith. If you succeed, you inflict 3 points of normal damage to that ghost.

Exceptional Success:

This use of Torment deals 4 points of normal damage, instead of 3.

Focus [Manipulation]:

Your Torment target also loses 1 Pathos from a successful attack.

••• Summon Soul

By reaching into the Shadowlands, you can summon a ghost and force it to obey your will. You call upon the closest spirit to your location, and, unless you know the true name of a specific wraith, have no control over what kind of individual will respond. However, the wraith is forcibly made loyal and must do its best to obey your demands — or suffer soul-wracking pain.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to summon a wraith. Wraiths are invisible to individuals who do not have the Medium merit, Witness of Death, or other such powers. Summon Soul can be used to summon a specific wraith, provided you know the name that entity had in life. Alternately, you can summon the closest uncontrolled wraith. Normally, the wraith arrives over the course of the next five minutes, so long as she is capable of reaching your location. Wraiths can pass through walls, but cannot fly, nor cross barriers enchanted against their passage.

Summoned wraiths attempt to obey your requests and follow your orders until dawn or until they take a total amount of damage equal to their NPC rating. Multiple uses of Summon Soul do not allow you to summon an additional wraith while still controlling the first; if you use Summon Soul, any wraith you are controlling with Summon Soul is released in favor of the new summoning. However, if your original wraith is released (by taking damage, fleeing, or if you send her away), you can utilize this power again to summon a second wraith. Further, Summon Soul cannot be used to control wraiths that are currently under the effect of another practitioner's use of the Necromancy discipline.

Wraiths summoned by this power are created as 2-point Stock NPCs. They cannot perform downtime actions, but they can act with relative independence. For more information about wraiths see **Chapter Twelve: Allies and Antagonists, page 500**.

Focus [Appearance]:

Wraiths you summon with this power are 3-point NPCs, rather than 2-point NPCs.

•••• Bind Soul

Most necromancers must be content with temporarily summoned allies, but your power of Necromancy has grown to the point where you can force a ghost to inhabit a location on a near-permanent basis — or to free one thus subjugated by another user of this power.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and concentrate for three full turns to bind a wraith to your location. You cannot bind a wraith to a person or other creature in this manner. A wraith affected by Bind Soul counts as a 3-point Retainer, and she cannot move more than 10 steps from the spot where she is bound.

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You can only have one wraith bound in this manner at a time. If you bind a new wraith, the previous wraith is released.

You can release a wraith you've bound by using a simple action. To release a wraith bound by another Necromancer, you must best the other character in an opposed challenge using the Necromancy test pool.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You can bind a number of wraiths equal to your level of the Occult skill. You must bind each wraith individually.

●●●●● Soul Stealing

The most terrifying power of a spirit necromancer is the ability to tear a soul out of its body, rendering the body torpid or unconscious while the disembodied spirit is within your control. Even creatures who arguably have no souls are affected by your power, lending to significant philosophical discussions about the nature of the ephemeral world.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, expend your standard action, and make an opposed challenge using the Necromancy test pool. If you succeed, your target must immediately spend a Willpower to stave off the effects of your Soul Stealing. If she is unable (or unwilling) to spend a point of Willpower, you successfully rip her soul from her flesh. The character's original body falls into a torpid state and can neither defend itself nor act on its own. While a soul is out of its body, the individual so affected always knows the location of her body, although she has no unusual ability to perceive its surroundings if she is not present in the same location as her physical form.

A soul thus removed from a creature's body finds itself in the Shadowlands. She can see and hear everything happening around her body, but cannot communicate nor interact with the physical world, unless individuals there have the Medium merit, Necromancy, or similar ability to communicate with ghosts. The individual is not truly a wraith, has no Pathos, and cannot manifest in the real world.

A soul removed by this power cannot be targeted by powers or effects that can only target ghosts. A character affected by Soul Stealing has 9 health levels while trapped in the Shadowlands. If a soul-stolen character runs out of health levels, she is dispersed and unable to act until she returns to her body. If the target was a supernatural creature, the individual still has access to her powers, but cannot spend Blood and cannot attack individuals who are not also in the Shadowlands. Characters in the Shadowlands can attack, and be attacked, by a character whose soul has been removed with this power. After one hour, the creature's soul will return to her body. This restoration occurs even it would normally be prevented by other powers or effects.

While a soul is missing, that soul's body retains its always-active Physical powers, such as Fortitude, but is otherwise defenseless.

If an individual using Possession, or a similar power, is targeted by Soul Stealing, the controlling spirit is the one affected, not the quiescent one. If Soul Stealing succeeds, the controlling spirit is the one removed from the body, and the original entity regains control of the physical form. When the effects of Soul Stealing end, a spirit thus removed from a mortal body returns to its native form, not the body it was Possessing.

Exceptional Success:

A target must spend 3 points of Willpower to stave off the effects of your Soul Stealing, rather than 1.

Focus [Appearance]:

In addition to its normal effect, your successful use of Soul Stealing inflicts 1 point of normal damage on your target as the soul is torn from its physical form with extreme violence. This point cannot be reduced or negated.

The Bone Path

The study of the Bone Path is the study of physical corpses; rotting flesh and dusty bone. By mastering the Bone Path, a necromancer gains the ability to create and destroy zombies and shambling hordes of undead. These creatures mindlessly obey the necromancer's commands.

● Eyes of the Dead

You are no stranger to corpses and the remnants of hewed flesh. Your experiments, and your skill with Necromancy, give you the ability to glance at a corpse and understand the manner of its death.

System:

Target a true corpse within line of sight and expend your simple action. You instantly know the manner of that creature's death, as well as when the death occurred and whether the corpse has been moved or otherwise altered. Further, by spending a standard action in concentration, you can sense the presence of corpses within 100 yards and discover their locations.

Focus [Appearance]:

By spending 1 Blood, you can also disguise the manner of a corpse's death, rendering the body in every way as though it had died in a manner of your choosing and erasing all traces of any other injuries or reason for its death. Once you have invoked this power on a corpse, even other practitioners of Necromancy cannot tell that the corpse has been tampered with by *Eyes of the Dead*.

●● Destroy Husk

Philosophers say that it is easier to destroy than to create, and your powers of Necromancy prove that saying to be true. By targeting an animate corpse, you can sever the connections that maintain the construct, dissipating its dynamic force.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use a standard action to target a single true corpse, part of a true corpse, or zombie in line of sight, even if it is a zombie you do not control. This power destroys the target utterly. Not even ash is left behind.

You cannot use this power on vampires nor other supernatural creatures, but you can destroy a true corpse that is currently inhabited by a wraith or by another vampire. If you do so, this forces the possessing spirit back into the Shadowlands, or to its natural body, and destroys the corpse.

Focus [Charisma]:

You can use Destroy Husk as a simple action, rather than a standard action.

●●● Shambling Hordes

By summoning your necromantic might, you empower deceased bodies with the raw essence of the Shadowlands, animating the rotting flesh. So long as a corpse is mostly in one piece, it can ignore physical debilitation – shuffling on broken legs, or seeing despite empty eyesockets – to obey your will.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to cause a true corpse to rise and obey your verbal commands. You must already possess (and have with you) a suitable corpse to animate in order to use this power. At any given time, you can control a number of zombies equal to the number of dots you possess of the Occult skill. Each zombie must be animated separately.

You can cause corpses to animate within their graves, even if you cannot see such corpses, so long as you are aware that corpses are in the area, such as by using Eyes of the Dead. It may take such zombies several turns to reach you, as they slowly dig or hammer their way out of graves or mausoleums.

The creatures created with this power are zombies, with very little sentience and absolutely no creativity. The zombies attempt to obey your requests and follow your orders. These zombies are relatively permanent; they last until you release them, or until they take damage equal to their NPC rating.

Zombies created by Shambling Hordes are created as 2-point Stock NPCs. Each zombie has either the Potence or the Fortitude specialization, and either the Brawl or Melee specialization. A zombie cannot perform downtime actions or act independently, although it can perform simple tasks while unsupervised, such as sweeping the floor or attacking anyone who enters a room.

Focus [Charisma]:

Zombies created by this power are 3-point Stock NPCs, instead of the standard 2-point Stock NPCs. These retainers have both the Potence and Fortitude specializations and your choice of either Brawl or Melee.

●●●● Morbidity

Wraiths and zombies are relatively fragile creatures, easily defeated or chopped apart. By focusing your necromantic power, you can alter an undead creature, enhancing its rotting flesh or fortifying its spirit through your magic.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood, use your standard action, and target a zombie, wraith, or other servitor undead. This power has a variety of uses:

Zombies:

- Heal a zombie within three steps of up to 3 points of damage. You can cosmetically repair a zombie. Altering a zombie in this manner causes it to become less decayed and rotting; it regains the semblance it had at the moment after its death. Thereafter, the zombie begins to rot again as normal. By application of this power on a zombie every few weeks, such a zombie could even pass for human.

  If a zombie is within three steps, you can give it 3 additional health levels. These additional health levels are marked off first when a zombie takes damage, and fade after five minutes, whether it has taken damage or not. No zombie can be under the effects of more than one application of this power at a time.

Wraiths:

- You can raise a wraith's NPC rating by 1 point, to a maximum of 6. The effects of this power last for the next hour. No wraith can be under the effects of more than one application of this power at a time.

  You can cosmetically alter a wraith, changing its general appearance. You cannot change the wraith's gender or natural features, but you can alter its clothing, hairstyle, and other superficial qualities. Many necromancers use this power to update their wraith retainers to a more modern style.

Focus [Appearance]:

You can use the zombie-based effects of Morbidity on a vampire, thus temporarily causing her to look more human. Application of this power in this manner can cause a vampire on a path to appear to be on Humanity for a short length of time. Such uses of Morbidity last for 10 minutes. You cannot target a vampire with Morbidity more than once per night.

●●●●● Death's Puppetry

The most terrifying power of a corpse necromancer is the ability to inhabit a corpse, spiritually taking over your target's physical form and wearing the corpse as if it were your own flesh. While you are in command of the target's body, you can take any physical action that body is capable of performing.

System:

To use Death's Puppetry, you must spend your standard action and target a true corpse or zombie within line of sight, including zombies you do not control. Your consciousness transfers into the target corpse as though that body were your own. Your original body falls into a torpid state and can neither defend itself nor act on its own, although your torpid body still has access to any Fortitude you possess.

Corpses have no disciplines and cannot spend Blood. Further, a character cannot use any of her own disciplines while using Death's Puppetry. While inhabiting this corpse body, a character uses her own Mental attributes and focuses, Social attributes and focuses, skills, and backgrounds. You must use the corpse's Physical attribute, rather than your own, for all Physical challenges while using Death's Puppetry. If you use Death's Puppetry on a Stock NPC, the subject's Physical attribute is equal to double that NPC's rating. You cannot utilize the target's Physical attribute focuses.

Death's Puppetry lasts until the next sunrise or until you spend a simple action for your character to return to her native body. Death's Puppetry ends immediately if the character travels more than 10 miles away from her native body, if the character's native body takes damage, or if the corpse she's inhabiting is destroyed.

Focus [Charisma]:

You can possess any zombie you control, such as those created by Shambling Hordes. You can activate this power even if you cannot see that zombie, so long as it is within one mile of your current location. You must still pay all other costs of using this power.

The Ash Path

The study of the Ash Path is the study of the Shadowlands: the otherworld of the dead. Through focused research regarding the transference of the soul from this world to the next, a necromancer learns to strengthen or weaken the Shroud, and even to pass back and forth between the two worlds.

● Shroud Sight

The Shadowlands lies superimposed over the real world like an echo of things long past. Buildings that have been torn down are still standing; carriages rush past on ghostly streets; walls, furniture, and even forested areas still exist where the modern world shows no sign of their presence. Through the use of Shroud Sight, you can see into the Shadowlands as easily as looking at the present world.

System:

Once purchased, this power is always active. You can see and sense the Shadowlands around you, perceiving the echoes of the past that still linger in that other world. You can notice wraiths in the Shadowlands, but you are granted no special ability to communicate with them. If a wraith speaks a language you know, then you can have discourse with it.

Focus [Manipulation]:

You can spend a standard action to study a living mortal and determine whether it is likely she will become a wraith. Wraiths are created when people die with unfulfilled issues, particularly strong emotional connections or other deep ties. You can also look at an item in the physical world and ascertain if it is a wraith fetter: an object of great importance to a particular wraith, which can be used to call or bind it.

●● Shroud Mastery

You stand between two worlds and can control the flow of power between the land of the living and the realm of the dead. With concentration, you can manipulate the Shroud between the worlds, making it more difficult to cross — or easier to ignore.

System:

By spending 1 Blood and concentrating for three full turns, you can raise or lower the Shroud by one level in an area up to the size of a large room. This effect lasts for the rest of the night. A stronger Shroud makes it more difficult for wraiths to interact with the living world, while a weaker Shroud has the reverse effect. There are three levels of Shroud: low, medium, and high. The typical Shroud rating is medium, though particularly "creepy" areas, such as cemeteries or haunted houses, have a low Shroud; and emotionally sterile places, such as a newsroom or a laboratory, will have a high Shroud rating.

- ***Low***: The area feels creepy and is plagued with unusual sounds, smells, and occasional apparitions. Wraiths have a particularly easy time interacting with the physical world in this location. Ghosts do not have to spend Pathos to manifest. When manifesting, a ghost has a number of health levels equal to the turns it spends manifesting, with a maximum of 5. Also, a ghost's view of the physical world is very clear, and they can communicate in a whisper, even with individuals who do not have the Medium merit (or any other ability to speak with or see wraiths). A soul that is outside of its body due to use of Soul Steal can spend a Willpower to manifest when the shroud is low. Such a character has access to all of her powers, including Physical powers, and 1 health level.
- ***Medium*** – All activities are as per the standard Shroud level. Ghosts must spend the normal amount of Pathos to cross the Shroud.
- ***High*** – Wraiths have a particularly difficult time interacting with the physical world. Ghosts must spend twice the normal amount of Pathos when manifesting.

Focus [Manipulation]:

By spending 1 Blood and concentrating for three full turns, you can raise or lower the Shroud by one level. This lasts for one lunar month, and you can target an area up to the size of a large house.

●●● Dead Hand

Perceiving the Shadowlands is only the first step to understanding the transition from life to death. Next, you must master the ability to cross the Shroud. Through use of this power, you can seize ghostly artifacts on the other side of the Shroud and draw them through to the physical world.

System:

By spending 1 Blood and expending your standard action, you can reach into the Shadowlands and draw out common objects and items. Objects retrieved with this power must be small enough for a normal person to hold in both hands. This power can be used to grasp things that naturally occur in the Shadowlands at that location, echoes of objects that existed in the past. Such items are always normal, though they may be quite old, and must sensibly be present within the local landscape of the Shadowlands.

You can also use this power to similarly push items through the Shroud to the Shadowlands from the material realm. In this manner, this power's user could use Dead Hand to reach through the Shroud and give her wraith Retainer a gun. Later, at a different location, she could again use Dead Hand to reach into the Shadowlands, where her wraith Retainer (who has been following her around) stands ready to hand back the gun.

Items native to the Shadowlands remain in this world for one hour, after which they dissolve into mist and return to their native plane.

Focus [Charisma]:

Items you pull into the physical world remain on that plane for the rest of the night, rather than for only an hour.

●●●● Stygian Lance

Deep within the Shadowlands, powerful tempests and storms ravage the sepia-toned landscape, ranging from rains of plasm to lightning-flashes of soulfire. You can unleash this fell power, hurling a lance of pure oblivion toward your enemies.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use a standard action to hurl a bolt of plasm from the tempests of the Shadowlands. Make an opposed challenge using your Social attribute + Occult versus the target's Physical attribute + Dodge. If successful, this attack deals 3 points of normal damage, and it can strike individuals in the Shadowlands – including wraiths, physical travelers, and individuals whose souls have been stolen – as well as those on the physical plane.

Exceptional Success:

Your Stygian Lance deals 4 points of normal damage, instead of 3.

Focus [Charisma]:

Damage from your Stygian Lance cannot be reduced or negated, but can be healed normally.

●●●●● Ex Nihilo

The necromancer who has mastered the Ash Path has also mastered the Shroud. You can cross the border between the Shadowlands and the physical world as easily as others might open a door and step through.

System:

By focusing on a familiar destination, spending 1 Blood, and chanting for five full turns, you can travel into and through the Shadowlands. You can bring up to three of your zombie minions (Shambling Hordes or other such Retainers) with you on this journey.

Time and distance are subjective in the Shadowlands, and it always takes four hours to arrive at your destination, no matter how far you travel in the real world. You can shorten the time it takes to arrive at your chosen location by sacrificing an undead servant, either a zombie or wraith, to the Tempest after you enter Ex Nihilo. For each such Retainer you destroy, your journey takes one hour less to complete. If you sacrifice all three of your zombie or wraith servants, you reduce your travel time to one hour.

Alternately, you can enter the Shadowlands without intent to travel. Instead, you may lurk beyond the Shroud and spy on the living world. While in the Shadowlands, you see the real world as a hazy shadow of itself. This allows you to have a general understanding of events around you, but it is difficult to pick out details or overhear conversations. Unfortunately, the Medium merit does not work in reverse to allow you to hear and witness the physical world as you would the Shadowlands. A character can return to the physical world by concentrating for five turns. This transition is slow and noticeable, as the individual slowly comes into focus, gaining solidity as she eases her way back through the Shroud.

You cannot bring anyone with you through the Shadowlands, other than your zombie minions. This power can be particularly dangerous if there are hostile wraiths, such as spectres, in the Shadowlands. Such creatures can attack you while you are on their plane. This encounter is treated in all ways like a normal conflict.

Focus [Manipulation]:

In addition to normal uses of this power, you can spend 1 Blood and your standard action to transition into the Shadowlands for a flicker of time. You spend one full turn moving through the Shadowlands, and you exit Ex Nihilo up to 20 steps in any direction from your original location.

Mortis Path

The Mortis Path deals with the physical processes and manifestations of death as they affect the physical form. This path springs from a deep necromantic understanding of the undead form, and it philosophically focuses on the nature of a corpse as a gateway between life and death.

In ancient times, members of the Cappadocian clan were the preeminent necromancers of vampiric society, but over the centuries, their proprietorship over the discipline has weakened. Now, only the Mortis Path remains as the exclusionary path of Necromancy practiced by that ancient clan. Only Cappadocians and the Cappadocian bloodline of Lamias can learn this path of Necromancy. Neither Giovanni, nor the Samedi bloodline, have innate access to this path.

● Masque of Death

This power aids the vampire both in deception and in understanding the differences between a true corpse and a necromantically animated member of the undead. By using the abilities of this power, you can transform yourself into a corpse for a period of time, even using the power to hide among other corpses during extended periods of torpor.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to transform your physical form into that of a normal corpse. While Masque of Death is active, you are considered to be a mundane corpse. You cannot move, you have no aura, you lose access to all of your vampiric powers (except for the effects of Masque of Death), you do not take damage from sunlight, and you appear to all investigation as a simple, non-magical dead body. A character using Masque of Death is not a true corpse and cannot be targeted by powers that only affect a true corpse.

While Masque of Death is active, you are aware of everything that occurs within five steps of your physical form. You do not take wounds from damage to your body while in this state, and you are immune to staking, but you can be killed if your head is severed or your body is destroyed. Destroying or beheading your corpse in this manner requires the attacker to utilize three standard actions, during which you may choose to end Masque of Death and revert instantly to your physical form. During this reversion, you erase any

damage that has been done to your corpse, and your body ejects any stakes or foreign matter.

Masque of Death lasts until you choose to end the power. If a character uses Masque of Death for an extended period of time, her corpse will rot and decay normally but will never entirely lose cohesion. In this manner, she will become as withered and decrepit as any other corpse in a tomb until such time as she awakens.

The user of this power can end this effect by spending a simple action.

Focus [Appearance]:

Once per turn, while using Masque of Death, you can spend 1 point of Blood to take one simple action, including using that simple action to move. Further, Masque of Death automatically activates if you enter torpor due to damage or if you are staked. Under these circumstances, you are not required to spend 1 Blood or use an action to activate Masque of Death.

●● Resume the Coil

This subtle power allows you to defeat the deep slumber of torpor, drawing yourself or another vampire from those depths.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to touch a torpid vampire. The target immediately wakes from torpor. A target awakening from torpor has the same number of health levels as when she entered torpor. Resume the Coil can be used to awaken yourself while you are torpid. This is an exception to the rule that prevents characters from using powers while in torpor.

Focus [Manipulation]:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to touch the true corpse of an individual who died within the last 24 hours. The target immediately rises from the dead. Her body reanimates, the soul returns, and she can act normally for the duration of this power. She has no memory of anything that happened since her death, neither on this side of the Shroud nor on the other. While this power lasts, the target cannot be killed, although her body can be destroyed (thus effectively killing her). This power lasts as long as you continue to spend 1 Blood per turn. When Resume the Coil ends, the target irrevocably dies and cannot be resurrected (or Embraced) by any means. Vampires, whether they are undead or have met Final Death, cannot be targeted with this power.

●●● Blight

Through mastery of this power, you can infect a victim's body, giving her a wasting disease that closely resembles the effects of the Black Death. Boils rise on her skin, her flesh rots and sloughs away, and dark, livid black patches of gangrene spread across her body.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, expend your standard action to point dramatically at your target, and then make an opposed challenge using the Necromancy test pool. If you succeed, your target contracts a terrible, wasting sickness. Victims of Blight take 1 point of aggravated damage as their flesh rots and falls off in clumps. This damage cannot be reduced or negated. After one hour, your target must make a static test using her Physical attribute + Survival with a difficulty equal to your Mental Attribute + Occult. Because this is a static challenge, you cannot use your Willpower to retest, although the target can do so. If the target fails this challenge, she takes another point of aggravated damage that cannot be reduced or negated. Repeat this process once per hour until the target either succeeds in a challenge (indicating her body has finally resisted the disease), dies, or falls into torpor.

Living characters can die from Blight, but vampires stop taking damage from this power once they fall into torpor. If a vampire voluntarily enters torpor before running out of health levels, Blight continues to eat away at her flesh until she runs out of health levels.

Exceptional Success:

When you activate this power, the target takes 2 points of aggravated damage rather than 1. Further, the victim suffers 2 points of damage for every static challenge she fails while attempting to resist the disease. This damage cannot be reduced or negated.

Focus [Manipulation]:

The static challenge to avoid damage must be made every 10 minutes, rather than every hour.

●●●● Reaper's Passing

The dreaded form of the reaper is never far from a vampire's soul, and those forced to face the realities of eternity will find it all too filled with the lingering threat of death. Even mortals fear the coming of their inexorable end.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to make an opposed challenge using the Necromancy test pool. If you

succeed, your target experiences a fleeting glimpse of death. Some lucky few see the momentary bliss of heaven, but most experience the horrors of hell or the terrors of utter emptiness. No matter what form this power takes, the victim is briefly incapacitated by her brush with death. The target loses her next standard action.

If this power is used twice on a single target, the effects are lessened, as the target is somewhat inured to the shock. If a target has been affected by this power within the last three turns, a second use of this power on that target has no effect.

Exceptional Success:

If you score an exceptional success with Reaper's Passing against a mortal target, that target dies instantly. Supernatural targets survive, but take 3 points of aggravated damage in addition to the normal effect of this power. This damage cannot be reduced or negated.

Focus [Manipulation]:

Victims of your successful use of Reaper's Passing lose both their next standard and their next simple action. If a target has already been affected by Reaper's Passing within the last three turns, she loses only her next simple action on the second use of this power.

●●●●● The Fourth Horseman

Through invoking the power of the Shroud and drawing that energy into yourself, the user of this power transforms into a literal incarnation of death. Most users of this power appear as a skeletal human in a black, tattered robe, with glowing pinpricks of eerie light in its empty eye-sockets, and surrounded by the audible wails of the dammed. Others may take a form suited to their cultural history or personal psyche, but in all cases, this form must be a recognizable avatar of death.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your simple action to transform dramatically into a physical avatar of death. This transformation must feed, fueling itself on the life-force in its surrounding area. If it cannot draw power from other sources, it eats at the user from within, slowly drawing her into death.

At the beginning of each turn in which the Fourth Horseman is active, any living individual within two steps of the user takes 2 points of normal damage as her life force is corroded and destroyed. This damage cannot be reduced or negated by any means.

Vampires in this radius lose 1 point of Blood, as the only life-force they possess is that which was stolen from others. The blood in a vampire's veins literally turns into ash. Vampires with no blood in their bodies suffer no ill effects.

If the Fourth Horseman has no nearby sources upon which to feed, either by damaging a living character or by turning a vampire's blood to ash, it turns inward, turning 2 points of the user's Blood to ash. This power ends immediately if the user runs out of Blood, falls into torpor, or spends a simple action to deactivate it.

While a character is under the effect of this power, all of her Brawl and Melee attacks inflict an additional point of damage.

The Fourth Horseman is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers. You can use weapons while in this form.

Focus [Appearance]:

While you are transformed into the Fourth Horseman, your fists or weapons are surrounded by visible necromantic energy. All of your Brawl and Melee attacks inflict aggravated damage. This energy can manifest as black, swirling clouds of smoke, as buzzing insects, or in some other manner appropriate to your specific form.

Necromantic Rituals

"Life is nothing but a fleeting moment
of pain before inevitable eternity.
In death, we are truly born."

— Agaitas, childe of Egothha

Rituals are necromantic formulas that create powerful magical effects. They make use of unusual and rare ingredients, and take significantly more time to cast than the simple spells of a necromantic path. All practitioners of Necromancy have the capacity to perform rituals equivalent to their mastery with that art.

Rituals must be learned and purchased separately from paths; you do not acquire them simply by purchasing a path of Necromancy. Like paths, they are rated from levels 1-5, and a caster can have several rituals corresponding to each level of the progression. A necromancer must purchase one ritual of each level before she is able to purchase a ritual at the next-higher level. So, in order to purchase a level 2 ritual, a necromancer must already possess at least one level 1 ritual; or in order to purchase a level 3 ritual, she must already possess at least one level 2 ritual, and so forth.

No character can learn more necromantic rituals than she possesses dots in all of her Necromancy paths. Total all your dots from all known paths of Necromancy to determine the maximum number of rituals your character can possess.

Unless otherwise stated, all rituals cost 1 Blood to activate. All rituals also require five minutes of casting time per level of the ritual.

Ritual Ingredients and Targeting: If a ritual requires you to have a focus, then it can be used at range. Otherwise, it requires line of sight, unless the ritual specifically says otherwise. Ingredients that are specifically called out in the ritual's description must be used to cast the ritual, or that ritual fails. A ritual's ingredients are always consumed in a use of that ritual, unless otherwise specified in the description.

Necromantic rituals use the Necromancy test pool: the Necromancy user's Social attribute + Occult versus the target's Social attribute + Willpower.

Level 1 Necromantic Rituals

Call of the Hungry Dead

The Shadowlands are a dark and empty wasteland, filled with echoes and bitter regrets. By connecting your victim's psyche to this other world, you can cause her to hear the souls of the dead, weeping for their past crimes.

System:

When a necromancer casts Call of the Hungry Dead, she must target a victim that is currently within a one-mile radius of the casting of this ritual. If you succeed in an opposed challenge against your target, using the Necromancy test pool, the victim is plagued by the voices of wraiths from across the Shroud. These voices whisper in the night, teasing and confusing the character, distorting her perceptions, and increasing her paranoia. The next time the target gains downtime actions, she gains one less action for that period. This ritual's effects do not stack.

Circle of Cerberus

A necromancer must always be cautious; her activities on the physical realm and in the Shadowlands can create many enemies. The Circle of Cerberus was created to help protect against such vengeance.

System:

The necromancer must draw a circle in salt and silver on the floor. Having such a circle etched into the ground does not create a permanent spell; the components erode away at the next sunrise. All those within the Circle of Cerberus receive a +5 bonus to defensive test pools against wraiths or powers of Necromancy, including similar powers possessed by other supernatural creatures, as long as the protected characters remain within the circle.

Dark Assistant

This ritual animates a severed hand or a human skull, causing the object to become self-aware so that it may serve as the necromancer's gruesome ally.

System:

The necromancer can perform this ritual on a severed hand or a clean human skull, animating the object to create an assistant. Such an assistant is permanent until destroyed.

Animating a hand gives it the ability to act as a physical assistant, scrambling about on its fingers at the necromancer's command. It can fetch small items, turn the pages of a book, or perform simple tasks.

Animating a human skull allows it to serve as a veritable library of information, reciting with perfect memory any book or information read to it and giving detailed accountings of any rituals or alchemical recipes that have been explained in its presence.

Neither the head nor the hand can perform any combat actions. Dark Assistants have only 2 health levels and are animated by dark energies. These creatures have no memory of their former lives and serve only the necromancer who animated them.

Eyes of the Grave

You can concentrate the pallor and decay of death into a pinch of grave soil and grind it into the eyes of a portrait, sketch, or picture of your target. Later, by tearing this picture in half, you inflict visions of horror that blind your opponent for a short period of time.

System:

At the zenith of this ritual's casting, you must destroy a portrait of the target that has been created by someone with at least 2 dots of the Crafts skill. The necromancer must target a victim who is currently within a one-mile radius of the initial casting of this ritual. Using the Necromancy test pool make an opposed challenge against your target. If you succeed, you have imbued a picture of your target with Eyes of the Grave. At some point later that same evening, you can tear the picture in half, causing your victim to suffer the effects of blindness for one full turn. A necromancer can have only one Eyes of the Grave ritual in effect at any time; casting this ritual a second time cancels the effects of the first invocation.

Smoking Mirror

Named for the chief Aztec god Tezcatlipoca, this ritual allows you to use an obsidian mirror to gain dark insight into the world around you. By gazing into the mirror's ebony depths, the

necromancer can discover an object's flaws, assess the general health of mortals, or even read a being's aura.

System:

You must cast this ritual on an obsidian mirror no smaller than six inches in diameter; such an object can be concealed with a bit of effort, but will not fit easily into a pocket. Until the next sunrise, looking into the mirror allows the necromancer (and only the necromancer who cast this spell) to utilize Death's Gaze via the mirror's reflection. Death's Gaze grants the ability to see wraiths and the surrounding Shadowlands. It also allows the necromancer to see the stain of oblivion on the living. If the necromancer has any dots of the Medicine skill, she may determine from this stain whether or not the living individual has any illnesses, damage, or physical disabilities.

Warping the Morbid Visage

Sometimes it is necessary to falsify one's death, either to the mortal world or to other vampires. This ritual allows the necromancer a vital tool in such deceptions, altering a corpse to look like her own form.

System:

The necromancer invoking this ritual is able to change a true corpse's facial features, coloration, and general height and weight, causing the corpse's appearance to correspond with her own for up to three full nights. To enact this ritual, the caster removes the corpse's tongue and keeps it on her person for as long as she wants the ritual to be in effect. Clever necromancers also use this ritual to ensure that onlookers cannot identify the corpse's true identity easily, using it to mislead investigations. The corpse's native DNA does not change; it is possible that scientific tests could determine the individual's genetic makeup is incorrect for her physical features or age, but to casual investigation, the body appears in all ways to be a copy of the necromancer who casts this ritual.

Level 2 Necromancy Rituals

Black Blood

This ritual allows the necromancer to enchant her blood, or any amount of cold blood, and through this ritual turn that blood into hideous black ichor.

System:

If this ritual is performed on the necromancer herself, this ritual transmutes 3 points of Blood within the caster's system. The caster cannot utilize this blood for any purpose. Should anyone attempt to drink from the caster, she drinks these 3 points of Black Blood before consuming any of the user's other Blood points.

If the ritual is cast upon a recently dead true corpse or another amount of cold blood (such as a blood bag or other blood-storage container), all Blood within that corpse or container is transmuted to Black Blood.

Those who ingest Black Blood take 2 points of normal damage per point of Black Blood they drink. Further, for the next hour, an individual who has ingested any amount of Black Blood suffers terrible cramping pain, and receives a -1 penalty to all Physical attribute tests.

Din of the Damned

The Shroud shelters the worlds from one another, but through application of the proper magic, a necromancer can allow the sounds of the land of the dead to be heard within the land of the living.

System:

This ritual bears some similarities to Call of the Hungry Dead, in that it makes the sounds of the Underworld audible in the physical realm. However, Din of the Damned affects an area or enclosed chamber, rather than a single individual. To ward an area in this manner, the necromancer must draw an unbroken line around its perimeter with a stick of chalk made from crematorium ash.

Until dawn, any attempt to eavesdrop on events inside the room, be it mundane, technologically enhanced or supernatural, receives garbled, static-ridden results. Further, a light wind in the area carries whispers, warnings, curses, screams, and laughter of the dead. All mortals within the area must leave, and they refuse to enter the area again for the rest of the night. Mortals who are forced to remain suffer a -5 penalty to all test pools.

Sepulchral Beacon

This ritual allows the caster to sense when the Shroud is breached within her vicinity. To a necromancer utilizing this power, the location of the rift is a palpable presence, pulsing with the bitter cold tempest of oblivion.

System:

Once a necromancer has cast this ritual, she is able to sense nearby breaches of the Shroud, including uses of Shroud Mastery until the next sunrise. This ability manifests as a creeping chill up the necromancer's arms, guiding the general direction to the breach. Once within sight, the breach appears to be an otherworldly tear, flickering with pale, heatless lightning. Sepulchral Beacon reveals the

location of a death (a spirit passing through the Shroud) and the use Necromancy or similar powers, as well as any other effect that may have disturbed the barrier between the living world and the Shadowlands. This power has a range of one mile.

Stained Sight

The world is a transient place, filled with death. By invoking the powers of Necromancy, the caster forces a single victim to see the decay inherent within every living thing.

System:

The necromancer must target a victim who is currently within a one-mile radius of the initial casting of this ritual. Further, she must have either a lock of her victim's hair, a pinch of flesh (or ash, in the case of a vampire) that was once part of the victim's body, or a point of the victim's Blood.

Using the Necromancy test pool make an opposed challenge against your target. If you succeed, you afflict your target with Stained Sight. For the duration, the victim sees the world around her as decaying, rotting, and dying. Those affected by this ritual are often repulsed by their surroundings, fearful even of allies, and can become depressed by the images of constant death. The victim gains the flaw Death Sight for a period of one month or two game sessions, whichever is longer.

Scales of Maat

There are wraiths, and then there are Stygian Lords; a skillful necromancer knows how to tell the difference, so that she might properly gauge her enemy — or her slave.

System:

This ritual allows a necromancer to gain a sense of a wraith's power. By casting it, the necromancer learns any powers a wraith possesses, as well as its general power level, reason for death, and how much time has passed since its death. To cast this ritual, the necromancer needs only to have some physical evidence of a wraith's existence: a fetter, part of a corpse, or an item that has been touched by the wraith in question or affected by that wraith's powers.

Level 3 Necromancy Rituals

Moldering Presence

By casting this ritual, the vampire's very aura emanates waves of decay and entropy. Any undead matter that comes in contact with the necromancer falls prey to hastened and premature decay. Wood and paper will rot, metal will rust, and even plastic and glass will slowly taint and then erode.

System:

A necromancer under the effect of this ritual can willfully cause decay to any inanimate objects she touches. For the rest of the night, she can spend a standard action to corrode and blight anything she is touching with her flesh, rendering the item immediately useless. In combat, you can destroy an object under your opponent's control by targeting that opponent with the Grapple combat maneuver. If you succeed, you can instead destroy the object in your target's possession.

Moldering Presence works immediately on items up to the size of a large book. Larger items may take a few turns or a few minutes to destroy using this power, at the Storyteller's discretion.

Rise, Cerberus

Cerberus was the guardian dog of Greek myth. By the use of this ritual, the necromancer can protect her haven with a guardian that is reminiscent of the mighty Cerberus.

System:

To enact this ritual, the caster must slay three large hounds, affixing two additional heads to a single hound's corpse before burying it beneath the floor of her haven. Then, she must chant over the grave for three consecutive nights. On the fourth night, the hound rises again as a wraith: a ghostly presence in the physical world, but entirely solid within the Shadowlands. The Cerberus Hound is a 4-point Stock NPC and counts as a wraith for the purpose of targeting powers. It can see through Obfuscate and other such powers of invisibility, counts as an animal, and has the additional ability to utilize Dread Gaze. The Cerberus Hound cannot leave the caster's haven for any reason. It has animal intelligence and is unfailingly loyal to its creator. The Hound has 10 points of Pathos. It also possesses focuses in Potence, Fortitude, Investigation, and Brawl.

Spirit Beacon

By casting this ritual over a severed human head, you turn it into a supernatural beacon for ghosts. Within the Shadowlands, the head appears to glow with an unearthly radiance, emitting light from its mouth, ears, and eyes. By your will, spirits are either drawn to this beacon — or driven away.

System:

The necromancer must have a human skull upon which to cast this ritual. Once cast, the skull is covered with arcane sigils and runes and glows with a soft, eerie green light, both in the physical world and in the Shadowlands. When the skull is created, the necromancer decides if the skull has a positive or a negative charge.

- A positively charged Spirit Beacon acts as a lure for wraiths. All wraiths within a one-mile radius are summoned to the skull's location, or they follow the skull, if it is moving. To stay away from the skull, a wraith must spend 1 Pathos every 10 minutes to ignore the Spirit Beacon's call.
- A negatively charged Spirit Beacon acts as a repellent for wraiths. All wraiths in the area are compelled to leave the area and stay at least one mile away from the Spirit Beacon. A wraith must spend 1 Pathos every 10 minutes to be within one mile of the Spirit Beacon.

The skull loses all enchantment at the next sunrise, though it may be enchanted again.

The Servant Undying

Loyalty, to a necromancer, means something entirely different and all-encompassing. Those who serve you cannot escape your orders simply by suffering the inconvenience of death.

System:

A necromancer performs this ritual on a Retainer, requiring the Retainer to sign her name on a contract in her own blood. Thereafter, if that Retainer is killed, it automatically rises a short time after death to serve the necromancer as a zombie. The zombie is more intelligent than most of its kind. It remembers the last order it was given by the necromancer and continues to fulfill that command to the best of its ability. Once that task is accomplished, the Retainer once again falls into death, and the zombie becomes ash.

Level 4 Necromancy Rituals

Bastone Diabolico

By enchanting a sturdy leg bone, the necromancer creates a weapon that can injure enemies on either side of the Shroud. Unfortunately, the first use of this weapon is to murder its donor, and thus the fabrication of a devil-stick costs the necromancer more than simply time or blood.

System:

To create a Bastone Diabolico, the necromancer must acquire a clean, rune-carved thighbone from a human subject, enchanting that bone in dark rituals. Thereafter, the necromancer has a permanent weapon, which can be used against enemies in the physical world or within the Shadowlands.

The Bastone Diabolico deals 2 normal damage. This weapon is an improvised weapon, possessing the Fast quality. For more information on weapons, see **Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment, page 515**.

In addition, each successful blow against a vampire removes 1 point of that vampire's Blood, and a successful blow against a wraith removes 1 point of that wraith's Pathos. Unfortunately for the necromancer, ghosts can sense a Bastone Diabolico. They tend to stay away from individuals carrying one, causing such a character to have a -1 penalty to all test pools to summon or control wraiths. A necromancer can have only one Bastone Diabolico in existence at any time. Creating a new one causes the old one to disintegrate.

Lethe's Waters

A necromancer with Lethe's Waters at her fingertips has a great deal of control over her enemy's memories. With but a touch or a flick of her fingers, she can temporarily render an individual amnesiac and susceptible to her powers of suggestion.

System:

The necromancer who casts this ritual gains the ability to, once during the course of a night, spend 1 Blood, use her standard action, and flick her fingers at a target in the physical world or within the Shadowlands. The caster must make an opposed challenge using her Physical attribute + Athletics versus the target's Physical attribute + Dodge. If she succeeds, her target loses all memory and is rendered amnesic for 10 minutes. While under the effects of Lethe's Waters, the victim views the necromancer as a friend. The victim won't necessarily follow the necromancer's orders, but she is favorably disposed. Once this power wears off, the victim remembers everything that transpired while she was amnesic.

If the body or spirit of an individual affected by this power is attacked, put in danger, or targeted by an offensive power, including Haunting, the effects immediately end.

Ritual of Xipe Totec

In times past, Aztec priests would flay the skin from a victim and wear it as a sacrifice to Xipe Totec, god of suffering and renewal. In a similar vein, necromancers occasionally skin mortals alive, but for a more pragmatic reason — to steal that person's identity.

System:

To perform this ritual, the necromancer removes a mortal's top layer of skin with an obsidian dagger, taking care to damage the skin as little as possible in the process. The victim must survive the process. The necromancer then dons the skin of her victim, which forms a second layer over her own. Naturally, the victim needs to be of similar stature — otherwise, the features become distorted and the disguise becomes useless.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Under normal scrutiny, the ruse is flawless. However, it imparts none of the victim's knowledge and mannerisms, and does nothing to mask the vampire's undead nature, if she is on a path. Conducting this ritual causes a necromancer to automatically gain 3 Beast traits.

Strength of Rotten Flesh

A ritual primarily used by those necromancers who favor the Bone Path, this grisly enchantment increases the capacity of a necromancer's zombie servants, allowing them to serve more effectively.

System:

When this ritual is cast on a necromancer's zombie, that zombie becomes more intelligent, stronger, and more durable. The zombie gains two skill focuses of your choice, and its health levels double. The effects of this ritual last for one month.

Level 5 Necromancy Rituals

Chill of Oblivion

This potent rite allows a necromancer to infuse her body with the proverbial cold of the grave. While under its effects, the vampire is shielded from the vampiric bane of fire.

System:

A necromancer using Chill of Oblivion converts aggravated damage from fire and high temperatures to normal damage. She can also put out an open flame by spending a point of Blood to extinguish a single source, no larger than a bonfire, within one step of her position.

While under the effects of Chill of Oblivion, the character's aura is laced with writhing black lines, which appear to be the result of diablerie. She also draws in heat from her immediate environment, giving her the flaw Eerie Presence. Finally, the taint of the Underworld makes her an easy target for malevolent wraiths or other users of Necromancy. All wraiths, and all uses of Necromancy, receive a +3 bonus to their test pools when targeting an individual affected by this ritual. This ritual lasts until the next sunrise.

Weight of the Tomb

The fear of death is an ancient terror, a cold, dark dart that strikes to the very core of an individual's being. By preying on this fear, the necromancer can forbid her target from engaging in one activity, causing her victim's psyche to liken such an action to suicide.

System:

The necromancer must target a victim who is currently within a one-mile radius of the casting of this ritual. Further, she must have either a lock of her victim's hair, a pinch of flesh (or ash, in the case of a vampire) that was once part of the victim's body, or a point of the victim's Blood.

Using the Necromancy test pool make an opposed challenge against your target. If you succeed, then you can name one limited, non-combat activity, such as "painting," "speaking to Prince Elliot," or "attending a Toreador clan meeting." Until the next sunset, the target associates that activity with death. She is convinced that if she participates in that activity, she will die — and she is not entirely incorrect. If the individual willingly undertakes that activity, she takes 3 points of aggravated damage, which cannot be reduced or negated.

No power can remove – or cause the target to forget – the ingrained fear of Weight of the Tomb, and asking an individual affected by this power to perform the activity (through Dominate or other such powers) is considered to be directly self-destructive. You can only cast Weight of the Tomb once within a lunar cycle, once per month, and no target can be affected by more than one Weight of the Tomb at a time. If a second application targets a character before the first fades, the new application removes the old.

Thaumaturgy

"Magic is an exercise of disciplined will and the knowledge that, sometimes, will must be unleashed. The secret lies in knowing when to exercise control… and when to let go."

— Etrius

Thaumaturgy is a generic term that encompasses all blood magic and sorcerous arts. Those who practice the thaumaturgic arts sacrifice a small portion of their mystically-infused vitae in order to forcibly shape the world according to their will. In the modern nights, many Neonates credit Clan Tremere for the creation of Thaumaturgy via a fusion of mortal wizardry and vampiric vitae. Trained as hermetic wizards, the Tremere applied their knowledge of the secret principles of *True Magick* to codify vampire sorcery into a formidable tool to manipulate vitae to create wide-ranging effects, much like the powerful spells attributed to legendary sorcerers.

Other clans, such as the Tzimisce, the Assamites, and the Followers of Set, have counted powerful thaumaturges within their ranks for untold millennia before the Tremere became vampires. Their practice of magic ranges from the hermetic to the deeply religious, from summoning elemental spirits to incorporating the practices of mortal voudoun, enlightened mystics, or darker, more sinister methods.

Thaumaturgy has certain limitations:

- Thaumaturgy relies upon a thaumaturge speaking magical phrases and making specific gestures. Use of blood magic is easy to notice, and the methods used to activate such powers are rarely subtle.
- All Thaumaturgy paths and rituals are considered Mental powers, and as such, cannot be used during Celerity rounds.
- Specific Thaumaturgy powers that are resisted with your target's Physical attribute can be repeatedly used against a target. This is an exception to the rule that prohibits a character from using a Mental power on the same target immediately after failing. Powers that are resisted with the target's Mental attribute cannot be attempted repeatedly. You must wait 10 minutes before retrying such a power, as per the standard rule.

Thaumaturgy consists of multiple paths of study and expands into several individual rituals. To purchase a path of Thaumaturgy and Thaumaturgic rituals, a character must possess the specific merit that allows her to do so, such as the *Thaumaturgic Training* merit, or a similar clan-specific merit. For more information on these specific merits, see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 253**.

Primary Path: The first path of Thaumaturgy that a character masters to the 2nd dot is considered her *primary path* of study. To improve any other path of Thaumaturgy, she must first improve her capabilities in her primary path. A character can never become more skilled in other paths of Thaumaturgy than she is in her primary path of study; she cannot learn the 3rd dot of another path until after she has learned the 3rd dot of her primary path, and so forth.

Characters of clans with a specific in-clan path of Thaumaturgy may choose another path as their primary path, as long as they meet the requirements as stated above.

Thaumaturgical Rituals:

Thaumaturgy does not have elder powers or techniques. Instead, practitioners of this art gain access to mystical rituals. Thaumaturgy rituals are formulaic and require a significant amount of time, as well as specialized implements and ingredients. You cannot buy a specific Thaumaturgy ritual until you have purchased the appropriate dot of Thaumaturgy to support that ritual. Learning a level 4 ritual requires you to possess 4 dots in your primary path of Thaumaturgy.

The cost to purchase a ritual is equal to double the ritual's level. Therefore, a level 3 ritual costs 6 XP to purchase.

A Thaumaturge cannot learn more thaumaturgical rituals than the dots of Thaumaturgy she currently possesses. For example, Regent Insolens possesses 4 dots in Thaumaturgy: Path of Blood (his primary path), 3 dots in Thaumaturgy: Path of Conjuring, and 2 dots in Thaumaturgy: The Lure of Flames, and thus may learn up to nine Thaumaturgy rituals.

Thaumaturgy Test Pool:

The Thaumaturgy wielder uses her Mental attribute + Occult versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower. Powers that specifically target an individual's Physical attribute, such as Flame Bolt and Force Bolt, are resisted using the target's Physical attribute + Dodge.

The Path of Blood

"We pay the price of knowledge and reap the reward that is our due. Your envy does not damage our ambition. It only makes us stronger."

— Nixx Ignatius, Tremere Pontifex

The Path of Blood is considered to be the foundation of hermetic Thaumaturgy. It leverages the concept of sympathetic magic to allow you to alter the properties of the vitae within your system or to discover secrets of others through divining with their blood. All Tremere learn this path of magic, basing the rest of their studies on these principles.

• A Taste for Blood

Initiates in the Path of Blood are taught to quantify and evaluate unique elements present in a drop of vampiric vitae. By tasting a drop of your target's blood, you can determine important information about her nature.

System:

Ingest a drop of your target's blood and use your simple action to discern information about the target. A Taste for Blood requires you to physically ingest the vitae that you test, and, therefore, consumes the sample of blood. This power can be dangerous if the blood is tainted with disease or other effects. Fortunately, the magical nature of A Taste for Blood shields the thaumaturge from being bound by the blood ingested when activating this power.

A Taste for Blood provides all of the following information:

- Medical information, such as blood type and state of health
- How much blood is currently in the subject's system

- What type of creature the blood came from. If the creature is not a mortal, ghoul, or vampire, the Storyteller may require a Lore challenge to identify the exact creature type.
- If the subject is a vampire, the thaumaturge may also determine:
  - The subject's generation
  - Whether the subject has ever committed diablerie
  - How recently the subject has fed

Focus [Perception]:

You can gauge the strength of any blood bonds or partial blood bonds the target has, including the bonds created by participating in the Vaulderie. You do not know to whom the subject is bound, nor whether the bonds are mutual, but you do know the number and severity of the bonds.

●● Blood Rage

You can mystically manipulate another vampire's blood while it is still within her system. A vampire affected by Blood Rage feels a rush, much like a surge of adrenaline, and automatically realizes she has been affected by a power.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to make an opposed challenge using your Mental attribute + Occult versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower. The target must be within one step of you. If you succeed, the target must spend a single point of Blood in any fashion you wish. This expenditure can exceed the limits of Generation. By using this power, you can force a vampire or ghoul to spend Blood in one of the following manners:

- Increase her Physical attribute
- Activate a discipline power, such as Rapidity
- Heal wounds
- Awaken from torpor
- Sweat blood through her pores

Blood Rage cannot be used to force the target to activate a power that requires her to spend an action, unless the target willingly uses that action. For example, you might force your target to spend 1 Blood to activate Tenebrous Form, but the target does not actually transform unless she chooses to spend the required action.

Focus [Perception]:

You must be within 10 steps of your target in order to activate Blood Rage, as opposed to the standard one step.

●●● Blood of Potency

You have mastered your vitae to the point that you can command it to temporarily thicken, causing your vampiric form to manifest a more potent generation.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to activate Blood of Potency. This power lasts for the next hour. While Blood of Potency is active, your Blood pool increases to half again its normal size (rounded up). In addition, you can spend 2 additional points of Blood per turn while the power is active. You are considered to be three generations lower than normal for the purpose of waking another vampire from torpor. You can use Blood of Potency once per night. Once this power ends, any Blood you contain over your natural Blood pool dilutes, leaving you at your regular Blood pool maximum.

If you are diablerized during this time, or if you Embrace childer, your real generation is used to determine the results for those actions, not your virtual generation.

Blood Magic Nuances

Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade has streamlined the various types of blood magic into a single, elegant mechanical system. However, different clans have distinct cultural systems of magic that require faith, alternative systems of symbology, and different ritual components. Though there is no mechanical difference, Players and Storytellers are strongly encouraged to highlight these differences through creative roleplay.

Focus [Intelligence]:

You can utilize Blood of Potency twice in the course of a single evening.

●●●● Theft of Vitae

One of the basic principles of sympathetic magic is the concept that like is attracted to like. By mystically attuning the vitae in your body into a thaumaturgical magnet, you can literally siphon blood from your target, causing it to cascade out of your enemy's pores and into your hand, to be absorbed instantly into the caster's system.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to make an opposed challenge using your Mental attribute + Occult versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower, targeting a character within 25 steps of you. If you succeed, you can mystically draw forth 3 points of Blood from your victim. This blood bursts through your victim's pores, soaring through the air into your hand, and is then mystically absorbed into your own flesh. Blood stolen in this fashion has all of its normal properties — ingesting blood from a vampire creates a blood bond, poisoned blood still sickens you, diseased blood passes on its infection, and so on. Needless to say, this rather unsettling power is considered a breach of the Masquerade when used openly.

Exceptional Success:

You steal 4 points of Blood from your target, rather than 3.

Focus [Intelligence]:

When you use Theft of Vitae to steal blood from a vampire, your power neutralizes the blood to a certain degree. Blood drawn with this power cannot induce a blood bond in you, sicken you, or carry diseases. Supernatural powers affecting vampire vitae, such as Vicissitude's Acid Blood, remain in effect.

●●●●● Cauldron of Blood

By touching your opponent, you can boil the blood within your enemy's veins, causing her to suffer incredible pain and agony. Red mist rises from the victim's body as bubbling blood seeps from her pores and orifices. Few vampires can withstand this internal furnace, and mortals are inevitably killed by such an attack.

System:

Use a standard action to Grapple a target. If you succeed, spend 1 Blood to inflict Cauldron of Blood on the victim, as well as inflicting all standard effects of a Grapple. Cauldron of Blood boils 2 points of Blood within your victim's body, destroying the affected Blood and causing 2 points of aggravated damage. Damage caused by this power cannot be reduced or negated.

The first time you use Cauldron of Blood on a target, you must succeed in a Grapple combat maneuver against that target. If your target is already Grappled, you can activate this power by spending 1 Blood and using your standard action. (For more information on grappling, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 280**.)

This power does not convert the normal damage dealt by a Grapple to aggravated damage, and that damage can be reduced or negated normally. The Grapple combat maneuver does not reduce the damage dealt by Cauldron of Blood.

Mortals affected by Cauldron of Blood die instantly.

Focus [Intelligence]:

You can affect 1 additional point of Blood, boiling up to a total of 3 Blood and causing 3 aggravated damage per use.

The Path of Conjuring

The Path of Conjuring allows you to create objects or creatures from nothingness, produced wholly by the magic and imagination of the individual constructing them. Items created by the Path of Conjuring are entirely generic, without any distinguishing features or marks, and always in perfect condition, with no dents, scratches, or other signs of wear. You can produce anything you can imagine, limited only by your physical size. You cannot create objects larger or heavier than yourself.

You must be familiar with the type of object you wish to conjure. For example, you must have the Firearms skill to conjure a gun, or dots of the Science or Medicine skills in order to create pharmaceuticals. Your Storyteller is the final arbiter of which skills you need to create certain items.

● Summon the Simple Form

Initiates in the Path of Conjuring have the ability to create an object formed from a single material. These items cannot have moving parts and lack any complex mechanisms. With this power, you can conjure a lump of stone, a wooden stake, or a bar of iron.

System:

By expending a standard action and 1 point of Blood, you can conjure any inanimate item that a normal person can hold with one hand. Items created with this power must be of simple design and cannot contain electronics or moving

parts. Objects created by Summon the Simple Form always appear in your hand. You cannot conjure living or undead creatures. After you have conjured an item with this power, you must spend 1 point of Blood each minute you wish to keep the object in existence. The first minute does not require an additional expenditure of Blood. If you do not spend this Blood, the object vanishes.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Summon the Simple Form can be invoked with a simple action rather than a standard action.

●● Magic of the Smith

You have the ability to conjure any complex object made of mixed materials and moving parts of which you have a fundamental understanding.

System:

By expending 1 Blood and concentrating for five full turns, taking no other action except movement, you can create a complex object with Magic of the Smith. So long as you are familiar with the desired object's design and have the appropriate skills, you can create items with moving parts or electronic components. With the proper skills, you can create a gun, a cell phone, a laptop, a battery, a small engine, or other such useful items. These items are limited in size; a normal person must be able to hold it in one hand. Objects created by Magic of the Smith always appear in your hand.

Objects created by Magic of the Smith may require outside assistance to function. A cell phone needs a service provider (or a skilled hacker) before it can make a call, and most electronic items will need electricity to function. Objects created with Magic of the Smith are assumed to have anything they need to function normally. For example, a conjured gun is created with a full clip of ammunition, and a conjured cell phone's battery has a full charge. After you have conjured an item using this power, you must spend 1 point of Blood each minute to keep the object in existence. The first minute does not require an additional expenditure of Blood. If you do not pay this cost, the object vanishes.

This power can be used to create a normal piece of equipment. For more information, see the equipment rules in **Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment, page 515**.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Magic of the Smith can be used to create an object up to 10 cubic feet in size. If used to create an object too large for you to hold, the object appears directly in front of you, touching your outstretched hand.

●●● Permanency

Objects that you create are real and permanent, requiring no further expenditure of Blood in order stay in existence.

System:

After creating an object using Summon the Simple Form or Magic of the Smith, you can spend 1 Blood and use a simple action to make that item permanent. The object does not disappear unless banished with a power such as Reverse Conjuration.

Focus [Perception]:

When you create an item using Summon the Simple Form or Magic of the Smith, you can choose to make the item permanent without the need to spend Blood or use an action.

●●●● Reverse Conjuration

You can destroy conjured items – either those created by you, or by another thaumaturge – dissipating them into the magic void from which they come.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to attempt to dispel an item conjured by Path of Conjuring. You can banish any of your own creations without a challenge. To banish an item created by another thaumaturge, you must make a static challenge using your Mental attribute + Occult against a difficulty equal to the creator's Mental attribute + Occult. You can target any item that you can see or sense with this power, but you have no special way of telling a conjured item from a natural one.

You can use Reverse Conjuration to banish objects or creatures summoned by other Thaumaturgical paths, such as the elementals summoned by the Path of Elemental Mastery. Banishing an elemental requires you to best it in an opposed challenge using the Thaumaturgy test pool.

Focus [Perception]:

You can use a simple action to determine if an object within your line of sight is natural or conjured. After determining if an object is conjured or natural, you can spend 1 Blood and use a standard action to attempt to dispel it, as stated in the rules above.

●●●●● Power Over Life

Although Thaumaturgy cannot truly create life, with this power you have the ability to conjure creations that have a semblance of true life. These creatures are not truly sentient, have limited intelligence, and lack creativity. They mindlessly obey your commands and have no sense of independent will.

System:

Concentrate for five full turns and spend 1 point of Blood per turn, taking no other action, to conjure a *simulacrum*, a living being that will obey your mental commands. This power can be used to create a facsimile of any normal animal or type of person. Your simulacrum has generic features appropriate to the type of person or animal you create, and it cannot be created as a perfect duplicate of any specific creature or animal.

This simulacrum is not truly alive and will not take any action without your instruction. "Blood" drawn from such a creature is of no use, as it has no natural or supernatural properties. Vampires cannot feed from these creatures, nor can they be Embraced. A simulacrum lasts until dawn, after which it dissolves into the same mystic ether from which it was created. A simulacra that is "killed" similarly vanishes, as do any parts that were removed from the creature. You can only have one simulacrum in existence at any one time. If you create a new simulacrum, the previous one discorporates.

Your creations have a Physical attribute between 1 and 8 (your choice), a Mental attribute of 1, a Social attribute of 1, and no skills, no focuses, nor supernatural powers. Your simulacrum can be targeted with disciplines and supernatural powers and can be the subject of powers like Possession. It is possible to ghoul your creations, allowing them to hold up to 5 points of vampiric Blood, but your simulacrum can never learn supernatural powers.

Focus [Intelligence]:

When you invoke Power Over Life, you can create specific duplicates of creatures, instead of generic creations. Making a duplicate of yourself has no prerequisite, but you must have at least 2 dots of the Subterfuge skill in order to make a duplicate of another individual. If used to create a duplicate of a supernatural creature, the result appears identical, but does not have supernatural powers, and is a mundane, living creature, not a supernatural one.

The Path of Corruption

"Seven deadly sins? No.
There's only one, and its name is restraint.
Restrain your baser drives for too long,
and they will rise up and destroy you."

— Dawn Cavanaugh,
Setite Mistress of Hollywood

The Path of Corruption grants the ability to subtly influence victims via a mystical twisting of the victim's morality, desires, and cognitive processes. You can employ these powers to subtly corrupt your victim's psyche into sliding towards the Beast. Properly taking advantage of this path requires an intimate knowledge of deception, addiction, and the dark places hidden in the heart.

If you fail a challenge when using Path of Corruption, you cannot use the same power against the same target for 10 minutes.

Casting the Path of Corruption is subtle, unlike other paths of Thaumaturgy. You do not need to speak to enact powers from Path of Corruption, and it is not immediately obvious that you are the source of your Path of Corruption powers. For more rules on noticing the effects of powers in use, see **Chapter Six: Core Rules, Noticing Attacks, page 281**. Path of Corruption cannot be used without breaking the invisibility granted by Obfuscate.

● Contradict

You have the power to twist your target's cognitive processes and perceptions, forcing her to reverse her last decision into something darker and destructive.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge using the Thaumaturgy test pool to use Contradict. If you succeed, the action or decision your target is about to undertake becomes its negative, far darker opposite. Your target determines the details of this decision, and she must roleplay it, although the Storyteller may intervene and provide specific instruction. You cannot predict the exact results of Contradict in advance, but it always takes the form of a more negative action than the subject had originally intended to perform.

You can use Contradict on any target within your line of sight. Contradict cannot be used in combat nor to effect actions that are mainly physical or reflexive.

Exceptional Success:

This use of Contradict is subtle, and cannot be detected with an Awareness challenge. This is an exception to the rule that allows Awareness to detect the use of supernatural powers.

Focus [Wits]:

Opponents receive a -5 penalty to Awareness challenges to discover your uses of Contradict.

●● Subvert

Subvert pushes your victim to surrender to dark temptations that her Morality might normally discourage her from indulging under normal circumstances.

System:

When you witness another character taking an action that indulges a desire or resisting the temptation to act on her desires, you can spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge to enact Subvert. If you succeed, the subject's actions change, and she succumbs to her desires. Subvert influences all of a subject's actions with varying degrees of subtlety. Should another opportunity arise to succumb to her desires, the victim must expend a point of Willpower to overcome this effect for five minutes. Subvert lasts for one hour.

Exceptional Success:

Your Subvert lasts for the rest of the night.

Focus [Wits]:

Characters under the effect of your Subvert suffer a -2 penalty to resist your use of other Path of Corruption powers.

●●● Dissociate

You have the ability to metaphorically cut into the heart of your victim and dissociate her emotional bond with others, leaving her a shell of her former self. Your victim becomes withdrawn from passionate lovers and bitter enemies alike.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge using the Thaumaturgy test pool to enact Dissociate. If you succeed, the victim of this power becomes withdrawn, suspicious, and emotionally distant. For the next hour, your target suffers a -3 penalty to Social challenges in which she must interact in a friendly or pleasant way. This penalty does not apply to defensive test pools.

All of the victim's blood bonds lower by one step for one hour. If you use this power on a character who has participated in the Vaulderie or a similar ritual, her vinculum rating reduces by one step for the duration of the effect. A victim may relent to this power, but if she does so in the hope of temporarily reversing bonds of blood, she must spend 1 Willpower to relent. Similarly, you must spend a point of Willpower to use this power on yourself if you hope to overcome a blood bond.

Exceptional Success:

The effects of Dissociate last for the rest of the night.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Blood bonds and vinculum ratings reduce to zero for the next hour.

●●●● Addiction

You have the power to trigger an uncontrollable hunger in your victim, creating a physical and psychological dependence that drives all of her thoughts and motivations. This addiction must have a specific focus, such as a sensation, substance, or specific action normally considered taboo.

System:

If you wish to addict a subject to a sensation, substance, or action, she must first encounter it. The thaumaturge then spends a Blood, uses her standard action, and makes an opposed challenge to enact Addiction.

If you succeed, the victim gains one Compulsion or Obsession derangement for the rest of the night; you determine that derangement's trigger, based on your manner of temptation. If a character is subjected to a second use of this power, the new effects overwrite the older application. For more information on Derangements, see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 266**.

No individual can become addicted to something that causes damage (normal or aggravated) through the use of this power.

Exceptional Success:

The Addiction inflicted by this power lasts for two game sessions or one month, whichever is longer.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Targets affected by your Addiction gain a Derangement trait. Additionally, your addictions cannot be overwritten by other thaumaturges, unless the other thaumaturge is also

Intelligence-focused. Other uses of this power simply fail when targeting a subject you have already Addicted.

●●●●● Dependence

You are the ultimate addiction. With your cult of personality and thorough mastery of Path of Corruption, you can force your victims to become obsessed with being in your presence.

System:

You must engage your target in conversation and talk to her for at least one minute to activate this power. After meeting this prerequisite, spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge to enact Dependence. If you succeed, the victim's psyche becomes bonded to your own for the rest of the night, as she suffers from the Obsession derangement.

A bonded victim is no less likely to attack you and feels no particular affection toward you. However, she is psychologically addicted to your presence. For the duration of this power, she suffers a -2 penalty to all test pools when you are not present. Additionally, you gain a +5 wild card bonus in Social test pools against your victim for the duration of this power.

Penalties from this power do not subtract from defensive test pools.

Exceptional Success:

The duration of Dependence extends to two game sessions or one month, whichever is longer.

Focus [Wits]:

The victim cannot attempt to harm you while this power is active.

The Path of Elemental Mastery

"Fear is fertile soil for magic, one whose bountiful harvest is obedience and supplication. One merely needs to know when to turn the earth and reveal the darkness beneath."

— Ashanti Beachum, the Demon Dreamer, Tzimisce Koldun

The ancient Greeks believed that the four elements – earth, water, air, and fire – were the fundamental building blocks of the universe. Using the techniques of the Path of Elemental Mastery, you can communicate with these primal forces and other inanimate objects and command them to do your bidding. The Path Elemental Mastery can only be used on inanimate matter.

● Elemental Strength

By drawing on the timeless strength and endurance of the surrounding earth and stone, you can force your body to take one of those properties for a short period of time.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to activate Elemental Strength. For the next five minutes, you gain either the Strength or Stamina focus (your choice).

You can only benefit from one application of Elemental Strength at any given time.

Focus [Intelligence]:

While Elemental Strength is active, you receive a +2 bonus to grappling challenges.

●● Wooden Tongues

You have the ability to listen to the wild spirits that live inside of an inanimate object. Such spirits are often pedantic and concerned only with that which interests them. If you can convince them to pay attention, you can learn a good deal of information about activities that the spirit has witnessed. Keep in mind that the experiences that interest you might not interest a coffee maker.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to activate Wooden Tongues. For the next five minutes, you have the ability to communicate with the spirits that live inside everyday objects and can bid them to communicate with you. The nature of the object determines the personality of the spirit; a knife will have a sharp personality, whereas a coffee maker might be very excited.

A spirit will answer basic questions truthfully, but unfamiliar concepts may confuse it. You can reasonably expect answers to the following types of questions:

- What is your function?
- Has anything interesting happened around you?
- What did the person who ran by moments ago look like?
- Has anyone been fighting here recently?

Inanimate objects accessed by this power cannot detect characters hidden by supernatural powers.

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Focus [Perception]:

Your use of Wooden Tongues lasts for an hour, rather than five minutes. Additionally, you can overhear the mumbled conversations of inanimate objects all around you, which provides warning when another individual approaches. As long as you are able to hear, you are aware of anyone who comes within five steps of you. Even if you cannot directly see a character, you can approximate her location by listening to the ambient chatter surrounding you. This effect cannot be used to detect characters hidden by supernatural powers.

●●● Animate the Unmoving

You have the power to animate objects and command them for a limited time to act according to your wishes. These objects bend and move as commanded, but their functions are limited by their forms.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to animate an object within your line of sight. The object gains limited mobility and obeys your commands to the best of its ability for the next hour. You can give those objects simple commands, such as "Chase that man," or "Attack anyone who enters." Objects aren't very smart and have extremely limited reasoning. Animated objects cannot use weapons or benefit from weapon qualities. A command stating "Bring me the gun when you see a red car drive past outside," could result in an extremely confused bar stool.

You have the ability to animate and simultaneously control a number of objects equal to your dots of the Occult skill, but each object must be animated separately. They remain animated as long as they are within your line of sight, for up to an hour.

Treat objects animated by this power as 2-point Stock NPCs. Animated objects with wheels or legs move at normal speeds. Objects without wheels or legs move at a rate of one step per action. Animated objects cannot be targeted by Mental and Social powers, but cannot attack anyone the thaumaturge cannot attack herself. For example, if the thaumaturge is succesfully affected by the Presence power Entrancement, her animations are unable to attack the vampire who entranced their master.

Focus [Perception]:

The duration of your ability to animate an object extends to the end of the evening. Additionally, you have a vague idea of what your animations are doing and what is going on within two steps of each animation. You might know that someone is attacking your animated barstool with a hatchet, but you cannot tell exactly who is swinging the axe.

●●●● Elemental Form

Ancient legends describe wizards with the ability to transfigure their shapes into the form of ordinary objects. You have the power to transform your body into any inanimate object with a mass roughly equal to your own.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to assume the shape and form of any object that is of a size roughly equal to your own. You retain your senses, but are unable to move under your own power. The object you become functions exactly like a real object of its type — becoming a television means you can be plugged in and turned on, with no harm inflicted to you. This power lasts for the remainder of the night.

You do not have access to disciplines while in this form. While using Elemental Form, your attributes and health levels remain the same, but you may be more difficult or easier to harm at the Storyteller's discretion. If you turn yourself into a glass vase, a blow from a hammer might inflict 10 points of normal damage instead of the standard 1. Conversely, if you turn yourself into a boulder, you're probably immune to a dagger-wielding Toreador's attack. Transforming into an inanimate object provides no protection against Mental and Social powers.

Characters using Elemental Form have no mystic ability to remain cohesive. If an individual transforms into dust, air, or water, she will probably be dispersed and die within a few turns.

Elemental Form is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers. You can end this transformation at any time by expending a simple action.

Focus [Intelligence]:

When you assume Elemental Form, you can become an object as small as half of your normal size, or as large as twice your normal size.

●●●●● Summon Elemental

You have the power to summon and command one of the elemental spirits of the world. These elementals are spirits animated by one of the primary elements: fire, earth, water, or air. Such creatures are not friendly allies, but slaves to your will.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to summon an elemental. Once summoned, the elemental spirit follows the thaumaturge's mental commands for the next three turns,

acting on the summoner's initiative. After the duration expires, the elemental peacefully returns to its homeland, unless it was abused during its summoning. Abusing the spirit causes it to attack you once the duration expires.

A summoned elemental is not subtle and represents a huge potential Masquerade breach. By default, an elemental spirit is a 6-point Stock NPC with no powers or skills. When you summon your elemental, you may choose one of the following special abilities:

- **Fire Elemental**: Your elemental has the skill focus "Ranged Attack: Fireball" and can throw balls of fire, which inflict 2 points of aggravated damage to anyone they hit. Anyone touching your elemental takes 1 point of aggravated damage. Anything flammable that touches your elemental is lit on fire.
- **Earth Elemental**: Your elemental has the Brawl skill focus and has 5 dots of Fortitude.
- **Water Elemental**: Your elemental is immune to Physical damage. Anyone struck by your elemental takes no damage, but is knocked prone. Your elemental moves at double speed while in the water.
- **Air Elemental**: Your elemental can fly at normal speeds and is immune to Physical damage. Anyone struck by your elemental takes no damage, but is knocked prone.

You can control only one elemental at any one time. If you use this power again before its duration expires, your control transfers to the new elemental, and the previously summoned elemental is set free to act on its own. Released elementals often attack their summoners before returning to their own plane of existence.

Focus [Intelligence]:

The duration of Summon Elemental extends to five minutes.

The Lure of Flames

"Magic is an oath. With each spell,
you swear yourself into service. With each ritual, you bind yourself more and more irrevocably to its law."

— Jayakar Dristi Boparai, Assamite, last holder of the Seat of Stars

Faith has often been linked to fire, as it symbolizes purity and divinity. Perhaps this is why the Inquisition found it such an effective weapon against vampires long ago.

Leveraging the mystical techniques of the Lure of Flames, you have learned to summon and control fire. Flames conjured by the Lure of Flames are mystical in nature. You must release the fire from your control before it can affect the environment.

For example, if you activate Hand of Flame, it does not burn your hand or cause you to frenzy. However, if you touch another individual with that hand and they catch fire, those flames could burn you or cause you to frenzy.

Fire triggers frenzy in vampires. Using it as a weapon is one of the easiest methods to bring Final Death to a vampire. (For more information about vampires and fire, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, Health and Damage, page 285**.)

• Hand of Flame

Initiates of the Lure of Flames learn to summon forth a shimmering, dancing flame over their hand (or hands). This fire projects a bright light and provides you with a terrifying weapon against other vampires.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to conjure forth a mystical fire that encases your hand (or hands). Hand of Flame casts light and allows you to strike with your hand to burn your opponents, causing aggravated damage. You can even use it in conjunction with other powers like Celerity and Potence, becoming a formidable combatant.

Once cast, the Hand of Flame remains until you expend a simple action to snuff it out. You suffer no damage or inconvenience from the Hand of Flame; indeed, you can even wear gloves or other clothing, which remain unaffected by the fire. However, should you cause something else to catch fire, those secondary flames can hurt you.

Focus [Wits]:

You summon forth your Hand of Flame at any time without requiring the expenditure of an action. Additionally, you are highly trained to be more efficient when fighting with flame in hand-to-hand combat. When using Hand of Flame in combat, you receive a +1 bonus to your Brawl attack test pool.

•• Flame Bolt

You have the power to summon a bolt of flame in the palm of your hand and then launch it at an enemy. The flaming blast shimmers through the air to strike your target with a devastating explosive blast.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge to cast a Flame Bolt at an enemy within 20 steps of your location. A successful Flame Bolt inflicts 2 points of aggravated fire damage when it strikes, then snuffs out in a puff of mystic fire. Should your Flame Bolt strike a flammable target, such as a pile of hay or papers, but not clothing worn by someone, the target catches fire.

Exceptional Success:

Your Flame Bolt does an additional point of aggravated damage, for a total of 3 aggravated damage on each successful strike.

Focus [Wits]:

You do not need to spend Blood to use Flame Bolt, though you must still use your standard action.

●●● Pillar of Fire

With a gesture, you can summon a mighty pillar of intense flames at a location or target of your choosing.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to conjure forth a pillar of flame that is approximately six feet in diameter, and of equal height. You must place this Pillar of Fire within 20 steps of your location. Anyone but you who stands within or passes through this diameter takes 2 points of aggravated damage. You are immune to the damage from your Pillar of Fire, but should you cause something else to catch fire, those secondary flames can hurt you.

If directed at a victim, the fire shoots up underneath the subject. You must best your target in an opposed challenge using your Mental attribute + Occult versus the target's Physical attribute + Dodge. If you succeed, your target takes 2 points of aggravated damage, otherwise she dodges out of the way before the pillar is fully formed. The normal effect of the Dodge ability doesn't reduce damage from this attack.

Pillar of Fire causes damage to characters in its area of effect on their everyman initiative. If a target remains within the Pillar of Fire for more than one turn, she continues to take its damage on her everyman initiative until she leaves its area of effect.

Damage from Pillar of Fire doesn't stack with itself or with other area-effect powers. If you have more than one such power affecting the same area, only the highest damage effect applies.

The column of fire remains for five minutes, until you decide to extinguish it by expending a simple action, fall into torpor, or die.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Anyone standing in or passing through your Pillar of Fire takes 3 points of aggravated damage each turn.

●●●● Engulf

With a gesture, you can mystically scorch a target, forcing your victim to spontaneously burst into flames. This agonizing fire continues to burn until the victim manages to take specific actions to extinguish it.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge to Engulf a target within 20 steps of your location. If you succeed, the target bursts into flames, suffering 2 points of aggravated damage. Further, the victim is lit on fire, taking 2 additional points of aggravated damage at the end of each successive turn until the victim uses two actions (simple or standard) to smother the flame. Anything the victim touches while on fire has the potential to likewise catch fire, at the discretion of the Storyteller.

You can Engulf a target multiple times in successive turns, causing cumulative damage as the victim repeatedly combusts. However, no matter how many times a victim suffers the effects of individual uses of Engulf, she still only takes 2 points of aggravated damage from fire on successive turns.

Exceptional Success:

Your use of Engulf does an extra level of aggravated damage, for a total of 3 points of aggravated damage per strike. An exceptional success does not increase the damage your target takes from burning on subsequent rounds.

Focus [Wits]:

It requires three actions (standard or simple) to smother the flames caused by Engulf.

●●●●● Firestorm

Masters of the Lure of Flames have the ability to project their inner fury into a frightening storm of fire, scorching and consuming everything in its path.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to summon forth a Firestorm of destruction. Firestorm works like Pillar of Fire, but affects an area up to 20 steps across and can be cast on a location up to 40 steps away. Unlike Pillar of Fire, Firestorm lasts for the next five turns, or until you decide to extinguish it, move more than 50 steps away from it, fall into torpor, or die.

Damage from Firestorm doesn't stack with itself or with other area-effect powers. If you have more than one such power affecting the same area, only the highest damage effect applies.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Your Firestorm causes an additional point of aggravated damage each turn, for a total of 3 points of aggravated damage.

The Movement of the Mind

Practitioners of Movement of the Mind have mystically trained themselves to telekinetically move, push, or grab objects and even people. If you can see a target, you can lift or manipulate it as though you are physically holding it. Telekinetic control over an object via Movement of the Mind does not provide you with tactile sensation, and thus you cannot feel if an object is hot, rough, or slippery from a distance.

• Force Bolt

Initiates of the Movement of the Mind have the ability to project a bolt of pure telekinetic force, stunning or knocking over objects or opponents.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge to project a bolt of pure telekinetic force at any target within 20 steps of you. A successful strike against a creature or person knocks the victim up to five steps in a direction of your choosing. A successful strike against an object can affect an item no more than 200 pounds in weight. If the object is free-standing, you can push it five steps in any direction. An object in someone's grasp can be knocked out of the individual's possession, if you defeat the holder in an opposed challenge while targeting the item instead of the individual.

Exceptional Success:

Your Force Bolt strikes your opponent in vulnerable areas, stunning her. The victim loses her next standard action.

Focus [Wits]:

In addition to the standard effect of Force Bolt, a person or creature takes 2 points of normal damage from the impact. The knockback caused by this power sends victims or items flying six steps, rather than five.

•• Manipulate

You have learned to control your telekinetic abilities and now can lift and manipulate a small object, within your line of sight, with the same agility as though you were physically lifting it.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to manipulate an object weighing up to 50 pounds in weight. Objects hefted with this power can move at your normal walking speed, and they must be something a normal person could lift with both hands. You can move or use the object in any fashion, as though you were using your hands. Thus, you can pick something up, push a button, or fire a gun by using this power.

After activating Manipulate, you can remotely control a targeted object for five minutes or until you lose line of sight. Remotely using an object takes your full concentration and requires you to spend a standard action. Additionally, the difficulty of fine control at range adds a -3 penalty to all test pools.

Manipulate cannot target objects possessed by other characters unless they are unconscious or otherwise immobilized.

Focus [Perception]:

You can Manipulate inanimate objects up to 100 pounds in weight. You are so adept at utilizing Manipulate that you do not suffer the standard -3 penalty when remotely using an object.

••• Flight

You have learned to project your telekinetic strength inward, unfettering you from the constraints of gravity to fly through the air.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to activate Flight. For the next five minutes, you can fly at normal speeds. While flying, you can carry up to 10 pounds of equipment for each dot of Movement of the Mind you possess.

Focus [Perception]:

If you use both your simple and standard actions to move, you can fly up to nine steps instead of the standard six steps.

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●●●● Repulse

You have mastered the ability to project a telekinetic wave of potent force from your body, which violently repulses people (threatening enemies and allies alike) and small objects away from you.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to Repulse anything under 500 pounds that is currently within five steps of your location. Any character within five steps of you whose Physical attribute is lower than your Mental attribute is knocked six steps back, moving directly away from you. Characters with a Physical attribute equal to or higher than your Mental attribute are knocked back three steps.

Objects weighing up to 200 pounds are also knocked back six steps. Objects weighing up to 500 pounds are knocked back three steps. Objects greater than 500 pounds are not affected.

Characters who are grappling or biting you automatically lose their grip and are knocked back. Characters whose trajectory causes them to bounce off solid objects or characters struck by flying debris take 1 point of normal damage from this use of Repulse.

You cannot pick and choose targets when using Repulse. All characters within range are affected equally.

Focus [Wits]:

You knock your target back six steps no matter how high her Physical attribute is.

●●●●● Control

Masters of the Movement of the Mind possess the ability to enforce their will via their mental might to seize complete telekinetic control over a target. With a gesture, you can control a subject, forcing her to physically move and act completely at your whim.

System:

You can use the Manipulate power on objects up to 1 ton in weight, and you can target living characters by succeeding in an opposed challenge using the Thaumaturgy test pool. Characters who are successfully targeted by Control are considered to be grappled. If an individual grappled by this power attempts to escape your Control, she must succeed in an opposed challenge using her Physical attribute + Brawl versus your Mental attribute + Occult.

This power doesn't allow you to use other powers that require a Grapple. For example, you cannot use Control to hold a target at range and then affect her with Cauldron of Blood. To use Cauldron of Blood (or other powers that require a Grapple) you must physically Grapple your target.

Grappled characters or objects can be moved up to three steps per turn, in any direction. Control lasts for 10 turns, or until your target breaks out of this power's grip. If you use this power to lift a target into the air and then drop her, or if she escapes while lifted in the air, she takes falling damage. For more information on falling damage, see **Chapter Six: Core Rules, page 285**.

If you use Control to drop a heavy object on your target, the target must make a static challenge using her Physical attribute + Dodge test pool against a difficulty of 10. If she fails, she takes 1 to 6 points of normal damage based on the size of the object. A large brick might inflict 1 point of damage, while a large truck might inflict 6. Attempting to drop an object on your target causes her to be considered the target of a Physical challenge.

Exceptional Success:

Your victim cannot attempt to escape your Grapple for two full turns: the turn on which she was grappled and the following turn.

Focus [Perception]:

You have the ability to lift anything up to 10 tons in weight.

The Path of Technomancy

"Ignore those withered bastards. Magic isn't a matter of rambling, posturing, chanting, or dancing around naked. It's here-and-now, wires and will, algorithms and abstract complexity theory. Sign in, or get out."

— Thomas Jurras, Anarch Thaumaturge

Technomancy is the thaumaturgical art of divining and controlling machines and technology. In this modern era, technology is as much a part of living society as forging steel or harvesting grain was in the Dark Ages. Similarly, younger vampires whose mortal years were steeped in the industrial revolution or the computer era find that they can extend their powers of blood magic over these curious inventions. Their blood, it seems, has become flexible enough to adapt as the world advances into a digital generation.

Some occult scholars believe that the Path of Technomancy works on a principle of sympathetic magic, similar to voudon. Others feel that the technological devices involved in such magic are nothing more than talismans for the exertion of the practitioner's will. Whatever the truth, those young vampires who possess this new path have an understanding

and assurance in the capability of technology and can leverage that devotion into their magic.

Technomancy Test Pool: Unlike most paths of Thaumaturgy, the Path of Technomancy uses the thaumaturge's Mental attribute + Computers versus the target's Mental attribute + Computers.

• Analyze

Initiates of the Path of Technology learn to tap into the fundamental truth behind a device. With a touch, you can project your perceptions into a device and glean an understanding of its purpose, the principles of its technology, and how to operate it. Analyze does not grant permanent knowledge, only a momentary flash of insight, which fades within minutes.

System:

To activate Analyze, you must touch a technological device, spend 1 Blood, and use your standard action. Thereafter, you project your consciousness into the device, granting you temporary, but comprehensive, understanding of its purpose, the principles of its functioning, and its means of operation. In this manner, you can touch a computer and learn its specifications, touch an alarm and know under what conditions it will sound, or touch a car and determine its condition, top speed, and so forth.

All but the basic knowledge gained through the use of Analyze fades at sunrise, unless the thaumaturge has perfect recall or enhanced memory. A thaumaturge can preserve such information, if she takes the time and effort to write it all down.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Analyze can also be used to understand a digital technological innovation, allowing you to read software and electronic files. For example, you can read the entire file contained on a flash drive, know all of the software installed on a computer, or peruse a cell phone's recent caller list — all without turning the devices on.

•• Burnout

You have the power to destroy any electronic device within your sight by forcing the power supply, either internal or external, to surge and burn out the circuits.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to use Burnout on any electronic device within your line of sight. The targeted device is destroyed beyond hope of repair. Burnout cannot be used to directly injure an individual, although the sudden destruction of a car's fuel injection control chip can certainly do so at the Storyteller's discretion.

Focus [Wits]:

Burnout can be used to specifically target electronic data storage and erase it beyond any hope of mundane recovery. If you cause this effect, there is no sign that the destruction was anything other than simple device failure.

••• Encrypt/Decrypt

You have the ability to protect or access electronic devices and media files.

System:

With a single touch, you may Encrypt any device, mystically scrambling its controls so that it only works for you. In addition, you can also protect any electronic media file you access, securing the file so that it cannot be opened by anyone but you. You also have the ability to reverse this power and Decrypt scrambled or protected systems so that you can access them despite their protection protocols.

Characters attempting to access something you have Encrypted suffer a penalty to their test pool equal to the number of dots you possess of the Computers skill. Anyone who attempts to access the device using Path of Technomancy must make an opposed challenge using the Technomancy test pool. Note that this challenge is not necessary if the hostile technomancer simply wishes to destroy the device.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Cracking your Encryption with mundane equipment is impossible. Only another technomancer can successfully Decrypt your protocols. Further, technomancers suffer a penalty to their test pool equal to the number of dots you possess of the Computer skill when attempting to influence or read something you've encrypted.

•••• Remote Access

You have such an innate connection to technology that with but a brief glance, you can remotely access any electronic device and utilize it as though you were physically operating it.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and target any electronic device within your line of sight. For the next hour, you can use your simple or standard action to interact with

the object, as if you were accessing it normally, even if you are not within its normal range. You can enter data into your cell phone without taking it out of your pocket, read the text on a monitor that you can't directly see, reset the alarm on someone else's watch, or reprogram a computer without touching it.

Focus [Wits]:

You automatically bypass any mundane security on the device you're targeting, but you may need to make a challenge to effect equipment secured by another technomancer. With this power, you can automatically access a computer, even if you do not know the passcode.

●●●●● Telecommute

You have the ability to sense any electronic device in your area and access it via Telecommute, as long as you remain within 1,000 feet of it.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to activate Telecommute. For the next five minutes, you can sense all electronic devices and their general location, within your immediate area. You can utilize any of your Path of Technomancy powers on these devices without the need to touch or see a targeted object, so long as you remain within 1,000 feet of it.

Focus [Intelligence]:

Once activated, Telecommute lasts for an hour instead of the standard five minutes.

The Path of Weather Mastery

Tales have long been told of wizards who could control the weather. The powers of this path are said to predate the Tremere clan by several centuries, as the sorcerers of the Assamites and the Followers of Set wielded such powers to help their herds with crops during times of famine.

Utilizing the Path of Weather Mastery, you have learned to subtly manipulate the weather or summon the fury of storms and lightning.

Note that the following powers must begin at a point within the thaumaturge's line of sight.

● Fog

Initiates of the Path of Weather Mastery can summon forth fog to blanket an area or landscape.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to summon fog. Over the next hour, fog will form over a large area, up to one mile in diameter for each dot of the Occult skill you possess. Anyone caught in this fog is unable to see more than five to 15 steps. The amount of naturally occurring moisture in the air determines this fog's density.

Your Storyteller has final say over exactly how long it takes the fog to form and how aggressively it blocks vision, based on your location and current weather conditions. The fog lasts for one hour for each dot you possess of the Occult skill, unless you choose to end this power early. Once Fog ends, its effects slowly fade, evaporating over the next hour.

Focus [Perception]:

In addition to the standard use of Fog, you can spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to instantly fill an area up to the size of a large ballroom with a thick fog. If used outdoors, your fog extends 50 steps in every direction, with you at the center.

Individuals in your instantly-created Fog cannot see more than three steps away. Characters wishing to attack or use a power on characters more than three steps away must use the Fighting Blind combat maneuver. Powers that allow you to see in total darkness, such as Eyes of the Beast cannot be used to bypass Fog, but powers that allow you to compensate for your lost sight like Heightened Senses can bypass this restriction. This Fog lasts for one minute for each dot you possess of the Occult skill, but you can dispel it early by expending a simple action. For more information on Fighting Blind, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, Combat Manuevers, page 281**.

●● Fluctuation

You have learned to subtly control the local weather patterns, slowly fluctuating the temperature up or down according to your needs.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to alter the temperature within a one-mile radius. You can raise or lower the temperature by up to 5 degrees Fahrenheit for each dot you possess of the Occult skill. This temperature change happens slowly, shifting 1 degree each hour until it reaches the desired level. Once there, power persists for one hour for each dot you possess of the Occult skill, before the temperature slowly returns to normal.

Focus [Intelligence]:

In addition to the standard effects of Fluctuation, you can spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to raise or lower the temperature in an area up to the size of a large ballroom. You can set the temperature anywhere between -20 degrees Fahrenheit and 120 degrees Fahrenheit. At its coldest, this power can freeze water in three turns. At its hottest, it can cause unprepared mortals to suffer from heat stroke, wither plants, and dry out inanimate objects within a few minutes.

●●● Gale

Via the power of your blood, you have the ability to command potent gales of terrifying force.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to call up high winds in a one-mile radius for each dot you possess of the Occult skill. You can summon up winds that blow at up to 30 miles per hour, with gusts of wind up to twice that speed. This increase in wind speed happens slowly. Winds increase in speed by one mile per hour every 10 minutes, until reaching the desired speed. Once the wind reaches the desired speed, this power lasts for 10 minutes for each dot you possess of the Occult skill, before slowly returning to normal. High winds can cause random black outs, road blockages, grounded flights, and damage to property at the Storyteller's discretion.

Focus [Intelligence]:

In addition to the standard effect of Gale, you can spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge using the Thaumaturgy test pool to fire a blast of air at your target. If your target fails to dodge, she is hammered by a violent gust of wind, knocked back up to 6 steps, and lands prone. If your target impacts a solid surface, she takes 2 points of normal damage.

●●●● Storm

You have learned to summon and control potent storms of great destructive power, which can wreak havoc upon your enemies and property alike.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to call up a Storm. This Storm blankets a wide radius in high winds and rain, or snow, if the temperature is low enough. The wind speed rises across the area of effect until it reaches 20 miles per hour. Your area of effect is a one-mile radius for each dot you possess of the Occult skill. Gusts of wind in the area can reach 40 miles per hour. This increase in wind speed happens slowly. Winds increase in speed by one mile per hour every 10 minutes until reaching the desired speed. Once the wind reaches the desired speed, this power lasts for 10 minutes for each dot you possess of the Occult skill.

By concentrating and taking no other action for 10 minutes, you can further ravage a one-block radius, intensifying the storm in that area. To do this, you do not need to see the affected area, but you must be familiar with that area. If you employ this effect, the target area suffers from power outages, flooding, and property damage. Roads become impassable, blocked by downed trees and other debris.

Focus [Perception]:

In addition to the standard effect of Storm, you can spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to surround yourself with a swirling storm. This miniature maelstrom lasts for one full turn for each dot you possess of the Occult skill. Once per turn, while this power is active, you can expend a standard action to employ the focus effect of the Gale power, without spending Blood.

●●●●● Lightning

The very weapon of the gods, lightning, is yours to command, smiting your enemies.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to make an opposed challenge. If you succeed, you can strike your target with a bolt of lightning. Individuals struck by lightning suffer 4 points of normal damage.

A lightning bolt can either come from your outstretched hand, or, if you are outdoors when you use this power, it can strike down from the clouds above.

Exceptional Success:

Your lightning bolt inflicts 5 points of normal damage, instead of the standard 4.

Focus [Perception]:

When you hit an opponent with Lightning, you may choose to either blind the target for one full turn or stun her, causing her to lose her next simple action. If a character is hit by more than one lightning bolt in a single turn, she can suffer both of these effects, but cannot be subjected to the same effect twice in a single turn.

Thaumaturgy Rituals

"Intelligence is power. It is the flame behind innovation,
a light that shows the path to the future.
Without the efforts of the mind, the world is lost."

— Myrsus ibn Sharbel

Rituals are mystical formulas that create powerful magical effects. They make use of unusual and rare ingredients, and take significantly more time to cast than the simple spells of a path of Thaumaturgy. All practitioners of Thaumaturgy have the capacity to perform rituals equivalent to their mastery with that art.

Rituals must be learned and purchased separately from paths; you do not acquire them simply by purchasing a path of Thaumaturgy. Like paths, they are rated from levels 1-5, and a caster can have several rituals corresponding to each level of the progression. A thaumaturge must purchase one ritual of each level before she is able to purchase a ritual at the next-higher level. So, in order to purchase a level 2 ritual, a thaumaturge must already possess at least one level 1 ritual, or in order to purchase a level 3 ritual, she must already possess at least one level 2 ritual, and so forth.

No character can learn more thaumaturgic rituals than she possesses dots in all of her paths of Thaumaturgy. Total all your dots from all known paths of Thaumaturgy to determine the maximum number of rituals your character can possess.

For example, Regent Insolens possesses 4 dots in Thaumaturgy: Path of Blood (his primary path), 3 dots in Thaumaturgy: Path of Conjuring, and 2 dots in Thaumaturgy: The Lure of Flames, and thus can learn up to nine Thaumaturgy rituals.

Unless otherwise stated, all rituals cost 1 Blood to activate. All rituals also require five minutes of casting time per level of the ritual.

Ritual Ingredients and Targeting:

If a ritual requires you to have a focus, then it can be used at range. Otherwise, it requires line of sight, unless the ritual specifically says otherwise. Ingredients that are specifically called out in the ritual's description must be used when casting the ritual. If you do not have a point of your target's Blood, and the ritual requires it, you cannot use the ritual on that target. A ritual's ingredients are always consumed in the use of the ritual, unless otherwise specified in the description.

Level 1 Thaumaturgy Rituals

Blood Mastery

By destroying a small quantity of your enemy's blood, you can leverage this symbolic act to give you power over your victim. You manifest this power over the target the next time you come into conflict.

System:

By burning 1 point of Blood from your target over an open flame, you gain a limited mystical mastery over her. In the very next opposed challenge against the victim, you automatically win the initial test. If your target spends Willpower to retest, you resolve the challenge normally from that point forward. Should Blood Mastery fail to trigger by dawn, the ritual expires.

Bind the Accusing Tongue

Bind the Accusing Tongue curses a subject by forcing a mystical compulsion upon her that prevents her from speaking ill of you in any fashion. To prepare for this ritual, you must create an image of the target, such as a photograph, a sketch, or wax effigy; acquire a lock of your victim's hair; and obtain a black silken cord. To curse your victim, wrap the cord about your victim's hair and image while reciting the ritual's vocal component and focusing your ire at her.

System:

Once the ritual is complete, make an opposed challenge against your intended target using the Thaumaturgy test pool. If you succeed, your victim cannot speak, write down, or otherwise communicate anything negative about you. If she tries, her voice (or hand) simply cannot to do so. The effects of this ritual last until dawn.

Communicate with Kindred Sire

You are connected to your sire through chains of blood that can never be severed. This ritual allows you to communicate telepathically with your sire, no matter where the two of you are in the world.

System:

You must meditate on the connection between you and your sire while intoning this ritual. Upon completion of the ritual, you establish a gentle telepathic communication with your sire from anywhere in the world. Your sire has the option to refuse the telepathic contact, and should that happen, you feel connected, but receive no reply. If your sire is in torpor or dead you receive a distinct empty feeling, rather than no sense of reply. Once established, this link lasts for an hour.

Defense of the Sacred Haven

Sunlight is a great bane of a vampire's existence. With Defense of the Sacred Haven, you can create a temporary mystical defense against sunlight when the strength and protection of your shelter is in doubt.

System:

Defense of the Sacred Haven prevents sunlight from entering a room up to 10 steps across in size. A mystical darkness blankets the area. Sunlight reflects off windows or magically fails to pass through doors or other portals. To invoke this ritual's protection, you must draw sigils in your own blood on all the affected windows and doors. The ritual lasts as long as you stay in the room in which you cast it.

Deflection of Wooden Doom

Deflection of Wooden Doom protects you against being staked. To cast this ritual, you must sit in a circle of wood for 10 minutes and chant the proper incantations. Once the ritual is complete, you place a tiny splinter of wood under your tongue. As long as the splinter remains there, you are protected from staking.

System:

The first time someone attempts to use the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver against you, that weapon's wood mystically crumbles to dust as it touches you, and the attack automatically misses. Once this ritual blocks one attempt to stake you, the ritual ends.

Engaging the Vessel of Transference

Engaging the Vessel of Transference enchants a glass container to mystically steal blood from any living or undead creature who touches it. The vessel replaces the blood that it steals with a volume of your blood equal to that which was taken. Once the ritual is completed, the Vessel of Transference automatically fills with your vitae and becomes inscribed with an occult sigil, which empowers the ritual.

System:

A Vessel of Transference must be between the size of a small cup and a one-gallon/four-liter jug. Whenever an individual's bare skin touches a container enchanted with Engaging the Vessel of Transference, she feels a tingling, noticeable chill against her flesh. The Vessel of Transference triggers the first time a character other than the ritual's caster touches it. Once activated, the vessel draws out 1 point of the individual's Blood, and then magically preserves the Blood until the vessel's seal is broken. The ritual only switches Blood between itself and a subject if it touches bare skin — even thin cotton gloves keep it from activating. A Vessel of Transference is fragile and automatically breaks if used in an attack.

Individuals with 2 or more dots of the Occult skill recognize the sigil and the chill of discomfort, and can identify a Vessel of Transference, discerning the purpose of the container. The two most common uses of this ritual are to covertly create a blood bond and to obtain a sample of a subject's blood for ritual or experimental purposes.

Illuminate the Trail of Prey

Your knowledge of blood magic is such that you have learned to track your enemies via the principle of identity. You invoke the spirits of the earth with the name of your enemy or an image of her face to reveal her location.

System:

The primary component of Illuminate the Trail of Prey is the birth name of your target or a picture drawn of her face created by someone with 2 or more dots of the Crafts skill. You do not need to see your target to cast Illuminate the Trail of Prey, but you must cast the ritual in a location that she has visited since the last sunrise, and you must best the target in an opposed challenge using the Thaumaturgy test pool. If you fail this challenge, you cannot try again against the same target for the rest of the night.

If you succeed in the challenge, glowing footprints appear in the earth. These footprints lead to your target. Only you can perceive these footprints, and the level of brightness depends on how long it has been since she was last in this location. Old tracks burn less brightly, while fresh tracks blaze with light. Illuminate the Trail of Prey ends at sunrise.

This ritual can track your foe so long as she travels over the earth, but the route follows the exact path that the individual took — which can make following a target difficult. Illuminate the Trail of Prey can track someone walking, running, or traveling in a vehicle so long as it passes over the earth. However, if your target passes over water or flies through the air, the trail will disappear at the point she left the earth.

Principal Focus of Vitae Infusion

You have learned to freeze your blood in stasis and thaw it out for later use. This power can be very useful for a vampire who needs to feed in an emergency.

System:

Through ritual concentration, you can transform 1 point of your Blood into a small red sphere the size of a common marble. Casting this ritual draws that point of Blood from your system. At a later time, you can place this sphere in your mouth, crush it between your teeth, and mentally

command it to turn back into blood, thus drinking the blood and refilling your Blood pool. The entire process of reabsorbing a point of Blood requires one simple action.

If another character is present when you create a blood sphere, you can teach that character the mental command to transform the sphere into blood. If she places the blood sphere in her mouth, she can then give the mental command, allowing her to use the blood sphere in the same way you would. Of course, since your own blood is used to create the blood sphere, the subject establishes one step of a blood bond to the caster of this ritual.

You can create a number of blood spheres equal to of the number of dots you possess of the Occult skill. If you make a blood sphere that would take you above this limit, a previously existing sphere is immediately destroyed. Ritualists know that allowing another individual – particularly another thaumaturge – to have access to your blood is very dangerous. Users should consider themselves warned.

Warding Circle

You have the ability to create a circle of protection that will ward off supernatural and partially supernatural creatures.

System:

During the casting of this ritual, you must use mortal blood to draw a circle on the ground (or other flat surface). This circle has a diameter of up to one step for each dot of the Occult skill that you possess. Once created, a Warding Circle cannot be moved without destroying it. You might paint a ward on a piece of plywood, but you destroy the Warding Circle if you move the wood.

By default, your Warding Circle affects partially supernatural creatures, such as ghouls or mortals with werewolf or fae blood. If you have 3 or more dots in your primary path of Thaumaturgy, your ward also affects vampires, werewolves, and fae. If you have 5 dots in your primary path of Thaumaturgy, your ward also affects ghosts, spirits, elementals, demons, and characters who are psychically projected. Affected character types who pass through your Warding Circle take 3 points of aggravated damage. When creating a ward, it is possible to exclude certain creature types. A thaumaturge with 5 dots in her primary path can make a Warding Circle that allows vampires to enter but damages the other listed creature types.

Individuals who are subject to damage from a Warding Circle can sense its presence when they approach within one step of the circle. The ward created by this ritual is spherical, making it difficult to jump over or burrow beneath the protection. A Warding Circle never affects the caster and may be tuned to exclude other individuals, so long as those individuals are present during the ward's casting and contribute a point of Blood to the ritual. Wards cannot be tuned after casting; adding another individual to the ward after it is cast requires the caster to destroy the ward and create another in its place.

The blood used to create a Warding Circle does not fade until the ritual's duration ends. Individuals who would be harmed by a Warding Circle cannot damage it. An individual cannot use a mop to clear away a ward that would affect her. Warding Circles can be broken by individuals who are not targeted by that ward's protection or by the natural destruction of the environment. If you draw a circle in blood across a highway, it could be smeared by the passage of cars, washed away by rain, or broken by a mortal with a mop.

Warding Circles cannot inflict damage on a character more than once per turn.

Casting a Warding Circle takes the normal casting time, five minutes, if you only wish to establish a short-term ward, which lasts for the rest of the night. If you wish to create a long-term ward, lasting a year and a day, you must expend a downtime action to cast it.

Level 2 Thaumaturgy Rituals

Banish Big Brother

Orwell knew the future. Big Brother is everywhere. Cameras are watching your every move. This ritual allows you to have a brief respite from constant surveillance.

System:

It is rumored that the Anarchs first developed this modern ritual. Banish Big Brother allows the caster to detect and potentially nullify technological eavesdropping devices within line of sight. You can turn off microphones, surveillance cameras, and so forth, but not undetectable, distant devices, such as satellite surveillance. Until the next sunrise, you always sense when you are being recorded, and you can preemptively disable the device involved, before it successfully captures a recording of you. Recording devices affected by Banish Big Brother become hopelessly inoperative until one hour passes, after which they resume normal functioning.

Burning Blade

Thaumaturges are rarely known for their martial abilities. You have an edge. You can mystically prepare your bladed weapon to ignite with a bluish flame when triggered, to literally burn your enemies.

System:

To use this ritual, you must chant over a blade, typically a knife or sword. Once completed, the magic in the weapon remains dormant until triggered. To activate the weapon, you must use a standard action to slice your hand and spread your blood along the length of the blade. Only the blood of the thaumaturge who cast the ritual can activate the blade, and only she can use it. This process causes 1 point of normal damage.

Once activated, the weapon flickers with a cold, bluish flame. The weapon inflicts aggravated damage on all supernatural creatures with a successful attack. This ability lasts for one attack for each dot of the Occult skill you possess, or until the weapon leaves your possession. The weapon's wielder cannot choose to do normal damage and reserve aggravated strikes. Each successful attack uses one aggravated strike until there are none left, at which point the weapon reverts to inflicting normal damage.

Craft Bloodstone

A Bloodstone is a small pebble that has a sympathetic link with the thaumaturge who created it, allowing her to always know its direction and general distance. To create a Bloodstone, you must place a small pebble into a vial filled with 3 points of Blood from any source and recite an invocation over the vial. The Bloodstone slowly absorbs the power of the blood, and the liquid becomes clearer and clearer, until it is as transparent as water.

System:

Once the Bloodstone ritual is complete, you have a mystical connection to the stone and can tell its relative position and general distance from you at all times. A caster can create a number of Bloodstones equal to the number of dots she possesses of the Occult skill. If a Bloodstone is Obfuscated or otherwise supernaturally hidden, the caster can follow the trail until she reaches the general location of the stone, but the connection becomes blurred at that point, and she can no longer feel the Bloodstone's precise location beyond that point.

Eyes of the Night Hawk

You have the ability to project your consciousness into a predatory bird and experience the night through its senses.

System:

This ritual allows you to see through the eyes of a bird and to hear through its ears. You must select a bird of prey for this ritual. After you finish the ritual's incantation, the bird obeys your mental commands to a point. She may fly in a desired route, spy for you, and even ferry small objects. However, she cannot fight for you, unless specifically trained for said purpose. The bird returns to you after finishing its flight. Once it returns, if you do not poke out the bird's eyes, you will suffer a three-night period of blindness. This ritual lasts until sunrise.

Illusion of Peaceful Death

The Masquerade can be difficult to maintain even under the best of circumstances, as factions of warring vampire coteries fight for dominance and resources. A bloody murder at the wrong time can draw undue attention from the police to an already complex situation. You have an ace in the hole for the little accidents that sometimes occur. To cast this ritual, you must have a carefully prepared feather soaked in the blood of a good man. You must use the feather to dust a corpse while chanting the phrase, "It must have been his time to go. At least he went out in his sleep."

System:

Once this ritual is complete, the target corpse appears to have died of natural causes, even if it was drained of all blood or horrifically mangled. This ritual does not add blood to an exsanguinated corpse or heal broken bones, but it does prevent mundane investigations from finding evidence of foul play. Supernatural investigations are capable of seeing through this illusion with some difficulty. Such investigations suffer a -3 penalty when used to investigate a corpse targeted by this ritual. The effects of Illusion of Peaceful Death last for one month.

Machine Blitz

You have the ability to introduce chaos into systems of order, forcing machines to go haywire. You must chant the proper incantations and then ritually destroy a piece of technology that you have personally used.

System:

Once the ritual is complete, all machines targeted by your focused hatred start to malfunction. Use your standard action to stop any machine or electronic device that you can clearly see. For the next hour, this ritual can be used to kill car engines, render flash drives inoperable, drain the battery of a cell phone, stop life-support machines, etc. Essentially, Machine Blitz stops any machine more complex than a rope and pulley. This ritual only stops machines; it does not grant any control over them. The effects of this ritual are invisible and appear to be coincidental. Repairing an object targeted by Machine Blitz requires an appropriate skill, such as Computer, of 3 dots or more and roughly an hour of work.

Recure of the Homeland

Life leaves a resonance behind in the places we inhabit. We are connected to the lands of our birth. You have learned how to use this resonance and connection to heal yourself. You can call upon the power of the earth to heal your own aggravated wounds. You must gather at least a handful of dirt from the city or town of your mortal birth and recite a litany of your mortal family tree. Next, you mix the earth with 2 points of your Blood to make a healing paste.

System:

The paste created by Recure of the Homeland can heal 2 aggravated wounds each night. Only you can benefit from this paste, and you must use it within one minute of completing the ritual, or the magic fades.

Level 3 Thaumaturgy Rituals

Detect the Hidden Observer

The same paranoid Anarch sorcerer who devised Banish Big Brother supposedly developed this ritual. He created it as a means of ensuring that valuable secrets wouldn't fall into the hands of his enemies. To enact this ritual, you must cast a portion of your blood into a fire fueled by personal documents or recordings. Once the fire dies, you must anoint your forehead with the ashes that remain.

System:

Until the next sunrise, you feel a sharp pain in your forehead whenever another individual uses supernatural powers to actively spy on you. This ritual's caster also discovers the type of attempted surveillance, whether listening, watching, telepathic contact, etc. This ritual does not block these powers in any way, nor does it offer any clues about the observer's location, nor her the identity; it only alerts you that someone is spying.

Detect the Hidden Observer does not protect against passive uses of supernatural powers. You cannot detect a Nosferatu using Obfuscate to spy on you, but you could detect an individual using the ritual Scry or the Auspex power Clairvoyance.

Flesh of Fiery Touch

Thaumaturges often must find ways of protecting themselves in order to prepare their magic. This defensive ritual inflicts painful burns on anyone who deliberately touches your skin. This ritual darkens your skin; your skin appears similar to a mortal's, if that mortal had experienced long-term exposure to the sun. Its tone is slightly unnatural and metallic. Some vain thaumaturges use this ritual purely for its subsidiary effect of darkening their skin to a healthy sun-bronzed hue.

System:

Performing this ritual requires a great act of courage. You must swallow a small glowing ember, suffering a single point of aggravated damage. Until dawn, anyone who voluntarily touches you receives a burn. This ritual does not damage those you touch nor those who accidentally come in contact with you.

Anyone who hits you with a Brawl attack takes 1 point of aggravated damage. Anyone who attempts to Grapple you takes ever-increasing damage until they release you or until you break free of the Grapple. On the first turn of a Grapple, the character holding you takes 1 point of aggravated damage on her everyman initiative, just as she would if she'd struck you with a Brawl attack. On the second turn of the Grapple, the character holding you takes 2 points of aggravated damage. On the third turn, she takes 3 points of aggravated damage. Damage inflicted by Flesh of Fiery Touch increases by 1 point each turn until your captor lets go, dies, or loses consciousness.

Incorporeal Passage

By looking into a fragment of a mirror while intoning this ritual's chant, you become completely incorporeal. So long as you continue to look into this mirror, you can literally walk through walls, and few places on earth can bar you from entry.

System:

While under the effects of this ritual, Physical attacks pass through you. You can step unhindered through any solid barrier. The ritual lasts for five minutes, but you can end it early simply by turning away from the piece of mirror that you hold.

While under the effects of Incorporeal Passage, opponents can still target you with Mental or Social attacks. Once you invoke Incorporeal Passage, you can only move forward or stand still. You cannot turn, nor go backwards. The magic involved in the ritual prevents you from engaging in any form of active attack while you are in this incorporeal state, though you can activate defensive powers. For example, you cannot use Dread Gaze, but you can activate Majesty.

If Incorporeal Passage ends while you are in contact with a solid object, you take 1 to 5 points of normal damage, based on the size of the object, and your body ejects the object. If Incorporeal Passage ends while you are fully or mostly inside of a solid object, such as a wall, all of your health levels fill with damage, and you are shunted into the nearest empty space large enough to hold your body, where you immediately fall into torpor (if you are a vampire) or begin the process of bleeding to death (if you are a mortal).

Mirror of Second Sight

The Sabbat developed this ritual, taking cues from Aztec folklore and magic traditions. You must find a silver mirror and soak it in your blood over the course of three nights. Thereafter, whenever you peer into the mirror, you can see supernatural creatures' true forms in the reflection.

System:

You can enchant a mirror that reflects the true form of supernatural creatures; vampires appear pale and corpselike, werewolves appear in their half-wolf form, the fae appear in all of their wild, glamorous beauty, and ghosts are visible in the mirror, appearing as semi-transparent versions of themselves.

This silver mirror must be no less than four inches wide and no more than 18 inches long. Mirror of Second Sight only functions for the caster. To all others, it is a just another mirror.

Pavis of the Foul Presence

By casting Pavis of the Foul Presence, you reflect the effects of the Presence discipline against your aggressor.

System:

First, you must tie a blue silken cord around your neck while intoning the chant to activate the ritual. Once the ritual has been cast, the very next time a character targets you with a Presence power or a Presence-based technique, Pavis of the Foul Presence reflects the effect of that Presence power back upon the aggressor. Once triggered, the ribbon around your neck turns to ash, ending the effects of Pavis of the Foul Presence.

Resolve the Presence power's opposed challenge as normal with the aggressor. If your attacker wins the challenge, the incoming Presence power simply has no effect on you. The attacker must wait at least one hour before targeting you with the same power again, although she can target you with other Presence powers. For the next hour, you are immune to the power which triggered Pavis of the Foul Presence, if the same character attempts to target you with that power again.

If you win the challenge to resist the incoming Presence power, Pavis of the Foul Presence turns the power back on the user. In this case, that power automatically affects the user, as if you had used it on her.

Note that Pavis of the Foul Presence only reflects powers that specifically target you. This ritual does not affect powers that do not target you directly, such as Majesty or Awe.

Soul of the Homunculi

Thaumaturges often need laboratory assistants whom they can trust implicitly. You have learned how to conjure a temporary servant, called a Homunculus, which is completely loyal to you, because it is made from your blood.

System:

To cast the ritual, you must slice open your arm and bleed into a mystically prepared earthen bowl. The magic of the ritual merges and animates whatever random unimportant items you happen to have lying around your workshop – glass beakers, dissection tools, pencils, crumpled papers, semiprecious stones – and it binds those materials together into a small humanoid form animated by the power of the ritual and your blood.

The main benefit of working with a Homunculus is the amount of time and energy it saves you preparing all of your ritual components, freeing you from having to spend a downtime action to keep them in stock. In addition, if your servant assists you in casting a ritual, the time required to cast that ritual reduces, as if the ritual is one level lower, to a minimum of one minute when casting a level 1 ritual. For example, casting a level 3 ritual with the help of this Homunculi takes 10 minutes, instead of the standard 15 minutes.

A thaumaturge can only have one Homunculus in existence at any one time. If she creates a new one, the old one is destroyed.

Homunculus Retainer

Homunculus
2-dot Retainer

Specialties: Occult, Lore

Effective Health: ○○○○

Your Homunculus has a test pool of 4 in most tests. In challenges involving Occult or Lore, its test pool is 8. A Homunculus is a naturally timid creature and flees if attacked, though it will try to defend its master's life at the cost of its own. It has no disciplines of its own, but it has a full understanding of all of your Thaumaturgical knowledge and can instruct others if so commanded. It is impervious to any mind-controlling disciplines or magic, as it is completely bound to your will.

Shaft of Belated Quiescence

You have the ability to enchant a stake of wood to purposefully seek out your enemy's heart.

System:

This ritual turns an ordinary stake of rowan wood into a particularly vicious weapon. When the stake penetrates a vampire's body, the tip breaks off and begins working its way through the victim's flesh to her heart. The trip may take several hours or several nights, depending on where the stake struck. The stake eludes attempts to remove it, burrowing further into the victim's body to escape surgical removal. Vampires who have had their hearts removed by Serpentis (or are otherwise immune to staking) are immune to this internal attack.

The ritual takes an entire night to complete. The stake must be carved of rowan wood, coated with 3 points of the caster's Blood, and blackened in an oak-wood fire. When the ritual is complete, the stake is enchanted to act as described below.

A wielder performs an attack with a Shaft of Belated Quiescence as she would with a normal weapon. If she inflicts at least 1 point of damage after the target's Fortitude or similar defensive abilities reduce the incoming damage, the tip of the stake breaks off and begins burrowing. If the attack deals no damage, the stake can be used to make subsequent attacks until it strikes deep enough to activate. Once the tip of the stake is in the victim's body, she must make an opposed challenge every hour to avoid being staked, as the wood attempts to worm through her body. The caster uses her Thaumaturgy test pool versus the victim's Physical attribute + Survival to resolve this challenge. Each time the target succeeds in the opposed challenge, she takes 3 points of normal damage. If, at any point, the victim marks off an Incapacitated health level as a result of this damage, the tip pierces her heart.

Removing the part of the body where the tip impacted, such as by a Vicissitude user activating Blood Form, or a vampire electing to cut off her arm, may stop the tip's progress, at the Storyteller's discretion. A character with 3 or more dots of the Medicine skill can remove the shaft by performing a 10-minute operation. Attempts to surgically remove the tip of the shaft are made using a character's Physical attribute + Medicine test pool against a difficulty rating of 10.

Once the tip pierces the target's heart, it stakes a vampire and instantly kills mortals and partially supernatural creatures, such as ghouls.

You can perform the Shaft of Belated Quiescence ritual on other wooden weapons, such as spears, arrows, practice swords, and pool cues, provided that they are made of rowan wood. The ritual cannot, however, augment a bullet or a weapon that does not have the staking quality.

A thaumaturge can have one Shaft of Belated Quiescence in existence for every 2 dots she possesses of the Occult skill. If she makes a new Shaft of Belated Quiescence that exceeds this limit, a shaft created earlier is destroyed.

Level 4 Thaumaturgy Rituals

Innocence of the Child's Heart

Innocence of the Child's Heart masks your aura from the Auspex power Aura Perception. Any individuals who use that power on you perceive a white aura, untainted by any signs of vampirism. This ritual requires a high price: the sacrifice of a mortal child.

System:

Innocence of the Child's Heart requires the ritualistic sacrifice of a mortal child and the harvesting of her heart. You must dip a beloved toy that once belonged to that child in the heart's blood. The toy quickly absorbs all of the blood until it is clean. As long as you carry the toy, your aura appears pure white, untainted by any signs of vampirism or diablerie. The ritual lasts for one week, plus an additional week for every dot of the Occult skill you possess. Naturally, this horrific ritual takes an extreme toll on the caster's Humanity. Unless the character is on the Path of Evil Revelations, she loses a point of Morality when she enacts this ritual.

Mirror Walk

Practitioners of Psychic Projection understand that there are multiple layers to the universe. A Malkavian thaumaturge, thought to be the inspiration for the evil-stepmother archetype in all of the Grimm fairy tales, leveraged her obsession with mirrors and knowledge of the psychic plane to create a ritual that would allow her to travel from place to place in the material world. Mirror Walk creates a sympathetic link between two mirrors, allowing you to travel between them.

System:

You must create two identical mirrors of the same appropriate size, made with silver. Then, soak both mirrors in 2 points of your own Blood and chant over the course of three nights to create a special resonance link between the two objects. Once completed, you can stand before either mirror and recite the mystical password to open a magical gate between the two mirrors.

Such powerful magic cannot be done swiftly. It requires three turns for the portal to open. The glass ripples and shimmers when ready, and only then can you step through

the egress. You can take one willing passenger with you on this trip, but you must act swiftly, as the gateway is a crack in reality, which closes in two turns.

The mirrors created by this ritual remain functional until broken or until the thaumaturge dies. You can only enchant one pair of mirrors at a time. If the thaumaturge creates another pair, the first set is destroyed. Only the thaumaturge who created the mirrors can use them, and once used, neither mirror can be used again until 10 minutes pass.

Severed Hand

The Amir of Clan Assamite created this ritual as a means to show mercy to criminals who deserved punishment, but not the Final Death. Severed Hand allows you to permanently sever a part of a restrained vampire's body, preventing the vampire from ever regenerating the lost body part. Although a hand is typically the most common appendage removed, this ritual can affect eyes, fingers, tongues, and other body parts.

System:

The Severed Hand requires you to completely immobilize your victim, normally accomplished by causing your victim to enter torpor. This ritual takes an entire night to perform, during which time you must sever the limb you wish to curse and coat it with an alchemical compound that prevents it from decaying or from being regenerated. Any thaumaturge who holds the severed limb receives a +3 bonus when targeting the limb's owner with Thaumaturgy powers.

The damaged caused by losing a limb can be healed in the normal manner, but the severed body part cannot be restored until the original limb is recovered or destroyed, or until a year and a day has passed. The severed limb can be concealed by powers like Mask of a Thousand Faces or replaced by use of powers like Vicissitude.

Scry

Via staring into a pool of water in a silver bowl, you can see and hear what is happening around your subject.

System:

Scrying is the practice of remote viewing via a reflective, translucent substance, such as water. You must fill a wide silver bowl with purified spring water mixed with a drop of owl's blood. Next, you must concentrate on an individual or location familiar to you, gaze into the bowl, and make an opposed challenge using the Thaumaturgy test pool. If you succeed, you can see and hear what is happening around the target as though you were personally in her presence. This ritual lasts for a number of minutes equal to the number of dots you possess of the Occult skill.

If used to Scry on a location, no challenge is required. You can view those surroundings as if you were standing in the center of the area. If you target a location with Scry, the viewpoint is immobile and cannot be changed for the duration of the ritual. You cannot use supernatural powers through Scry. If you attempt to Scry on an individual, and you have an object of personal value or deep connection to the target, such as a piece of her hair, a love letter, or so forth, you do not need to be familiar with the target to use this power. The object used to establish a link to your target crumbles to dust when this ritual ends.

Scry automatically fails if the target is currently invisible, such as someone concealed by the powers of Obfuscate.

Level 5 Thaumaturgy Rituals

Blood Contract

There is power in the written word. A contract empowered with blood is said to be unbreakable. You have the knowledge to make that so.

System:

Blood Contract creates an unbreakable agreement between two parties who sign it of their own free will. The contract must be written in your blood. All clauses in the contract must be understood by all parties and responsibilities must be listed implicitly. Each party referenced directly in the contract must sign her agreement to the stipulations in her own blood.

A Blood Contract must include the following three clauses:

- A clear description of the service or favor provided by the individual who is being contracted.
- A clear description of the payment provided by the individual doing the contracting.
- The terms under which the Blood Contract can be terminated.

These clauses do not have to be fair, but they must exist for the Blood Contract to function. Attempts to add clauses that forbid the destroying of the contract, override the required clauses, or absolve an individual from the consequences of breaching the contract, cause the ritual to immediately fail.

Anyone who signs said contract is now mystically bound and must follow it to the letter, including the thaumaturge, if she is one of the signing parties. Violators automatically suffer enough damage to cause them to enter into torpor. Should someone be foolish enough to violate the contract, both parties sense it immediately.

Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

The Blood Contract lasts until one party dies, until its completion cause is triggered, or until the document itself is destroyed.

It is possible to coerce an individual into signing a Blood Contract with threats, but if a character is compelled to sign a contract with a supernatural power, the ritual fails.

Sample Blood Contract: Percival (the target) must do his best to ensure that no one discovers that Dominic (the caster) killed Prince Leon. In return, Dominic will teach Percival four powers of Dominate over the next six months. This contract shall be nullified if the circumstances of Prince Leon's death become publicly known without Percival's involvement.

Cobra's Favor

Cobra's Favor manipulates your vitae to burn with a toxin that causes horrific damage to any creature that consumes it. You must acquire an herbal poultice and the venom of a snake, and then mix these components with a point of your Blood. At the end of the ritual, you must spill the mixture into a prepared container, while reciting an incantation to transmute the concoction into a jet-black liquid.

System:

You must ingest the elixir for the ritual to take effect, suffering 1 level of aggravated damage, which cannot be reduced or negated. Afterwards, anyone who consumes your blood suffers a point of aggravated damage per point of Blood ingested. This damage cannot be reduced or negated. Cobra's Favor remains in effect for one month.

Paper Flesh

This dreadful ritual enfeebles the subject, making her skin brittle and weak. Humors rise to the surface, and flesh tightens around bones and scales away at the slightest touch. Used against tough opponents, this ritual strips away the inherent resilience of the vampiric body, leaving it a fragile, dry husk. You must inscribe your target's birth name and image on a piece of paper. Then you must burn it to cinders while cursing the victim's name.

System:

If you succeed in an opposed challenge against your target, she loses her highest 3 dots of Fortitude, starting with any elder Fortitude powers she possesses. If the target has more than three elder Fortitude powers, she may choose which powers are lost. If your target is Stamina-focused, she loses two Fortitude powers, rather than three. Should the target survive until sunrise, this ritual ends and all of her Fortitude returns. If Paper Flesh removes the prerequisites for your character's Fortitude-based techniques, you lose access to those techniques until your Fortitude returns.

Any character who loses Fortitude automatically realizes that she has been affected by a power, and realizes the manner in which she is more physically vulnerable.

Unless you know the victim's birth name, you must target someone who is physically present when you cast the ritual. If you know the victim's birth name, you can target her at a range of up to 10 miles.

Stone of the True Form

To create a Stone of the True Form, you must acquire a small stone and coat it with a mixture made from a point of your Blood and other eldritch compounds. Once the ritual is complete, the stone serves as an anchor to metaphorically connect the material world with Plato's world of idealized forms. If you have the will, you can force others to assume their natural shape.

System:

Anyone touching your Stone of the True Form reverts to her normal shape, deactivating all transformative powers. Further, individuals cannot activate transformative powers for the remainder of this turn and for the next full turn after having touched the stone. Stone of the True Form can also temporarily undo physical changes made by uses of Vicissitude.

Stone of the True Form is effective even if the target is not solid. A cloud of mist can be "touched" by a Stone of the True Form by passing the stone through the mist. This movement does not affect targets who are completely insubstantial, such as those in the psychic plane.

With a Stone of the True Form, you can strike an individual within 10 steps by throwing the stone at her, if you succeed in an opposed challenge using your Physical attribute + Athletics versus your target's Physical attribute + Dodge. Alternately, you can hold a Stone of True Form in your hand and use the Disarm combat maneuver to touch your target with the stone. When used in this way, the Disarm combat maneuver doesn't disarm your opponent, but does bring the stone into contact long enough to affect the target.

A Stone of the True Form lasts indefinitely, but you can only have one Stone of the True Form in existence at a time. If you create a new Stone of the True Form, the first one is destroyed.

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Elder Powers

"The Roman scholar, Seneca, was incorrect.
Unjust dominion can be eternal."

— Hardestadt the Elder

Elder vampires have vitae so thick and potent that it can support purer applications of vampiric disciplines. These mighty effects are known as *elder powers*, and vampires with less potent blood simply cannot learn or utilize them.

A character must possess the first 5 dots of a discipline before she can learn an elder power of that discipline; after that, the character can learn any number of elder powers (Generation permitting) within that discipline. Characters can learn in-clan elder powers without a teacher, but require a teacher to learn an out-of-clan elder power, as they would with any other out-of-clan power. The teacher must have that discipline in-clan and also possess the specific elder power that the student wishes to learn. For rules on learning new disciplines, see **page 111**.

Mastering an elder power is a mark of distinction in vampiric society, both for the purposes of proving the potency of your blood and as a point of honor in your mastery of a discipline. Elders who have mastered more than one such power earn greater respect.

Common disciplines tend to offer more elder powers than uncommon or rare ones, due to the fact that clans with more members and longer histories tend to have developed more applications of their disciplines, especially when more than one clan possesses that discipline's powers.

In-clan elder powers cost 18 experience points (XP) for Luminary, Master, and Pretender Elder vampires to purchase. It costs 24 XP for Master and Pretender Elders to purchase an out-of-clan elder power. It costs 30 XP for a Luminary to purchase an out-of-clan elder power. Neonate and Ancilla vampires cannot purchase elder powers at all.

Elder powers have no focuses and do not typically gain magnified results in the case of an exceptional success.

Elder Animalism

Crimson Fury

A vampire's Beast often feels like a tangible thing, raging in the shadows of the soul and clawing at a vampire's consciousness in a fury to find release. An elder with this power can allow the strength and rage of her Beast to be tasted in her blood, offering some protection against anyone who attempts to drain her vitae.

System:

Anyone who tastes your vitae can sense the barely-contained fury of your Beast. Biting you or drinking 1 or more points of your Blood causes an individual to enter fear frenzy and flee in terror. This power does not require a challenge; the frenzy is automatic and cannot be resisted with Willpower.

Crimson Fury will affect any character who bites you or drinks your blood, even individuals who are normally immune to frenzy, such as mortals, ghouls, or vampires currently affected by Quell the Beast. Anyone who becomes blood bound to you after you purchase this power becomes immune to this effect and carries the mark of your Beast in her blood. Anyone who tastes the blood of someone who is bound to you, by biting or drinking from her, suffers from the effects of Crimson Fury as well, although she fears the individual's mystical protector (you, though she cannot know who you are) instead of fearing your thrall.

If another character manages to diablerize you, your Beast lives on, tearing at her soul. The diablerist dies within three nights, as your Beast slowly and painfully tears her apart from the inside out. This effect is not passed on to characters who are blood bound to you.

Intimidate the Beast

The Beast is a predator and loves nothing more than exerting its influence over another member of its species. When you utilize this power, you unleash the full strength of the monster within you, driving another vampire to panic in fear before the overpowering might of your Beast.

System:

You can only target vampires, or other supernatural creatures capable of frenzy, with this power.

When you are the focus of another character's attention (as per Gaze and Focus), you can spend 2 Blood, expend your standard action, and make an opposed challenge against your victim using the Animalism test pool.

If you succeed, your Beast supernaturally assaults your target's Beast, sending it into a panic. Any time this victim confronts you, her Beast claws at her psyche, trying to force her to back down from what it perceives as a more potent predator.

The victim must immediately look away from you or she will take 2 points of normal damage, which cannot be reduced or negated. For the next 10 minutes, each time your victim looks at you, attempts to speak with you, confronts you, or attacks you in any way, she takes 2 points of normal damage that cannot be reduced or negated, as her Beast erupts in

horror. The victim of Intimidate the Beast can avoid taking damage by looking down or away from you and avoiding any kind of confrontation. A victim of this power instinctively knows what actions will cause her to take damage.

Intimidate the Beast cannot damage a character more than once per turn, and it has no effect on creatures that do not have a Beast.

Elder Auspex

Clairvoyance

Your mastery of supernatural sight allows you to cast your mind out and view faraway events, locations, or individuals as though you are standing in their presence. This power has inspired legends and myths, conveying the sense that no matter where you hide — you cannot escape a vampire.

System:

To activate Clairvoyance, spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action. Your perceptions split, allowing you to focus on a familiar person, place, or object without losing the ability to perceive your current surroundings. For more information on targeting a familiar character see **page 114**.

If you use Clairvoyance on a supernatural creature, or on an object in the possession of a supernatural creature, you must make an opposed challenge against your target, or the individual controlling the object, using the Auspex test pool. If successful, you can see, hear, and otherwise sense the area around your target as though you are in its presence. If you observe a location with which you are familiar, no challenge is required, and your Clairvoyance automatically succeeds.

Your Clairvoyance lasts for five minutes for each dot you possess of the Investigation skill. If you use Clairvoyance to spy on a character who is in multiple places at the same time, or a character whose physical form has been split into more than one piece, you must choose which location you would like to perceive when you activate Clairvoyance. Thereafter, if you choose to perceive the alternate location, you must activate Clairvoyance again. For example, if you use Clairvoyance to spy on a target using Possession or Psychic Projection, you may choose to spy on the target's native body or on the location of her sentience. Similarly, if you choose to spy on a character whose heart has been removed, you may choose to perceive the body's surroundings or the area where the target's heart is located.

You can only utilize other Auspex powers, not elder powers or techniques, through Clairvoyance, so long as you can fulfill the other requirements of those powers. A character can use Heightened Senses to smell a candle through Clairvoyance, but cannot touch the wax to activate Spirit's Touch. Because you are not physically present, your Heightened Senses cannot forewarn you about the proximity of Obfuscated individuals or illusions. You can still spend 1 Blood to sharpen your senses, in the hope of detecting such effects.

If your target is hidden by a power that grants invisibility, such as Unseen Presence, you must overcome the target's Obfuscate in order to use Clairvoyance on that individual. Make a challenge using your Mental attribute + Investigation versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower, or Mental attribute + Stealth (the target's choice).

A character cannot have multiple applications of Clairvoyance active at the same time.

Psychic Assault

Most uses of the Sight are subtle, gathering information or passing thoughts in a gentle and inconspicuous manner. Psychic Assault is none of these things. A vampire who masters this power has the capacity to attack another individual using the strength of her mental acuity, hammering on her unfortunate subject with an incomprehensible barrage of will and thought.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action to attack your opponent's mind with Psychic Assault. Make an opposed challenge against your opponent, using the Auspex test pool. If you succeed, your victim takes 4 points of normal damage. The damage dealt by Psychic Assault cannot be reduced or negated by armor or supernatural resistances, such as Fortitude.

A character attacked by a Psychic Assault immediately knows where the attack originated and from which individual in that location (if more than one person is in the area). You can repeatedly activate Psychic Assault against the same target; this is an exception to the rule that prohibits a character from using a power on the same target immediately after failing. If you fail a Psychic Assault against an opponent, you can try again against that same opponent (or someone else) on the next turn.

Exceptional Success:

Your Psychic Assault deals 5 points of normal damage, instead of 4.

Elder Celerity

Quickness

With this level of heightened speed, you become a hazy, indistinct figure, so accelerated in your actions that it is difficult to perceive details. The world slows to a crawl around you, allowing you to batter your enemies repeatedly before they can react.

System:

When you activate Celerity, you gain an extra round of actions, consisting of one simple action and one standard action. Resolve these actions during the third Celerity round within the turn.

Projectile

A vampire with this ability has mastered the skill of lending additional speed to hurled objects and thrown weapons. Even mundane implements, such as pencils or stones, can be murderous in the hands of such an accomplished elder.

System:

When you make a Physical ranged attack, such as a thrown or firearms attack, spend 1 Blood to activate Projectile. This attack receives a +3 bonus to its attack test pool, and inflicts an additional point of damage.

Projectile can be used to augment a ranged attack that wouldn't normally cause damage, such as hurling a coin. If Projectile boosts this type of attack, treat it like a normal firearms attack, which does 2 points of damage by default, 3 if you achieve an exceptional success. Such attacks do not receive the +3 bonus or an additional point of damage from use of Projectile.

The Blood expenditure for Projectile is added to any other Blood spent on Celerity this turn. You can utilize this power even if you do not choose to activate the rest of your Celerity for the turn. Projectile can be used during Celerity rounds, but you must pay the Blood cost each time you augment an attack with this power.

Elder Chimerstry

Shared Nightmare

Shared Nightmare is a terrifying power, capable of inflicting the effects of your imagination upon multiple targets at once. Your chimerical attacks are no longer constrained to a single individual per round.

System:

Once purchased, this power is always active and enhances all uses of Horrid Reality. Attacks made by your Horrid Reality-augmented Apparitions can attack up to five characters simultaneously. Your illusion might throw a grenade, wounding several targets, or launch a gout of flame, burning a group of victims.

When targeting multiple enemies with this power, you must make a separate opposed challenge against each of the defenders. Should you spend a point of Willpower to retest any of these opposed challenges, you also gain that retest for the remainder of the opposed challenges, without spending further Willpower. If you spend the Willpower to retest after some challenges are already resolved, you cannot go back to previous challenges you've lost and apply that Willpower retest retroactively.

If you expend both your simple and standard actions to apply a combat maneuver, as per the Charisma attribute focus for Horrid Reality, that combat maneuver only applies to one individual.

Army of Apparitions

Where some can conjure an individual or item from nothingness, you have the capacity to fill a warehouse or populate a civil rights march entirely with illusion — in the blink of an eye.

System:

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to create up to three Apparitions for each dot you possess of the Subterfuge skill, minimum three. When created, you can give each Apparition its own pattern. When you use a simple action to alter your Apparitions' patterns, you may choose to affect one, some, or all Apparitions created with this power.

You can only have one application of Army of Apparitions active at any time.

Elder Daimoinon

Infernal Compact

Evil is not a solitary creature. It hunts in packs, sharing its benefits and damnations, and dragging as many souls as it can into the corridors of hell. With this power, you can induct others into the good graces of demons, initiating them into your infernal alliance, for the benefit of all.

System:

By sharing the affections of your damned patron, you can grant infernal powers to others. To receive a benefit from this power, the target must accept the affection of your infernal patron of her own free will. Further, she must sacrifice something she cares deeply about (a lover's memento, a loyal retainer, or so forth) to your patron, through you. Once presented with a suitable sacrifice, the Daimoinon user spends 3 Blood and invokes a mystic ritual of benediction for five full turns, during which the subject must be present. If the target has second thoughts before the end of the invocation, this power automatically fails. If the target remains willing through all five turns of the ritual, the supplicant's sacrifice is consumed in green flame, and she receives an infernal blessing. The target gains the Infernal Power merit without paying any XP cost, and without this merit counting towards the maximum number of merits she can purchase. The target chooses which effect she receives from the application of the Infernal Power merit. You are considered to be the target's infernal master for the purpose of this effect.

Infernal Compact's effects last until either you or the target die. In either case, the target loses access to the Infernal Power merit, unless she chooses to purchase the merit normally, using the merit system.

Elder Dementation

Lingering Malaise

Sharing madness is as natural to you as drinking blood…and as fulfilling. Those elders who master this power can inflict a much more substantive affliction upon others' minds.

System:

Characters affected by your Voice of Madness set their Derangement traits to 2; any time a victim experiences a psychotic break while under the effects of this power, the psychotic break does not reset her Derangement traits to 0 (or 1, if the character is a Malkavian). Instead, her Derangement traits reset to 2. For more information on Derangements and Derangement traits, see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 266**.

Deny

The world we see and experience is not a real world. The truths we know and trust are not real truths. These are only shadows, nothing more than reflections of something deeper, which lies beyond. With this power, you can prove the truth of Plato's old adage, and deny the collective assumptions of the world.

System:

Spend 3 Blood and use your simple action to Deny the existence of an inanimate object. This power cannot be used to deny the existence of living creatures, undead, or spirits; it works only on inanimate objects. You are consciously aware that, to the weak-minded, the object you've denied still exists, but for you, it is nothing more than a semi-transparent, obviously false reflection of reality. The object you've denied cannot obscure your sight, block your movement, touch, or harm you in any way.

A user of Deny can step through a locked door that she "doesn't see," as if it is an archway, and a sword that she refuses to acknowledge fails to cut her, passing right through her body. The Dementation wielder can Deny any object within her line of sight, but she can only extend her denial to objects she is touching. For example, the Dementation user can swing a fire ax through a door that she has denied and strike the opponent on the other side, but if she fires a pistol through the denied wall, the bullets hit the wall as usual.

You can Deny any object up to the size of a small house. It is possible to Deny multiple objects at the same time, but you must spend 3 Blood and a simple action for each object. Deny lasts for one hour, or until you spend a simple action to end its effects.

Elder Dominate

Mass Manipulation

All thought is one. All minds are one. Reach into the cosmos and feel the stir of sentience. With but a modicum of pressure, you can sway the eternal mind, manipulating a group of individuals as though they shared a single consciousness. A vampire who uses the power of Mass Manipulation reaches into the universal consciousness, spreading her control wide and affecting multiple targets with a single application of Dominate.

System:

Your Dominate powers can affect a number of additional targets equal to your current Willpower. All of your intended targets must be paying attention to you, as per the rules of Gaze and Focus.

Mass Manipulation cannot be used in conjunction with Possession (you cannot possess multiple people at the same time). Mass Manipulation can augment other elder Dominate powers, but it cannot be used in conjunction with Dominate-based techniques.

When extending a Dominate power to multiple characters, you must extend the exact same effect to each target. If the use of that Dominate power cannot apply to one of the targets, then that target is unaffected by the Dominate power. For example, if you use Tyrant's Gaze to strip Telepathy from multiple targets, an individual who does not have Telepathy is unaffected by this use of the power.

When targeting multiple characters with this power, you must make a separate opposed challenge against each of the defenders. Should you spend a point of Willpower to retest any of these opposed challenges, you also gain that retest for the remainder of the opposed challenges without spending further Willpower. If you spend the Willpower to retest after some challenges have been resolved, you cannot go back to previous challenges you've lost and apply that Willpower retest retroactively.

Tyrant's Gaze

By their nature, vampires are tyrants, eager to control power and authority — and wield it over others. You channel this urge into your Dominate, reinforcing your will over theirs even to the point of afflicting the powers inherent in another individual's blood.

System:

To utilize Tyrant's Gaze, spend 1 Blood, expend your standard action, and make an opposed challenge against your target, using the Dominate test pool. If you succeed, you can select one of the target's powers. This power becomes locked away in the victim's blood and cannot be accessed or used for the next hour. If the power is already active, it immediately ends, even if that power would otherwise be automatic or always active. Tyrant's Gaze can be used multiple times in order to rob a target of more than one power, so long as you pay this power's cost separately for each use. If you choose to strip a power the victim does not possess, Tyrant's Gaze has no effect.

When you declare that you are stripping a target's supernatural speed, endurance, or strength (Celerity, Fortitude, or Potence) you remove the target's highest-level power in the targeted discipline (including elder powers). If the target has more than one elder power, you choose which one is lost.

Tyrant's Gaze can be used to lock down a discipline power, elder power, technique, or ritual. It can even strip a power native to another creature type, such as werewolves, fae, or mages. In order to strip a power in this fashion, you don't need to know the power's name, but you must be aware of the power or have personally seen it used.

You do not need to speak to use Tyrant's Gaze, but you must have your target's focus (see Gaze and Focus, **page 113**). The victim of this power immediately identifies the individual who has affected her with Tyrant's Gaze, and she is also aware which power she has lost.

Elder Fortitude

Personal Armor

Your skin is as hard as iron, and your body as tough as nails. Weapons snap and break against you, shattering from the force with which they are wielded. Vampires who master this elder power are like titans, nearly unstoppable and difficult to harm.

System:

To activate Personal Armor, you must spend 2 Blood and expend a simple action. For the next hour, any time you are hit with a melee weapon or any other inanimate object, the object breaks against your flesh and becomes useless. Weapons that are destroyed by Personal Armor inflict damage before they break, but cannot pierce your heart; thus, Personal Armor effectively prevents you from being staked.

If you are struck with a Brawl attack, some of the force of that attack reflects back on your attacker. The individual who hits you in such a manner assigns her normal damage to you, and then takes damage equal to half of the damage she assigns (round up). Thereafter, you may choose to reduce the damage you took from the blow by using powers such as Fortitude. Reducing your damage in this manner does not in any way reduce the damage your attacker takes; her total is determined by the amount assigned by her attack before you reduce it.

Ranged attacks and attacks that do not actually strike your flesh, such as the Potence power, Flick, are unaffected by Personal Armor, except for wooden projectiles, which will still shatter before they can pierce your heart.

Repair the Undead Flesh

A character with this power has mastery over the blood, bone, and flesh of her physical form, and she can command them to perform great feats of healing beyond the ability of normal vampires. She can summon forth her blood with an incredible effectiveness, sealing even the most grievous of wounds.

System:

You can spend 2 Blood to instantly heal 1 point of aggravated damage. This power functions like normal healing and doesn't require the expenditure of an action to perform.

Elder Melpominee

Shattering Crescendo

Your song is part of the mystical music of the spheres, echoing through the cosmos with incredible intensity.

System:

When you invoke the power Death of the Drum, you may choose to inflict an additional point of damage to a single target, or instead, to affect up to three targets of your choice.

When targeting multiple enemies with this power, you must make a separate opposed challenge against each of the defenders. Should you spend a point of Willpower to retest any of these opposed challenges, you also gain that retest for the remainder of the opposed challenges, without spending further Willpower. If you spend Willpower to retest after some challenges have been resolved, you cannot go back to previous challenges you've lost and apply that Willpower retest retroactively.

Persistent Echo

Adept performers know that the lingering echoes of a song can be as powerful as the music itself, softly repeating in a listener's mind. With the power of a persistent echo, you can leave your song in absentia, waiting to be brought to life once more.

System:

When you activate Phantom Speaker, Madrigal, or Death of the Drum, you may choose to have the effects of that power delayed, hanging silently in the air at your current location, until triggered at a later time. You must be physically present in the location in which you wish to place your Persistent Echo at the time you activate this power, but you do not need to be present when the Persistent Echo triggers.

First, you must meet all requirements of the power you wish to invoke. Then, inform the Storyteller of the specifics that will cause this power to activate at the location where you are currently present. Examples of triggers might include, "When someone other than myself comes through this door," or "When the sun sets three days from today." This power remains suspended via Persistent Echo for a number of nights equal to your dots in Performance: Singing or until it is triggered.

You cannot have more than one application of Persistent Echo in effect at any time. Creating a second Persistent Echo erases the first.

Elder Mytherceria

Steal the Mind

Steal the Mind is an invasive power, plumbing the depths of a subject's psyche to plunder her very sentience for your own benefit. This theft is temporary, but while you have possession of your subject's mind, she is little more than a husk.

System:

To steal a victim's mind, spend 2 Blood, expend a standard action, and initiate an opposed challenge with your target, using the Mytherceria test pool. If you succeed, your target's mental acuity is transferred to you. She becomes dull and slow-witted, and may even fall into a coma (if mortal).

While you are in possession of your victim's mind, you gain a +3 to your Mental attribute, and your target suffers a -3 to her Mental attribute. If this penalty places your subject at 0 points in her Mental attribute, she falls into torpor (or a coma, if mortal). When used on a Stock NPC, this power always drops the NPC into torpor (or a coma), and provides a bonus to your Mental attribute equal to +3 or the Stock NPC's level, whichever is lower.

An individual cannot be under the effects of more than one use of Steal the Mind at any time. The bonuses gained from Steal the Mind do not stack. You cannot use this power on two different characters in order to gain a +6 bonus to your Mental attribute.

The effects of Steal the Mind fade after five minutes, although you can extend the duration for an additional five minutes by spending 2 additional Blood while the power is active. Extending the duration in this manner doesn't require another test. After the effects of this power fade, torpid or comatose characters quickly awaken.

Creatures that are not sentient, such as zombies, or are not human, such as animals, constructs, or elementals, are immune Steal the Mind.

Elder Obeah

Unburden the Bestial Soul

Legend says that vampires are cursed by Caine's sins, their souls blackened by the very nature of the Embrace. With this power, elders can alleviate the urges and ravages of the Beast, offering a vampire's soul an evening of rare and blessed peace. However, such forgiveness comes at the cost of a certain amount of free will.

System:

Spend 3 Blood, touch a willing target, and concentrate for one minute to remove all of that target's Beast traits. After being consecrated in this manner, your target is incapable of taking any action that would cause her to gain Beast traits for the remainder of the evening. If your target attempts an activity that the Storyteller believes might lead to a Beast trait, the character loses her action without performing the activity.

Elder Obfuscate

Cache

Shielding objects and individuals from the attention of others is one thing, but maintaining such control from afar requires the mastery of an elder. With this power, your ability reaches far beyond your immediate location, offering even greater protection to those you conceal.

System:

When you use Cloak the Gathering to hide another individual, the power lasts until dawn, regardless of how far away the target travels from your location. When you use Conceal to hide an object, you can hide anything smaller than a large car. Again, this invisibility persists until dawn, even if the object is not on your person.

The invisibility granted by this power will still fail if your target takes an action that would ordinarily break Obfuscate.

Phantom Hunter

Legends tell of hunters who stalk the night, striking from nowhere and remaining unseen, like an invisible wind. These tales only serve to remind vampires that they are never safe; their every move is watched, and silence often precedes the storm.

System:

When an event happens that would normally end your Unseen Presence, you can spend 3 Blood to activate Phantom Hunter. For the next three seconds, you can continue to take actions that would ordinarily break your Unseen Presence, without becoming visible.

If you utilize Phantom Hunter during combat, the protection it grants continues only for the duration of one everyman round. For the remainder of that everyman round, you can attack, be attacked, speak out loud, and interact with your environment without becoming visible. However, if you are still interacting with your environment or with another character at the end of the everyman round, you then become visible. If you are no longer engaged in an action that would break your Unseen Presence at the end of the everyman round, your Unseen Presence remains active.

Phantom Hunter can be activated at any time, even before your turn in the initiative order. For example, if you are struck before your initiative, you can activate Phantom Hunter at that moment.

If you attack someone while you are under the effects of Phantom Hunter, the victim catches a brief glimpse of you during the attack and can retaliate on her next initiative. Other characters do not see you and cannot target you with an attack, unless they have the ability to pierce your Unseen Presence, such as by using Auspex or similar powers.

Example:

Bolviar has concealed himself with Unseen Presence and sees his rival, Theodoro. He approaches Theodoro and uses a standard action to punch him, saving his simple action for use later in the round. When he attacks, Bolviar spends 3 Blood to activate Phantom Hunter, so that the attack will not break his Unseen Presence.

Theodoro catches a brief glimpse of Bolviar during the attack, but to other observers, it appears as though Theodoro was struck by an invisible force. When Theodoro's initiative comes up in that first everyman round, Theodoro exercises his option to attack Bolivar, and succeeds in grappling him. Because the everyman round has not yet ended, Phantom Hunter is still active. The Grapple does not break Bolviar's Unseen Presence.

After being grappled, Bolivar expends the simple action he's been saving, attempting to escape Theodoro's Grapple. If Bolivar succeeds in breaking out of the Grapple, he will remain invisible. If he fails to escape the Grapple, he will still be interacting with another character when the everyman round ends. If this happens, Phantom Hunter's effects will end, and Bolivar's Unseen Presence will then fail.

Elder Obtenebration

Shadowstep

Your attunement with shadows is so great that you can do more than draw the Abyss into this world; you can actually travel in the other direction, into the Abyss. This power allows you to travel short distances, stepping into one shadow and emerging from another.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend your standard action to step into one shadow and exit from another, teleporting up to 50 steps in any direction.

To use Shadowstep, you must step into a patch of natural darkness, one not created by Shroud of Night or currently affected by Obtenebration powers. You immediately exit from another natural shadow within your line of sight, as though it were your next step. Shadowstep cannot be used in brightly lit areas and cannot be used if you are grappled.

You can bring another individual with you, so long as you hold her in a firm grip. To do so, you must spend 2 additional Blood, 3 Blood total, to Shadowstep and bring the subject along. If the subject is unwilling, you must Grapple the target before using Shadowstep in this manner.

It is not possible to take more than one additional character with you when using Shadowstep; you also cannot bring items that you cannot carry easily.

Shadow Twin

You summon a sliver of the primal sentience of the Abyss into your own shadow. Forever after, it is your dark servitor, capable of obeying your commands and performing complex tasks. When you require its assistance, the shadow always answers and comes to your aid.

System:

When you learn Shadow Twin, your shadow becomes infused with the power of the Abyss and gains a semblance of life. Your shadow is attuned to your will and can follow your mental commands. You do not need to speak aloud to issue commands, although you must be within line of sight to do so. Your shadow moves, performs simple actions, or attacks as you direct.

Your shadow possesses all of your skills and has a Physical, Mental, and Social attribute equal to one-half of each of your attribute ratings (round up). It can manipulate physical objects, lifting items or carrying objects weighing up to one pound for each dot of the Occult skill you possess. Note that your Shadow Twin cannot wield a weapon in combat unless you are wielding a melee weapon, in which case it holds a shadowy version of that same melee weapon, which provides all the same bonuses and drawbacks as the original. Weapons held by your Shadow Twin cannot have the Flaming quality; the shadow simply refuses to use such weapons.

Your shadow is immune to Physical harm, but can be affected by Mental and Social powers. It can detach itself from you, in which case you have no shadow until it returns. A Shadow Twin can seep through cracks, move along solid surfaces, and ooze through small holes in a manner exactly like that described by Tenebrous Form. It can use each of the first 2 dots of Obtenebration once per hour, without cost, and you can see through your shadow's Obtenebration effects as though you had created them. Your shadow does not have access to any other powers.

A Shadow Twin is dispelled if exposed to bright light, fire, or sunlight. If exposed to bright light, your shadow returns one minute after the light fades, or you leave the brightly lit area. If damaged by fire or exposed to sunlight, your Shadow Twin cannot return until 10 minutes have passed.

If you and your shadow are separated, you can summon it by spending 1 Blood and expending a simple action, which causes your shadow to dissipate in its current location and return to your side as a normal shadow. You can then choose to reawaken it with another activation of this power.

When your Shadow Twin is not active, it behaves like a normal shadow and cannot be attacked or dispelled. If you command your shadow into action, it can be attacked or dispelled as described above.

Elder Potence

Force

Your strength is near-miraculous, and you can shake the foundations of buildings or topple barricades with the application of your physical power. You strike with incredible gravity, causing shock waves that can shatter a target's bones or burst her organs.

System:

When you succeed making a Brawl attack, your character automatically inflicts 4 points of damage. This includes the extra damage granted by Intensity and Puissance. Note that Vigor still adds an additional point of damage, but when you achieve an exceptional success. Force cannot be used in conjunction with weapons. Any weapon wielded with the power of Force shatters before it can inflict damage. When wielding weapons, characters who possess Force may hold back, inflicting 3 points of damage instead of 4, in order to avoid breaking their weapons.

If you strike a mortal or partially supernatural creature with Force, the target dies instantly. Her body suffers too much trauma; her internal organs burst and her bones twist and splinter like toothpicks from a single blow.

A character with Force can break any inanimate object by focusing her strength on it. Most objects shatter with a single blow, but your Storyteller may require multiple actions for a character to bend or batter exceptionally tough or thick substances. It may take a while to pound through a 10-foot-thick concrete wall, but with Force, destruction is only a matter of time.

Normal Success: Your character inflicts 4 points of damage at this level.

Exceptional Success: Your character inflicts 6 points of damage, rather than 4 points of damage. This reflects the bonus from Vigor.

Flick

Your strength surpasses the physical barrier, radiating from your spirit in a wave of tangible energy. You can target the pure kinetic force of your blows outside of your corporeal reach.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and a standard action to make a ranged Flick attack against your target. This attack receives a +3 bonus and is considered to be a Brawl attack despite any distance between your character and her target. Other Potence powers, including both elder powers and Potence-based techniques, can be used to modify a Flick attack, just like a standard Brawl attack. You cannot use other powers with Flick; it can only be augmented by Potence powers. You cannot use weapons of any sort while using Flick.

To use Flick, you must be able to see your target, and you must make a noticeable physical gesture in her direction, such as a pantomimed martial-arts blow, a backhanded swipe, or boxer's punch.

You can use Flick during Celerity rounds, so long as you pay the 1-point Blood cost for each Flick attack. Damage from Flick is always normal damage and cannot be converted to aggravated damage by any means.

Elder Presence

Paralyzing Glance

Although your stare cannot kill, it can certainly shake a foe to her core. You can summon the unrelenting predatory nature of your Beast, focusing it into a single fleeting look. Those targeted by this stare become prey before you, too terrified even to run away.

System:

To activate Paralyzing Glance, you must spend 2 Blood, expend your standard action to stare intently at your target, and make an opposed challenge against your opponent, using the Presence test pool. If you succeed, your target becomes utterly frozen and abjectly terrified. She is unable to move, speak, flee, or take any other actions.

Your target remains paralyzed so long as you continue to expend a simple action each round to maintain your focus, although you do not need to continue looking at your target. This paralysis continues until you leave the target's presence, until she is the target of an attack, or until she takes damage. If the paralysis breaks for any reason, the victim suffers the effects of Dread Gaze, and must flee your presence immediately. For the rest of the evening, the target will avoid you, acting as if you'd achieved an exceptional success with Dread Gaze.

Love

Vampiric blood holds many powers, from the command of mental facilities to the might of pure strength or speed. But many elders argue that the ability to sway emotions through the chains of the blood bond are the most effective and insidious power of all. Certainly, those who can evoke the obsession of blood-bound love without actually forcing another to drink their blood have an advantage in vampiric culture — a terrible, frightening advantage. Those who fall under the effects of such a creature's power will move heaven and earth, betray friend and ally, and even sacrifice themselves, all on behalf of their beloved.

Love is a dangerous thing, as it completely alters its subject's emotions and personality toward the enthralling vampire. Such a victim is suddenly affected by a stage three blood bond for the next hour.

Once Love wears off, the subject attempts to rationalize the actions she took while under the sway of this discipline. However, unlike Entrancement, a user of this power can persuade her target to do dangerous and atypical things. If, while affected by Love, the target engaged in particularly abnormal activities or acted against her ethics or beliefs, she will almost certainly realize her emotions were forcibly manipulated.

For more information on blood bonds, refer to **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 295**.

System:

To activate Love, spend 3 Blood, expend your standard action, and make an opposed Social challenge against your opponent, using the Presence test pool. If you succeed, your target is suddenly affected by a stage three blood bond toward you for the next hour.

If you use this power on the same target twice in one evening, reduce the duration of the second application of Love in half, so that it lasts for 30 minutes. This penalty is cumulative. The second time you use Love on one target, the duration is a half hour; the third time you use Love on that target in the same evening, the duration becomes 15 minutes; and so forth.

Elder Protean

Earth Control

By using this power, an elder is no longer constrained to merely slumber beneath the ground. Once melded with the soil, she can move through the earth, changing her location as easily as walking down a windy street.

System:

While using the power of Earth Meld, you can move underground at normal speeds. You cannot pass through any substance with which you cannot meld, such as rock, water, concrete, or a thick tangle of roots, but you can physically interact with and even attack anything you find underground — including other individuals using Earth Meld. Earth-melded characters cannot fight back unless they also possess Earth Control.

Characters using Earth Control are aware of the underground landscape within 10 steps of their location, but cannot normally perceive the surface. For this reason, long-distance navigation with Earth Control is problematic for most users, but Perception-focused characters can perceive their surroundings while within the earth and generally have no trouble navigating while underground.

You cannot dig or otherwise physically force an individual using Earth Control to leave the shelter of the ground, unless you have some method of determining her current location.

Shape Mastery

The Beast within your blood is so fierce that it cows others, forcing their inner rage to retreat from the onslaught of your primitive dominance. With but a gesture, roar, or other primal show of superiority, you can cause someone else's Beast to draw back and her physical form to revert to its normal state.

System:

Spend 3 Blood, expend your standard action, roleplay a show of dominance (a roar, a vicious glare, or other predatory gesture) toward your target, and make an opposed challenge using your Social attribute + Survival versus the target's Social attribute + Willpower. If successful, you force your target to immediately return to her natural form. Further, she cannot change shape for the next hour.

Shape Mastery reverses the effects of a transformative power, such as Shape of the Beast, Black Metamorphosis, or Horrid Form. It cannot effect powers that alter only a small portion of the body, such as Feral Claws, or powers that alter the body but are not transformative, such as Earth Meld.

Elder Quietus

Blood Sweat

By concentrating on a victim, this power's user causes the blood in that individual's body to suffer a transmutation, becoming poisonous to her own internal systems. The victim's body rejects such bile, swiftly expelling it through her sweat glands and pores.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge using the Quietus test pool. If you succeed, the target begins sweating blood. Mortals affected by Blood Sweat lose 2 Blood each turn for the next three turns, and they take 2 points of normal damage for each point of Blood lost.

Vampires affected by Blood Sweat lose 2 Blood each turn for the next three turns, but do not suffer damage from this blood loss. Multiple applications of Blood Sweat do not stack.

Baal's Bloody Talons

Those who truly master the alchemical proficiency of their blood can grant it incredible capacity to cause harm. Their blood becomes a potent ichor, poisoning flesh with the lightest touch and causing the victim incredible, boiling pain.

System:

In addition to the standard effects of Baal's Caress, your applications of this power give a weapon a +2 bonus to Melee test pools. Further, this weapon inflicts an additional point of aggravated damage when it hits successfully. Baal's Bloody Talons cannot be combined with Taste of Death.

Elder Serpentis

Seed of Corruption

With only a few moments of discussion, you can plant subtle ideas of defiance and vice within a target's subconscious, tempting someone into committing evil actions. If left unchecked, this inner turmoil can corrode the victim's morals and bring suppressed impulses to the surface, causing her to act on her darkest desires.

System:

Spend 2 Blood, speak with your target for at least three full turns, and make an opposed challenge using your Serpentis test pool. If successful, you cause your target's darker nature to surface. Seed of Corruption brings out the victim's hidden desires, repressed fears, bottled anger, and suppressed

temptations. The individual should roleplay a darker, more flexible moral attitude, taking advantage of any opportunity to play out her character's wicked impulses.

For the rest of the evening, the target gains Beast traits any time she restrains this darker nature. If the target voluntarily ignores an opportunity to take advantage of another person's suffering or to indulge in wickedness or vice, she gains 1 Beast trait. A character also gains Beast traits as normal if she sins against her standard Morality, which remains in effect during Seed of Corruption's duration. In cases where this causes internal conflicts, Seed of Corruption overcomes a character's moral stance.

Divine Image

Egyptian gods possessed great beauty, appearing human when they wished to impress or be adored by their worshippers, and transforming into beast-headed forms when they wanted to invoke fear or show their immortal heritage. So, too, can an elder with this power invoke love or terror by allowing the glory of divine inspiration to reflect upon her countenance.

System:

By spending 3 Blood and using your standard action, you invoke a change in your appearance that is visible to all. When you activate Divine Image, you must choose to personify a benevolent or a malevolent countenance, and you receive benefits according to that choice:

- ***Benevolent:*** A benevolent countenance is extraordinarily beautiful, lending unnatural grace and poise as well as raw physical attractiveness. This form may appear utterly human, or it may show signs of divine manifestation, such as wings, feathered hair, small, opalescent scales, or some other appropriate physical manifestation of mythological "good," but it always has a faint, golden glow. Mortals react with awe and reverence when dealing with a character using this countenance, and even supernatural creatures feel a desire to please this individual. A character displaying this countenance receives a +2 bonus to all Social test pools used for mundane challenges, or Social test pools involving powers, such as Entrancement or Eyes of the Serpent, which rely on emotions like sexual attraction, affection, or persuasion.
- ***Malevolent:*** Typically, when an elder Setite invokes a malevolent countenance, her head transforms into that of an appropriate beast – a jackal, hawk, or other such totem – and her body radiates a dark, golden aura. Characters with other beliefs may show alternate signs of this countenance, such as demonic horns, red skin, an oni's fangs, or some other appropriate physical manifestation of mythological "evil," but it always has a dark, flame-like radiance. Mortals react with abject terror and submission when dealing with a character using this countenance, and even supernatural creatures feel afraid of incurring the character's wrath. A character displaying this countenance receives a +2 bonus to Social test pools used for mundane challenges, or Social test pools involving powers, such as Dread Gaze or Majesty, which rely emotions like intimidation, fear, or subservience.

Once a character invokes Divine Image and chooses her form, she must invoke the power again and meet all of its requirements a second time in order to alter her countenance to the opposing manifestation.

Divine Image is a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers. Divine Image's transformation is close enough to human to allow you to use weapons. Divine Image lasts for 10 minutes.

Elder Temporis

Kiss of Lachesis

At this level of Temporis mastery, you have the ability to affect the passage of time on physical objects and individuals, causing such things to wither and decay. The effects of age ravage the subject as though decades had passed within a single breath.

System:

Spend 2 Blood and expend your standard action to cause a target to age (or become younger) in the blink of an eye. If you target an individual, or an object controlled by another individual, you must also defeat your target in an opposed challenge using the Temporis test pool.

A successful use of Kiss of Lachesis allows you to increase or reduce your target's age by any amount up to 100 years. Causing a living target to age the full 100 years will kill a mortal instantly and deals 2 points of normal damage, which cannot be reduced or negated, to supernatural targets, through withering and general decay. Kiss of Lachesis deals no significant damage to objects unless you wish to do so; if you choose to deal damage to an object, any normal item will crumble to dust.

Objects decreased in age in this manner cannot return to an earlier or incomplete state. A silver coin may lose its tarnish and seem newly minted, but it will not revert to an unformed block of metal. Likewise, while an adult's body may revert to the age of a child, her mental faculties, memories, and experiences are not affected. An amputee reverted to an age prior to the injury will not regenerate her missing arm, nor will a broken sword become anything but newer-looking shards. Sentient

beings retain all memories and any derangements. A vampire's earliest regression point is her Embrace; a vampire regressed to the point of her Embrace remains a vampire, not an inanimate corpse — the regressed vampire retains all disciplines and keeps any changes in Generation due to diablerie.

Elder Thanatosis

Corrupt the Flesh

You have become a true master of the powers of rot and decay. Through the use of Corrupt the Flesh, you can infect a subject with a wasting disease that dissolves her internal organs.

System:

Spend 3 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge using the Thanatosis test pool. If you succeed, you infect your target with a corrupting disease. Mortal targets infected with Corrupt the Flesh die instantly as their skin erupts into boils and their internal organs liquefy. A supernatural creature suffers a -3 penalty to her Physical attribute for the next hour, and she loses her Physical attribute focus. The effects of Corrupt the Flesh last for an hour.

Elder Valeren

Fiery Agony

A Valeren user's spiritual weaponry is powerful and incredibly intense when used by those who have mastered its elder powers. Through the use of Fiery Agony, you can expend the power of your chi to inflict pain upon anyone you can see, so long as you have touched your victim within the last hour.

System:

Use your simple action, and spend 1 Blood to activate this power. If you have touched your target within the last hour, you do not need physical contact to use Burning Touch, so long as the target is within line of sight. Any sort of touch allows the use of Fiery Agony, including the use of a Brawl attack, being hit by an opponent's Brawl attack, a handshake, or brushing up against someone in a crowded room. If you lose sight of your target at any point, you must touch her again before using Fiery Agony.

A victim of Fiery Agony instinctively knows who is responsible for her torment.

Elder Vicissitude

Breath of the Dragon

With this power, you shape your inner organs into an organic, supernatural furnace. Like the dragons of ancient tales, you roar a gout of flame upon your enemies, incinerating everything in a small radius.

System:

Spend 2 Blood and expend your standard action to breathe fire on your opponents. Breath of the Dragon can target up to three characters standing within three steps of each other. All targets must be within six steps of you.

To attack with Breath of the Dragon, use your Physical attribute + Athletics versus the target's Physical attribute + Dodge. If you succeed, this power inflicts 4 points of fire damage. Fire causes aggravated damage to vampires. Breath of the Dragon can be used during Celerity rounds, but you must pay the cost for each attack.

When targeting multiple enemies with this power, you must make a separate opposed challenge against each of the defenders. Should you spend a point of Willpower to retest any of these opposed challenges, you also gain that retest for the remainder of the opposed challenges, without spending further Willpower. If you spend Willpower to retest after some challenges are resolved, you cannot go back to previous challenges you've lost and apply that Willpower retest retroactively.

Exceptional Success:

Breath of the Dragon does 5 points of fire damage to your targets, rather than 4.

Acid Blood

Those who master the powers of Vicissitude can transform their bodies beyond human capacity, shaping their own flesh and blood into a thing of supernatural beauty or cruel mockery. With this power, the vampire's skill with Vicissitude has become so adept that her very blood can defend against those who would defile her.

System:

Once you purchase this power, your character's blood permanently becomes a potent acid. This condition does not harm your character, but will injure others who come into contact with her vitae.

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Anyone who drinks your blood immediately takes 3 points of aggravated damage per point of Blood ingested. This damage cannot be reduced or negated. Anyone who attempts to diablerize you, even if you have no points of Blood left in your Blood pool, must make a challenge using her Physical attribute + Survival versus your Physical attribute + Occult. If the diablerist succeeds in this challenge, she takes 5 points of aggravated damage and successfully diablerizes you. If the diablerist fails this challenge, she is immediately destroyed as your heart's blood dissolves her from the inside out. You remain intact.

Because anyone drinking your blood takes damage, Acid Blood can make it difficult (but not impossible) to Embrace new childer or maintain ghouls.

If a character with Acid Blood is using the Blood Form power, she can spend 1 Blood per turn to do 3 points of aggravated damage to anything or anyone touching her. This includes anyone she has grappled; the Grapple does not cause damage, but anyone you touch is continually burned by your Acid Blood. If multiple people are touching you when you activate this effect, a single use of this power will burn up to four individuals, causing each of them 3 aggravated damage.

Note that characters who run out of Blood while in Blood Form immediately meet their Final Death.

Elder Visceratika

Bulwark

By grasping another and holding her close, you can shelter her within the stone bulk of your embrace. In this manner, ancient Gargoyle slaves once protected their Tremere masters; today, this power is more often used against the warlocks rather than on their behalf.

System:

To use Bulwark, you must first succeed in using the Grapple combat maneuver on your target. Remember that willing targets may relent, obviating the need to spend Willpower to perform a combat maneuver. Once you have established a Grapple, you can spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to activate Bulwark.

While within your embrace, your target is protected from all Physical attacks, and cannot physically attack others. Any Physical attacks directed at the individual protected by Bulwark target you instead. Protected individuals can be targeted by Mental and Social attacks that do not require touch. A protected individual can utilize Mental and Social attacks herself, so long as those attacks do not require her to touch her opponent or utilize gestures. Bulwark ends if the target escapes your Grapple or if you let her go. Additionally, Bulwark ends if you have one or more points marked off in your Incapacitated wound track.

Furnace of Steel

Your capacity to twist stone and shape metal has reached a point where you can do so without using direct physical touch. With a gesture or a roar, you can cause guns to melt, car axles to bend, or any other metal in your presence to lose cohesion.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to target a single metal or stone object within your line of sight that is no larger than 10 cubic feet in size. The target object warps and permanently loses its integrity, as if exposed to extreme heat. Weapons melt and become useless when targeted by this power, and you can easily destroy vehicles and buildings. Even if the item is within someone else's control, so long as you can see the item, you can target it with Furnace of Steel, without making a test.

Techniques

"You like latin, old man? How's this for latin: Quid pro quo."

— Smiling Jack

Techniques aren't disciplines; each technique is a learned methodology that integrates the use of two or more disciplines at once in order to create a unique effect. Such twisting of the blood is very difficult for vampires with great potency, as their blood is too thick for this sort of mongrel cogency. Elders have static blood, are resistant to change, and are unable to adapt to the swift mutations necessary to entwine two powers in such a way. These powers are the province of vampires who possess thinner, more transmutable vitae. Individuals of the 8th generation and below can cause their blood to vacillate between powers they have mastered, twisting those effects into a combination of those powers.

Vampires can purchase techniques without a teacher, even if one or more of the prerequisites include out-of-clan disciplines for that character. The character simply needs to already possess the prerequisites for the specific technique she wishes to learn.

Techniques cost 12 XP for Neonate and Ancilla vampires. Vampires of the 8th generation must spend 20 XP per technique, rather than the standard 12. Luminary and Master Elders cannot purchase techniques at all.

Techniques have no attribute focuses and typically do not gain magnified results if you achieve an exceptional success.

An Da Shealladh

Prerequisites: Dementation ••• and Auspex ••

To some, the second sight is a blessing. To others, it is a curse. Knowing someone deeply can provide a tremendous advantage. Malkavians who learn this power often use it to learn the best ways to prank another individual by playing on her hopes and fears.

System:

The power known as An Da Shealladh (pronounced an-DAH-she-alla) was created by a branch of the Malkavian clan that lived in the Scottish highlands. By combining the powers of Eyes of Chaos and Aura Perception, you can unravel a host of information about your target. Spend 1 Blood, use your standard action, and make an opposed challenge using the Dementation test pool. If you succeed, you learn your target's Archetype, derangements, current number of Beast traits, and number of current Willpower.

Animal Succulence

Prerequisites: Animalism •• and Fortitude •

A true predator knows how to make a quick, clean kill and how to utilize every portion of her prey's vitality. You are such a vampire, and because of this ability, animal blood refreshes you as though it were human vitae.

System:

You draw additional energy from animal blood, more than other vampires retain from such prey. When feeding from animals, the potency of the blood you draw is not reduced. You do not need to spend a downtime action to feed, so long as you feed on animal blood.

Animal Swarm

Prerequisites: Protean •••• and Celerity ••

Within the one, there are many. Our consciousness moves in all things, and as a swarm of beasts instinctively knows the will of its leader, so too can you divide your flesh and incarnate into many creatures at once — each unified by your mind.

System:

When you activate Shape of the Beast, you may choose to turn into a swarm of animals instead of one larger creature. You transform into the same animal you would normally become by using Shape of the Beast. If your Shape of the Beast allows you to turn into a bat, you can turn into several bats at the same time by using Animal Swarm.

This swarm consists of one animal for each dot of Celerity you possess. Elder powers and Celerity-based techniques do not increase the number of animals created by Animal Swarm. Each animal can act independently and can take one simple and one standard action each turn. When you activate Animal Swarm, all of your Mental and Social powers end. You cannot spend Blood or use Mental or Social powers while in Animal Swarm.

Each of the animals in your Animal Swarm has your Mental attribute, Social attribute, and skills. While swarming in your flight form, each of the animals gains a +1 bonus to Dodge-based defensive test pools, and they can fly at your normal movement speed. In flight form, your Physical attribute is considered 1, when you are attacking.

While swarming in your fight form, and when you are not attacking, each of your animals has a Physical attribute equal to half of your own Physical attribute (round up). These animals inflict your normal damage, and your Potence can augment their attacks. Animals created by this power have the same attribute focuses as the character who created them, and they possess 5 health levels. If your animals attempt to retest in combat, each animal must spend Willpower separately; they use your Willpower pool to do so.

Animals created by Animal Swarm can separate and perform separate tasks, but must remain within one mile of each other. You can use a simple action to return to your human form at the location of any animal created by this power. When you revert to human form, you automatically reabsorb any of your animals that are within your line of sight. Animals not within your line of sight crumble at the same moment, turning into ash. When Animal Swarm ends, you lose 2 Blood for each animal that you were unable to reabsorb, including animals destroyed in combat and animals destroyed because they were not within your line of sight when you reformed.

Animals created by this power are considered to be one entity for the purpose of powers that modify an individual's behavior. If one animal is Dominated, all of the animals in the swarm suffer the effects of that power. If one animal cannot break an individual's Majesty, none of the animals in the swarm can attack that individual.

Armor of Darkness

Prerequisites: Obtenebration ••• and Fortitude ••

By blending the disciplines of Obtenebration and Fortitude, a vampire can toughen her flesh into a rime of shadow, cloaking and merging her skin with the stuff of the Abyss. This creates a dark, ever-murmuring mantle of chill nightfall, shielding her from both the sun's rays and the bane of fire.

System:

Armor of Darkness does not require an action to activate or maintain, but can only be activated on your initiative. Spend 1 Blood to sheath yourself in darkness so potent that even sunlight cannot dispel it easily. Unlike most Obtenebration powers, Armor of Darkness is not automatically disintegrated by sunlight; it is supported by the denseness of Fortitude in order to form a more lasting protection. Armor of Darkness lasts for one turn without further expenditures, but you can extend its effects by spending 1 Blood per turn.

While Armor of Darkness persists, you are immune to damage caused by sunlight. You also reduce aggravated damage caused by fire or incendiary weapons to normal damage instead.

Banshee's Wail

Prerequisites: Melpominee ••• and Dementation ••••

Banshees keen at the death of important personages, howling out their sorrow as a warning of impending death. Those who possess this power can tell when a loved one is injured and can lash out at murderers from afar.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action to mark a willing target with your Banshee's Wail. The next time your target suffers damage, this power activates, and the individual who caused damage to your target is affected by Voice of Madness as though you had used that power. If you succeed in your Voice of Madness challenge, that target gains a fear-based derangement with the original target of Banshee's Wail as the trigger. If Banshee's Wail is not triggered before sunrise, it fades away. You cannot have more than one application of this power in effect at any one time.

Blind the Sun

Prerequisites: Temporis •• and Fortitude ••

By shifting time and calling on the steadfast qualities of your physical form, you can remain awake during a portion of the day without suffering ill effects. Although you cannot leave your location, younger vampires often use this power to maintain the Masquerade, posting online, making phone calls, and otherwise making it appear as if they were mortal to an unsuspecting world.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action to activate this power. For the next eight hours, it is still considered to be night at your location, which must be a single enclosed room. While you remain in this room, you do not fall asleep due to sunrise, and you do not suffer the negative effects of being awake during the day. Other individuals who are also present in the room when you invoke the power gain the benefits of this time alteration, but individuals who enter the room after the power activated do not. When this power ends, vampires are affected as though the sun has risen.

Bull's Eye

Prerequisites: Auspex ••• and Celerity •

You can combine the powers of Auspex and Celerity to shoot a firearm with deadly accuracy.

System:

Once per turn, spend 1 Blood and target a single individual with a firearms attack. You automatically hit your target without a challenge, gaining a normal success. Effects that allow an individual to automatically avoid your attack are effective against Bull's Eye, but powers that provide defensive bonuses are not.

Alternately, once per turn, you can spend 1 Blood when you achieve a normal success on a firearms attack against a single target. That normal success becomes an exceptional success.

The two effects of Bull's Eye cannot be combined. You can use this power to automatically hit, or to turn a normal success into an exceptional success, but you cannot use both effects on the same attack. Bull's Eye can only be applied to attacks using the Firearms skill.

You cannot use Bull's Eye when using weapons that attack multiple targets, such as weapons with the Automatic or Spray qualities.

Control the Savage Beast

Prerequisites: Animalism ••• and Dominate ••

Your Beast is a dominant hunter, savage and controlling. When it becomes aware of another of its kind, it instinctively attempts to leash it, demanding its obedience.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to overpower the mind of a vampire who is frenzying near you; to a degree, you can control her actions. The target must still fight, feed, or flee as required by her particular type of frenzy, but you can decide which target your victim attacks, which mortal's blood she drinks, and in which direction she flees.

Control the Savage Beast doesn't require a challenge to activate and only works on vampires experiencing natural frenzy. Frenzies brought on by use of the Animalism discipline cannot be controlled with this power.

Death's Grip

Prerequisites: Thanatosis •• and Potence ••

Flesh rots in your grip, providing a morbid handhold. By mastering this power, you gain the ability to punish your enemies for breaking out of your holds, forcing them to leave a pound of flesh behind.

System:

When you Grapple and use a Thanatosis power on your target, you slip your fingers into the target's newly rotting flesh. If the victim breaks free of your Grapple, portions of her flesh, muscle, and bone tear away in your hand. The target takes 1 point of aggravated damage, which cannot be reduced or negated. This power has no effect if you willingly release your target.

Denial of Aphrodite's Favor

Prerequisites: Presence •• and Dominate ••

Developed by the Ventrue clan, this power is designed to defend a vampire against the very powers that clan wields. As much as Kings relentlessly manipulate others, they have a disdain for being manipulated themselves. With this power, you can protect yourself against those who would beguile you.

System:

You automatically ignore the Presence power Awe, and you gain a +3 bonus to any attempt to resist Dread Gaze or Entrancement.

Devious Feint

Prerequisites: Auspex ••• and Presence •

By subtly pushing your opponent's emotions until she reacts, you create a weakness in her defense that you discover and exploit.

System:

Instead of spending a point of Willpower to use a combat maneuver, you may choose to spend 1 Blood instead.

Echo Psychosis

Prerequisites: Dementation ••• and Presence •

Your grasp of madness allows you to see through the cracks in other people's social masks. The instant their concentration flickers, you break through the walls, grasping the moment and assaulting their psyche with the depths of your madness.

System:

Any time someone spends a point of Willpower to ignore your Awe, you can reflexively target her with Passion on the same initiative. If you have Majesty and a character attempts to break your Majesty and fails, you can immediately target her with the Haunting. To successfully use Passion and the Haunting with Echo Psychosis, you must make all of the appropriate challenges, but you are not required to spend Blood or use an action to activate those.

Fearful Blow

Prerequisites: Potence •• and Presence ••

For centuries, the mere whisper of a vampire in the area was enough to send mortals into hiding. Even in modern times, the power of fear is a potent and tangible thing. A vampire's courage and prowess in battle can be enough to strike terror into the heart of her enemies.

System:

After successfully hitting an opponent with a Brawl attack that inflicts at least 1 point of damage after the target has applied all armor and damage-reduction powers, you can spend 1 Blood to immediately use Dread Gaze on the same target. This use of Dread Gaze requires a normal opposed challenge using the Presence test pool to successfully affect your target, but its use does not require an action.

Fearful Blow cannot be used during Celerity rounds. Fearful Blow cannot be combined with other powers or merits that augment Dread Gaze.

Feast of Shadow

Prerequisites: Obtenebration •• and Potence •••

The sentience within the Abyss is ever-hungry, ever aching for something to fill the void of its existence. You can summon forth the power of the Abyss, which swirls around you, whispering and carrying the deep chill of the void. With an inhalation of breath, you draw this energy into yourself, consuming it as though it were blood.

System:

Use both your simple and standard actions to draw forth and consume the power of the Abyss as though it were blood. Feasting on the energy of the Abyss provides you with up to 10 points of Blood. Additionally, using this power raises your maximum Blood pool by 5 for the next five minutes. Blood gained from this power acts like normal points of Blood in all ways.

Consuming the Abyss takes a toll. Every time you use Feast of Shadow, you gain a Beast trait, which does not fade normally. Instead of fading when you rest during the day, a Beast trait caused by Feast of Shadow fades only after one game session or two weeks, whichever is longer. While you have Feast of Shadow Beast traits, your eyes are jet black and your essence is tainted with the energy of the Abyss. Those who look upon your aura will see a dark, brooding serpent of shadow wrapped ouroboros-like around your soul.

You can repeatedly drink from the Abyss using Feast of Shadow, but the penalties are cumulative. For example, if you use Feast of Shadow twice in one evening, you gain 2 Beast traits. One Beast trait will fade after the next game session; the second will fade after two game sessions. Feast of Shadow can never raise your maximum Blood pool by more than 5.

Only the character invoking Feast of Shadow can feed from the Abyss; you cannot share this Blood with anyone unless they feed directly from you, in which case, they are drinking your blood, not the Abyss, and gain no Abyssal taint or bonuses.

Fenrir's Boon

Prerequisites: Potence ••• and Animalism •

Like the forest gods of ancient superstition, you have the ability to grant strength and courage to those animals who look to you as their pack leader. When you fight surrounded by the creatures of the wilderness, you have a worthy advantage.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a standard action to boost the fighting prowess of nearby animals. While under the effects of this power, all of your animal Retainers and animals currently controlled by your Animalism gain a +2 bonus to Brawl test pools, and they inflict aggravated damage. These creatures must be within your line of sight to gain and keep this advantage.

Fist of Stone

Prerequisites: Visceratika ••• and Potence •••

Your punches carry the weight of boulders, knocking people and objects out of your way with the force of your directed rage.

System:

When you successfully hit an opponent with a Brawl attack, you may choose to forgo some or all of the damage you would ordinarily deal in exchange for knocking your opponent back. For each point of damage you forgo, you can knock your target up to two steps away.

Flame's Bane

Prerequisites: Daimoinon •• and Fortitude ••

Even as infernal beasts are said to exist on planes of hellfire, so too can this power's user render herself immune to the vampiric bane of fire.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to activate Flame's Bane. For the next hour, you are immune to fire damage. You take normal damage from weapons with the Flaming or Incendiary Ammunition qualities, and you do not risk frenzy from being close to fire. Derangement triggers and other effects of fire are not affected by this power.

Guardian Lion

Prerequisites: Visceratika •• and Animalism ••

By shaping the form of a creature out of stone and marking it with your blood, you cause that statue to come to life and obey your commands.

System:

By spending 1 Blood to mark a statue of a medium-sized land-bound animal (usually a lion or a dog), and expending three standard actions in concentration, you can animate a small statue and cause it to serve you. Treat this statue as a level 3 Retainer; additionally, it has the Full Body, Hardened, and Ballistic armor qualities. The statue is intelligent enough to understand complex commands, but not creative enough to extrapolate if a situation changes, nor to alter its instructions without your directive. If left without instruction, the statue will stand perfectly still, in its original pose, waiting for your command. This power ends at the next sunset, making a Guardian Lion the perfect protector for havens or other locations. You can only have one Guardian Lion in existence at any one time.

The creature created by Guardian Lion is a creature of stone, not a real animal, and cannot be targeted by Animalism.

Instinctive Command

Prerequisites: Celerity ••• and Dominate ••

You have so mastered the first power of Dominate that you use it almost instinctively, issuing orders faster than the blink of an eye.

System:

You can use the first power of Dominate, Command, as your action during Celerity rounds. This use of Command must fulfill all other requirements of the power; you must expend a standard action and speak a simple one-word command or make a gesture that the target can understand.

Instinctive Command cannot be combined with other powers or merits that augment Command.

This power is an exception to the rule preventing use of Mental actions during Celerity rounds. Note that an individual can only be targeted by a single Mental power during each round.

Ligeia's Lament

Prerequisites: Melpominee •• and Dominate ••

A properly trained voice has great power to command and to cajole, expressing deep emotion and forceful control at the same time. By combining the power of Dominate with the musical expression of Melpominee, you have mastered the ability to impart simple commands even when your target cannot be seen.

System:

You can activate the powers of Command or Mesmerism through the power of Phantom Speaker, so long as your target has her attention focused on you. In this manner, you can use these Dominate powers on someone you are speaking with over a telephone, or on someone staring at you across a crowded, noise-filled room.

Mercurial Vitality

Prerequisites: Vicissitude ••, Potence •, and Fortitude •

The body is mutable, and all flesh can change. With concentration, and by calling on your vampiric vitae, you can shift your physical structure, supplanting your bone with muscle tissue, or increasing your muscle mass by lowering your bone density.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a simple action to temporarily increase both your Potence and Fortitude by 1 dot each for the rest of the turn. Mercurial Vitality cannot be used to raise a power above the 5th dot.

Monologue

Prerequisites: Obfuscate •• and Presence •

Perhaps it is the sound of your bewitching voice, the labyrinthine wit of your spurious logic, or your sheer and unadulterated gall in the face of true danger, but you have the ability to grasp your enemy's attention and hold it like a vice. You engage your targets in conversation, preventing them from initiating an attack until you have had your full say.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and start talking to activate Monologue. Monologue lasts for one full turn for each dot of the Subterfuge skill you possess or until you stop talking. While this power is active, anyone who intended to attack you must either engage you in conversation without attacking or leave. You cannot force others to like you or divulge specific information, but they must engage in conversation as long as you continue talking, or until you reach the maximum duration allowed by your Subterfuge skill.

Once your Monologue expires, opponents can attack you normally, and you cannot activate this power again for the next hour. If you attack, use a supernatural power that targets another character, or attempt to move away from aggressors, Monologue ends immediately.

Monologue does not protect your allies. Individuals affected by Monologue do not lose the ability to attack, only the ability to target you with an attack.

Misplaced Affection

Prerequisites: Presence ••• and Obfuscate ••

It's one thing to make someone fall in love with you. It's another thing to cause them to fall in love with the idea of you — or with someone else, entirely. Such deceptions are a sign of a true artist, and only the finest courtesans and bards are capable of using their talent and skill in such a difficult task.

System:

When you successfully entrance another individual, you may choose a nearby ally to be the focus of your target's Entrancement, instead of attracting the target to yourself.

The secondary subject must be willing to be a part of this ruse. If she declines, your Misplaced Affection fails, and your target is entranced normally, with you as her focus.

The secondary subject of your Entrancement must treat the target well and follow all other requirements for a successful application of that power, or the Entrancement will break. To the target, it appears in all ways as though your secondary subject was, in fact, the individual who entranced her, and she must obey all dictates of that power.

Misleading Wounds

Prerequisites: Obfuscate ••• and Fortitude •

Those who rely on their eyes to determine their enemy's condition often find that they have sorely misjudged their prey. Battle-prowess is not solely a measure of physical capacity, but also of a cunning mind.

System:

Any time you take damage, you may choose to appear as though you have more or less Fortitude than you actually possess.

When you take damage, you may choose to appear as though you resisted some, all, or none of that damage, regardless of how much damage you actually resist. You may also choose to appear as though you've spent Blood to heal, or conversely, you can spend Blood to heal your wounds without the results being apparent. By using this power, you might spend 1 Blood to heal 1 point of damage and make it appear as if you spent 4 Blood healing 4 points of damage. Alternately, you might spend 3 Blood healing and mask the effects from mortal observers, preserving the Masquerade.

This power does not change the actual amount of damage you take or heal; Misleading Wounds only affects appearances. Characters with Auspex can attempt to pierce these powers and determine your actual wound levels, using the same system for seeing through the powers of Obfuscate. (For more information, see **Auspex versus Obfuscate, page 118**).

Nightingale's Song

Prerequisites: Mytherceria •• and Dominate ••

Our conscience stirs in dreams, causing us to murmur our guilt, pain, and darkest thoughts even as we sleep. With your knowledge of fae dreaming, and your ability to tap into Dominate's raw authority, you can bring up a person's secrets and cause her to whisper them forth, without her consent.

System:

Spend 1 Blood, expend your standard action, and make an opposed challenge using the Mytherceria test pool. If you succeed, you trigger the target's dreaming subconscious, causing her to tell you a secret — something she knows but thinks you definitely shouldn't be allowed to discover. The target may choose the specific secret, but topics which are already on her mind are most likely to spill out. You can affect the outcome by speaking to your target first, bringing up a specific topic, and then utilizing Nightingale's Song on the target while that topic is foremost on her mind. You can only use Nightingale's Song on an individual once per night.

Quickened Blood

Prerequisites: Celerity •• and Fortitude •

Your body is tougher than most, able to utilize its resources more efficiently. With a little preparation and temperance, you can encourage your body to great feats of speed without sacrificing your reserve of vitae.

System:

When you spend 1 Blood to activate your Celerity powers for two consecutive turns, Quickened Blood automatically activates. For the next five minutes, you can utilize the first 5 dots of Celerity without spending any further points of Blood.

Radiant Gaze

Prerequisites: Serpentis •• and Dominate •••

The power of your gaze is brilliant and overwhelming, triggering an instinctive desire to obey.

System:

After successfully targeting someone with Eyes of the Serpent, you can spend 1 Blood to immediately use either Forgetful Mind or Mesmerism on that same target. This use of Forgetful Mind or Mesmerism allows you to directly implant commands in your target's mind or alter her memories without speaking. This use of Dominate requires a successful opposed challenge using the Dominate test pool to affect your target, but its use does not require an action.

Reflection of Endurance

Prerequisites: Obeah ••• and Fortitude ••

Obeah and Valeren are related disciplines, like two sides of the same coin. After Saulot made his journey to the East, his clan

divided into healers and warriors — but both inherited the same radiance of spirit. That spirit can, with training, be channelled into providing a fleeting reflection of its other side.

System:

This power functions like the Valeren power Mens Sana. This combination power duplicates all costs, effects, and focuses of that power (if applicable).

Reflection of Mercy

Prerequisites: Valeren ••• and Auspex ••

Obeah and Valeren are related disciplines, like two sides of the same coin. After Saulot made his journey to the East, his clan divided into healers and warriors — but both inherited the same radiance of spirit. That spirit can, with training, be channelled into providing a fleeting reflection of its other side.

System:

This power functions like the Obeah power Corpore Sano. This combination power duplicates all costs, effects, and focuses of that power (if applicable).

Relentless Pursuit

Prerequisites: Potence •• and Celerity ••

Speed and strength are two sides of the same coin, providing a vampire a great deal of physical prowess. By combining these disciplines, a vampire can push herself to massive leaps, travelling great distances in a single bound. Use of such a power in public is a clear breach of the Masquerade.

System:

When an individual you're fighting against in hand-to-hand combat (within one step) moves away from you, spend 1 Blood and take up to 12 steps towards your target's new location. If possible, you must end your movement in melee range of your target (within one step). Relentless Pursuit does not require an action, but can only be used once per turn.

Retain the Quick Blood

Prerequisites: Quietus •• and Celerity ••

The Assamite clan created this blood-conserving technique during the original Anarch Revolt. It is a powerful tool, allowing a vampire to call upon the preternatural gifts inherent in vitae without depleting her reserves.

System:

Once per turn, when you spend Blood to activate a Quietus power, you immediately regain 1 of the Blood points spent to activate that power. Blood recouped with Retain the Quick Blood does not count toward your maximum Blood expenditure per round.

Second Wind

Prerequisites: Fortitude ••• and Potence •

Although all vampires can heal their wounds, your ability to repair damage to your flesh and bone is marvelous to behold. With concentration and a short space of time, you can force your body to reject its damage, repairing even the most terrible wounds.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and spend two full turns in concentration, taking no other action except movement. By using Second Wind, you can convert all aggravated damage you have taken into normal damage.

Sympathetic Agony

Prerequisites: Chimerstry •• and Fortitude •••

Illusory pain can be just as real as inflicted suffering, and true physical toughness is as much a matter of will as it is of the flesh. When you are damaged, you can redirect the pain of that injury to your target, momentarily overcoming her with the same pain she tried to inflict on you.

System:

Once per turn, when someone inflicts damage on you, you can spend 1 Blood and target your attacker with an opposed challenge using the Chimerstry test pool. If you succeed, your victim suffers a -3 penalty to all Physical, Social, and Mental attack test pools on her next initiative. Sympathetic Agony cannot be used in response to attacks that did not deal damage, or when you negated all damage by using Fortitude or similar powers. Sympathetic Agony can be used during Celerity rounds, but can only be used once per turn.

Telepathic Directive

Prerequisites: Auspex •••• and Dominate •

Most powers of mental control are audible and must be communicated to the subject through verbal orders or obvious gestures. You have mastered the ability to compel others through telepathic communication, placing your instructions directly inside the subject's mind.

System:

You can use Telepathy to communicate your Command and Mesmerism instructions directly into your target's mind. The target hears your voice in her head as though you are speaking, and she recognizes the voice if she has heard it before.

Telepathic Directives are always understandable, as they are conveyed through the common language of thought. Even if your target is deaf or incapable of understanding your gestures, she is still affected by the Telepathic Command. Note that you still need to capture your target's attention, and you must fulfill all other requirements of the Dominate power you wish to use.

Telepathic Directives cannot be combined with other powers or merits that augment Command or Mesmerism, such as Mass Manipulation.

Unnatural Grace

Prerequisites: Celerity •, Fortitude •, and Presence •

In myth, vampires are often linked to cats. Tales speak of Vlad Dracul striding up a castle's minarets, of a vampire appearing in a CEO's board room without entering the building, and of supernaturally agile burglars whisking easily across near-invisible wires. Vampires are known for turning up where you expect them least, and this power is one of the reasons why.

System:

Spend 1 Blood and expend a simple action to activate Unnatural Grace. For the next hour, your character can stick to solid surfaces, maintaining her balance at angles up to 90 degrees. Thus, your character can stride up a wall or saunter across a miniscule tightrope, but she cannot walk upside-down on a ceiling.

When you employ Unnatural Grace, you land silently from any fall and take no damage from falling up to one mile. Regardless of the circumstances, you always land perfectly on your feet.

Visions of the True Form

Prerequisites: Vicissitude •• and Auspex •••

Those who craft flesh at this level of skill can notice almost insignificant imperfections in another creature's form, realizing instinctively when someone's shape has been transformed. With sight guided by this instinct, you can glimpse the true appearance beneath the ruse.

System:

By purchasing Vision of the True Form, you gain the ability to sense an individual's true form. If you suspect a character is not in her true form, you can use your standard action and make a challenge using your Mental attribute + Investigation versus your target's Mental attribute + Willpower to examine the individual. If successful, you gain a brief vision of the subject's natural appearance.

Visions of the True Form only works on transformative powers and effects, such as Shape of the Beast, Black Metamorphosis, Shape of Beast's Wrath, and Horrid Form, or powers that physically change the target's form, such as Fleshcraft. It cannot be used to discern powers that alter only a small portion of the body, such as Feral Claws, or powers that alter the body without transforming it, such as Earth Meld. Visions of the True Form also reveals supernatural conditions, such as the Nosferatu clan flaw.

Will to Survive

Prerequisites: Fortitude • and Presence •

Emotions can control the flesh, calming the heartbeat and soothing the autonomic systems, allowing your body to better recognize injury without interruption. With this power, you have learned to focus your nervous reactions to better support your body's ability to heal.

System:

If you have any damage in your Injured wound track, you automatically regenerate 1 point of normal damage each turn without spending Blood. If you have no remaining normal damage, but still have aggravated damage in your Injured wound track, Will to Survive heals 1 point of aggravated damage every three turns.

Will to Survive heals a character during the everyman round; this power has no effect during Celerity rounds.

Will to Survive ceases to function if you have no Blood in your Blood pool or no wounds in the Injured wound track. Will to Survive does not require you to expend an action or Blood. In combat, this healing occurs during your everyman initiative.

Wolf's Blood

Prerequisites: Animalism •• and Protean •

Vampires are not the only creatures that stalk the night. The massive hunter assaults during the Nights of Turmoil caused many Gangrel to seek any shelter they could find, even hiding

among small populations of lupines in a desperate attempt to survive. This activity necessitated a resurgeance of an ancient technique used before the New World was discovered: the power of Wolf's Blood.

System:

As long as you adhere to the Morality of Humanity and possess a Morality rating of 3 or more, you can fool werewolves into believing you are one of their kind. When these creatures use powers to determine your creature type, you show all the signs of being a werewolf.

After you purchase this power, the wolf form provided by your Shape of the Beast power and the monstrous form of your Shape of Beast's Wrath power appear indistinguishable from a werewolf's hispo and crinos forms, respectively.

Wolf's Blood can only go so far to disguise your nature and does not confer any knowledge of werewolf society upon your character. If a werewolf sees you burning in the sunlight, she'll likely guess your secret. This technique only fools supernatural powers.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws

You can't forget. You can forgive, ignore, even punish — but nothing is ever forgotten. That's the difference between heaven and hell."

— Ansen, the Devil's Advocate

Overview

Merits are special advantages that help distinguish a character and show the effects of her history and ongoing story. Flaws are disadvantages that pose challenges to a character's nightly existence and provide a player a few extra experience points (XP) to spend elsewhere on her sheet. These qualities allow you to customize your character by specifying particular advantages or disadvantages that give added depth and personality. Both merits and flaws are optional. If you don't see any that suit your character, you can create your character and play without adding any to your sheet.

Each merit and flaw has a specific XP cost associated with it. This number indicates the points needed to purchase a merit or the points you will receive for taking a flaw. You may purchase up to 7 points of merits. However, a character can never have more than 7 points of merits at any time. This rule encourages players to make significant choices about the qualities that make a character unique.

In addition, you may select flaws at character creation. Flaws add up to 7 XP to your character, but also give that character a notable disadvantage in the game. Flaws are designed to be interesting, significant, and to exemplify your character's troubled past or personal prohibitions. You should try to roleplay your character's flaws as much as possible, helping the Storyteller create a rich and detailed chronicle. Perfect people are no fun to roleplay, and characters with authentic-feeling traumas, biases, and failings bring life and vibrancy to the game.

A Storyteller may choose to include or prohibit any merit or flaw that she feels is inappropriate for her chronicle. Merits can be removed from a character sheet or flaws may be added to that sheet (either temporarily or permanently) as the Storyteller sees fit, so long as a character never has more than 7 XP of merits and does not receive more than 7 XP from flaws at any time.

Adding Merits and Flaws

If you have not purchased the maximum points of merits for your character, or did not take the maximum amount of XP in flaws, you may purchase merits and flaws during the chronicle, with Storyteller permission. Note that there are some merits and flaws that can only be purchased at character creation and cannot be added to a character sheet thereafter. These merits and flaws represent qualities that happened in a vampire's history, and they cannot suddenly develop now. Some examples of these items include: all bloodline merits, clan rarity merits, Embrace-related flaws, and merits and flaws that directly represent events occurring prior to a character's Embrace. A character could spontaneously become a Medium after going through a

ghost-related plot, for example, but she could not develop a bloodline that she did not acquire at her Embrace.

To purchase a merit, obtain your Storyteller's permission, expend a downtime action and the necessary XP, and then add that merit to your character sheet. This purchase cannot cause the character's total point value of merits to exceed 7. Benefits conveyed by a merit begin immediately upon the merit's purchase.

If you choose to replace a removed merit with a new one, you must pay for the new merit normally; a character cannot simply "swap merits." For example, let's assume a player has her Storyteller's permission to remove the Calm Heart merit from her character sheet and add the Daredevil merit. The player must first remove Calm Heart, receiving no refunded XP when that merit is removed. She must then spend 2 XP to place the Daredevil merit on her sheet.

If you have any questions about whether a specific merit or flaw is appropriate for purchase during the play of your chronicle, speak to your Storyteller.

Removing Merits and Flaws

As your character grows, you may wish to remove some of her merits or flaws. If a merit or flaw is integral to the function of your character sheet, it cannot be removed. These merits and flaws represent qualities that happened in a vampire's history. They cannot vanish, because that history cannot be erased. As stated above, these items include: all bloodline merits, clan rarity merits, Embrace-related flaws, and merits and flaws which directly represent events that occurred prior to a character's Embrace.

To remove a merit, obtain your Storyteller's permission, expend a downtime action, and then remove that merit from your character sheet. This action does not refund any of the XP used to purchase that merit; these XP are lost. Benefits conveyed by a merit cease immediately upon the merit's removal. When you remove a merit that granted the character a special ability or allowed you to buy an item at decreased cost, you must strip the power or item granted by that merit from your sheet when you remove the merit. You gain no refund of any XP used to purchase that item; those XP are lost.

For example, if you choose to remove a merit that allowed you to purchase a fourth discipline at in-clan costs, all dots of that discipline would be removed from the character's sheet without XP refund. You might choose to repurchase the discipline later, at out-of-clan costs, but you must follow the normal procedure for your character to learn an out-of-clan power, including drinking a point of the teacher's blood and spending downtime actions in study of the discipline. If a player chooses to remove the Efficient Learner merit, the character loses all out-of-clan disciplines purchased using that merit, with no refund of XP.

To remove a flaw from your character sheet, you must spend XP equal to twice the original benefit of the flaw. A 3-point flaw requires 6 XP to remove, and so forth. If you have any questions about whether a specific merit or flaw is appropriate to be removed during the play of your chronicle, speak to your Storyteller.

Repeated Merits or Flaws

Unless otherwise stated in the mechanics of a merit or flaw you cannot purchase a specific merit or flaw more than once. A character cannot have Rugged multiple times, gaining a plethora of additional health levels nor take the flaw Deep Sleeper twice and claim to be "Sleepier."

Inappropriate Flaws

Players cannot purchase flaws that do not impact their characters. Such flaws include:

- Flaws that duplicate a clan's innate weakness, such as purchasing the Bound to the Earth flaw on a Tzimisce character
- Flaws that are inappropriate to the character's creature type, such as purchasing the Beast in the Mirror flaw on a character who is a ghoul
- Flaws that are negated by a power or merit the character possesses, such as purchasing both the Deep Sleeper flaw and the Blind the Sun technique
- Flaws that are made irrelevant by circumstances of plot or setting. You cannot have a flaw that requires you to fear all Ravnos, if there are no Ravnos allowed in your Storyteller's setting.
- Merits and flaws that are diametrically opposed in story or in mechanics. A character cannot purchase Acute Sense: Hearing and also possess the Hard of Hearing flaw.

If you gain a power or ability that negates the detriments of a flaw your character possesses or makes that flaw insignificant, you must immediately buy off the flaw. Players who are forced to buy off a flaw in this manner may go into debt if they do not already possess enough earned XP to buy off the flaw; if you go into debt for this reason, the next XP earned by this character must be entirely allocated to repaying that flaw, until the experience debt is resolved.

Rarity Merits

When a Storyteller creates her setting, she establishes the rarity of certain options, such as the various clans. For example, in the Camarilla setting, Tremere are common, but Lasombra are rare. In the Sabbat setting, Lasombra are common, but Tremere are uncommon. This rarity helps a Storyteller portray the setting, ensuring that the created characters follow guidelines established by the history of her chronicle.

Each setting establishes a list of common, uncommon, and rare clans. A setting's common clans are the most appropriate for play. There is no merit cost for playing a clan that is common in your chronicle's setting. To play a clan denoted as uncommon or rare, you must purchase the associated merit, below.

Buying an uncommon, rare, or restricted clan merit doesn't mean that your character is an established member of the base society in that setting. It simply means the character is tolerated in that setting, and she may attend gatherings or be part of politics and other events. Purchasing the Rare Clan merit in a Camarilla setting doesn't automatically make your Baali an upstanding member of the Camarilla. Your character's loyalties are determined by you with the help and support of your Storyteller.

Rarity merits count against a character's merit limit of 7 points. Purchasing the Rare Clan merit means you have spent 4 points and may only buy 3 more points of merits for this character.

Your Storyteller may limit some clans more strictly. When a clan is noted as Restricted or is not on the list of acceptable clans for a setting, that indicates your Storyteller feels the clan is not appropriate for her chronicle. You must obtain your Storyteller's permission before purchasing the Restricted Clan merit to play a certain clan. The Restricted Clan merit may also be purchased to play a clan's bloodline if it would cost more than 7 XP due to rarity in your setting. If playing a Lasombra is rare in your setting, you would need to pay 4 XP to play this clan; taking the Lasombra bloodline Kiaysd (a 4 point merit) would cost another 4 XP, a total of 8 XP. Ordinarily, that combination of merits would exceed the 7-point merit cap. However, with your Storyteller's permission, you may play that character type with a 6-point expenditure by purchasing the Restricted Clan merit.

For example, if you wanted to play the Lamia bloodline (4 merit points) of the Cappadocian clan (Rare Clan: 4 merit points) in the Camarilla setting, you would use the Restricted Clan merit instead to pay for the combination of merits.

If you are using one of the **Mind's Eye Theatre (MET)** settings, check the setting's corresponding rarity list for clans, or speak with your Storyteller. For a complete list of **World of Darkness** settings, or for guidelines about making a custom setting for your chronicle, see **Chapter Eight: Storytelling, Writing a Setting Style Document, page 333**.

Uncommon Clan (2 point merit)

Your character is a member of an uncommon clan, one that is not ordinarily found in your chronicle's setting. This clan is not often seen, and she may be something of an outsider. You will find few other individuals of her clan within this setting, and she may be afforded fewer benefits than "proper members" of society.

Rare Clan (4 point merit)

Your character is a member of a rare clan, one that is very infrequently found in your chronicle's setting. Such characters may be loners, outcasts, or solitary observers of society, and they may be treated poorly or shunned by the rest of the characters in play, as may be appropriate to the setting.

Restricted Clan (6 point merit)

With this merit you can portray a clan that is not listed in your chronicle's setting. Check with your Storyteller before choosing this merit. The Storyteller may not allow you to purchase this merit if she wants to completely forbid certain clans or bloodlines that do not mesh well with her setting. With your Storyteller's permission, you may use this merit to portray an unusual clan's bloodline, even if the total cost for playing that bloodline (rarity merit cost for the base clan plus bloodline merit cost) would otherwise total more than 7 points of merits.

Bloodline Merits

The **World of Darkness** is a broad and varied place, with many unorthodox branches of each clan spanning out across the continents. The word "bloodline" indicates a sub-group of a clan; some few vampires of the clan whose vitae has altered over the centuries, developing different powers or unusual capabilities. Not all of these branches carry alterations of the vitae, some have cultural rather than physical changes. If a bloodline in the **World of Darkness** retains the same discipline set as a parent clan and has no significant mechanical differences, then it is a cultural bloodline. You may choose to play a member of a cultural bloodline with your Storyteller's permission, at no merit cost. There are no mechanical changes to the character's sheet, and you may simply roleplay any cultural or philosophical differences between that sub-group and the parent clan.

However, some bloodlines described in the **World of Darkness** have significant changes to their vitae, resulting in altered in-clan disciplines, mechanical benefits, or additional detriments. Playing a member of one of these bloodlines requires the purchase of a bloodline merit, to indicate that the character is mechanically different from her parent clan.

Bloodline merits must be purchased at character creation (or when a mortal or ghoul character becomes a vampire), as they reflect an aspect of the character's Embrace. A character's clan and bloodline must be the same as her sire; a sire's Embrace always creates a vampire of her clan and bloodline (if any). If the sire has no bloodline, then the childe will always be a member of the standard clan (just like the sire). Remember that a character can never have more than one bloodline merit, and you cannot remove that merit from the character's sheet.

A more detailed description of each bloodline mentioned is listed under the parent clan's entry in this book. For more details, see **Chapter Two: Introduction to the World of Darkness, The Clans, page 41**.

Default Clans

Sometimes, a Storyteller will decide that a certain clan's bloodline is the default version of that clan in her setting. In this case, the bloodline costs no additional points to purchase, save those required by the appropriate rarity merit for the clan itself. In addition, the parent clan takes on the merit point cost normally applied to the bloodline.

If your setting requires requires a rarity merit to play a clan, that rarity merit purchases the bloodline as the default clan.

For example, the Samedi are a bloodline of the Cappadocian clan, and require the purchase of a 2-point bloodline merit. In the Camarilla setting, however, Samedi are the standard version of the Cappadocian. Further, the Camarilla style guide indicates that Cappadocians are rare, and requires the player to purchase the Rare Clan merit if she wishes play one. You will see this denoted as: Cappadocian (Samedi). This means that if you purchase the Rare Clan merit for 4 points, you are purchasing a Samedi, which has the discipline set and all the benefits and detriments described under the Samedi bloodline of the Cappadocian clan, without further expenditures. If you wish to play a true Cappadocian in the Camarilla setting, you must purchase the Rare Clan merit, and then also purchase a 2-point bloodline (the cost of the Samedi bloodline merit) to have the disciplines, benefits, and detriments of a true Cappadocian.

If a default bloodline is established, it will always be clearly denoted in the Setting-Specific Mechanics section of the settings material. Be sure to speak with your Storyteller if you have any questions as to standard and default clans in her chronicle.

Clan-Specific Merits

Each clan has a list of merits that are available only to vampires Embraced into that clan. These merits are not available to adopted members, allies, revenants, or ghouls, even if the ghoul's domitor is a member of the clan.

Greater Clans

Assamite Clan Merits

Surprise Attack (1 point merit)

You are skilled at attacking from surprise. You receive a +3 bonus to your Physical test pools when attacking an opponent who is unaware of your presence. You only receive this bonus once per combat, as your first attack reveals your presence and ruins any further surprise. (For more information, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, Surprise Action, page 278**)

Bloodline: Vizier (2 point merit)

You are a member of the Vizier bloodline, scholars and philosophers who defied the Eldest and refused to worship Haqim above Allah. The Viziers fled the mountain of Alamut and no longer serve the Eldest of the clan. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Celerity, and Quietus.

Awakening the Steel (3 point merit)

You possess a melee weapon that has been given a magical name, as part of an enchantment by a member of the Sorcerer caste. If you spend 1 Blood and use a simple action to call the weapon's name, it appears in your hand. This occurs regardless of the weapon's original location. You must have room to hold the weapon when it appears in your hand; the weapon cannot appear inside of a solid object. If your weapon is broken or destroyed, it will reform (as good as new) when you activate this power. If this power is used to reform your weapon, it appears exactly as it was first forged. If the weapon was modified or coated with blood, those modifications are removed when the weapon is reformed.

Bloodline: Sorcerer (4 point merit)

You are a member of the Assamite Sorcerer caste, which obeys the will of the Eldest and also seeks vengeance on the Tremere and Viziers. Your in-clan disciplines are Obfuscate, Quietus, and Thaumaturgy: Lure of Flames. You can also purchase one other path of Thaumaturgy of your choice.

This additional path of Thaumaturgy can be learned without a teacher and is purchased at in-clan costs, but is not considered an in-clan discipline.

Brujah Clan Merits

Brotherhood (1 point merit)

Brujah are known for two things: their fiery tempers and their intense clan loyalty. As a member of Clan Brujah, you gain a +2 bonus to Brawl, Melee, and Ranged attacks when attacking an individual who was targeted by another Brujah's Physical attack (Brawl, Melee, or Ranged) earlier in the same combat round, or when another Brujah is using the Assist Attacker tactic to aid your attack. Members of the True Brujah bloodline cannot purchase this merit.

Burning Wrath (2 point merit)

A Brujah's heart is ablaze with emotion, spurred by anger, and filled with righteous fury. By channelling this anger, you can expend a simple action to unleash your Burning Wrath, thus turning your fists into supernatural weapons. When this power is invoked, the character's fists glow red with a dull, contained heat (you cannot actually start fires with this power). For the next hour, when you attack a foe with a bare-knuckled punch, you gain a +2 wild card bonus on this attack, and if successful, you inflict aggravated damage. You may end Burning Wrath at any time by expending a simple action.

Scourge of Alecto (3 point merit)

When another character spends 1 or more points of Willpower to ignore your Awe, or attempts to overcome your Majesty, your Beast responds with spiteful rage. The sheer force of its anger rips into your rival's spirit, tearing her apart. The target of Scourge of Alecto takes 1 point of aggravated damage; this damage cannot be reduced or negated. This effect does not require an action or a challenge to activate.

Bloodline: True Brujah (4 point merit)

You are a member of an ancient Brujah bloodline that reviles its tempestuous ancestors and dedicates itself to intellectual studies and passionless pursuits. Your in-clan disciplines are Potence, Presence, and Temporis.

Follower of Set Clan Merits

Personal Cult (1 point merit)

Setites enjoy developing cults and herds of worshippers. Whether these devotees are fanatic slaves, adoring followers, or sex-crazed groupies, your cult serves without question. These mortals adore their vampiric master — whether or not they know your true nature. You may define this cult in any way you choose. Perhaps they worship Set, or Caine, or even you. They may have ecstatic parties and orgies, run drug laboratories, or participate in any rituals you choose.

You gain 5 free dots in one of the following backgrounds: Haven, Herd, or Resources. If you've previously purchased dots of that background, all XP is refunded. If you assigned creation points to that background, you may move those points to another background in which you currently have no points.

In addition to this background, you have a temple in which your personal cult worships; this temple is considered holy ground. If you have any merits or flaws that are affected by holy ground, this temple does not affect you negatively. If you spend 3 Blood and rest the day in this temple, you can heal 2 points of aggravated damage instead of 1. This temple may be further defined by the Haven merit.

Bloodline: Tlacique (2 point merit)

You are a member of the Tlacique bloodline, which is comprised of broods of South American vampires and claims descent from Tezcatlipoca, the Aztec god of night, war, and sorcery, whom they consider analogous to Set. Your in-clan disciplines are Presence, Obfuscate, and Protean.

Bloodline: Vipers (2 point merit)

You are a member of the Viper bloodline, the holy warriors of the Setite clan. This heritage comes with a great deal of responsibility, and you are expected to protect the clan's temples and priests. To ensure you are capable of this task, you have been blessed with a powerful strength to use in Set's service. Your in-clan disciplines are Potence, Presence, and Serpentis.

Addictive Blood (3 point merit)

Anyone foolish enough to taste a point of your Blood becomes addicted to it. The next time this creature has the chance to drink from you, she must spend 1 Willpower to turn down the opportunity. This expenditure allows the victim to resist her addiction for the next 10 minutes without further expenditure. After resisting your Blood in this manner five times consecutively, the addiction is broken. If you have the Presence power Entrancement, anyone who drinks a point of your Blood also becomes Entranced by you for the rest of the night.

Setite Sorcery (4 point merit)

Sorcery is a gift granted only to the most faithful, and Set's children revere this ability as a mark of faith among their kind. When you acquire this merit, you gain the discipline Thaumaturgy. You can purchase the Path of Corruption and

one other Thamaturgical path of your choice. These paths are learned without a teacher and are considered out-of-clan powers for all purposes (including purchase costs).

Gangrel Clan Merits

Protean Blood (1 point merit)

Once per hour, you can activate a Protean power without paying the costs (Blood and action) normally required to activate that power. Protean Blood's effects happen on your initiative and cannot be combined with effects that allow you to take actions before or after your initiative in the round. This merit cannot be used with elder powers or Protean-based techniques, but may be used with the merit Shape of Beast's Wrath.

Bloodline: Coyote (2 point merit)

You are a member of the Coyote bloodline. Sometimes known as "City Gangrel," Coyotes were once seen only among the Sabbat, but in recent nights have been found as Autarks, Anarchs, and even the occasional member of the Camarilla. Unlike most Gangrel, Coyote are comfortable in city-based environments and consider themselves the ultimate urban predator. Your in-clan disciplines are Celerity, Obfuscate, and Protean.

Bloodline: Noiad (2 point merit)

You are a member of the Noiad bloodline, which hails from Finland, Sweden, and other parts of Scandinavia. These primitive seers and oracles disdain technology and modern culture, and prefer to remain in the undeveloped areas, holding tightly to the ancient traditions of their kind. Your in-clan disciplines are Animalism, Auspex, and Protean.

Shape of Beast's Wrath (3 point merit)

When assuming the fight form granted by Protean, you can choose instead to turn into an enormous half-wolf, half-man monster. When you utilize Shape of Beast's Wrath, your Brawl test pool increases by +5, and you do aggravated damage with your unarmed brawling attacks. While in this form, all of your defensive pools (Physical, Mental, and Social) suffer a -2 penalty. Shape of the Beast's Wrath is considered a transformative power and cannot be combined with other transformative powers. Attribute bonuses or focus benefits that would normally be gained from Shape of the Beast do not apply to a character who has assumed the form granted by Shape of the Beast's Wrath.

Bloodline: Ahrimanes (4 point merit)

You are a member of the all-female bloodline known as the Ahrimanes. These Gangrel are extremely shamanistic, and they have an unusual bond with spirits of all kinds. They are secretive and violent. Your in-clan disciplines are Animalism, Presence, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery. Male characters cannot possess this merit.

Giovanni Clan Merits

Necromantic Expertise (1 point merit)

You can purchase an additional path of Necromancy in addition to the Sepulchre Path (any path except the Mortis Path, which is excluded from this merit). This additional path is learned without a teacher and is purchased at in-clan costs, but is not considered an in-clan discipline. For example, when using the Dominate power Possession, these Necromantic paths cannot be brought along. You can purchase this merit multiple times, allowing you to learn multiple paths of Necromancy.

Mook (2 point merit)

You were Embraced for your physical prowess, and the Giovanni clan elders have called in favors to make sure you have ample instruction in combat without hindering your loyalty to the clan with the annoyance of a minimal blood bond. You can learn the disciplines Celerity and Fortitude without a teacher, although you must still pay out-of-clan costs to purchase these powers. This merit may be used to learn elder powers (assuming you meet the Generation requirements).

Ghostly Retainer (3 point merit)

A loyal Retainer serves you from beyond the grave. This ghostly spirit is typically a departed family member who, for whatever reason, was never Embraced. Build this NPC as a level 5 Retainer, using the wraith rules in the Allies and Antagonists section (see **Chapter Twelve: Allies and Antagonists, page 500**). If you possess Necromancy: Sepulchre Path, you may spend 1 Blood to sorcerously summon your ghostly retainer, allowing her to teleport to your current location.

Bloodline: Premascine (4 point merit)

You are a throwback to an older lineage of the clan. You suffer from a ghastly pallor reminiscent of the Cappadocians, and you can learn Necromancy: Mortis Path. Other Giovanni (especially old ones) are extremely suspicious of characters who demonstrate the ability to harness the Mortis Path, believing that such an individual may still be loyal to the Cappadocians. Necromancy: Mortis Path is learned without a teacher and does not require the purchase of the Necromantic Expertise merit, but is not considered an in-clan discipline for any purpose (including purchase costs). This merit is an exception to the rule that prevents non-Cappadocians from learning Mortis Path.

Lasombra Clan Merits

Angelic Visage (1 point merit)

Your innate connection to the Abyss shows in every movement of your body and every shadow of your face, lending you an unnatural grace and sexual attraction. You gain the Social attribute Charisma focus in addition to the normal Social attribute focus selected during character creation. Additionally, you always appear attractive and dignified, even when you are injured, dirty, or have low Humanity. Even if you are on a path or at low Humanity, your moral degradation lends you a porcelain, alien beauty rather than a monstrous, feral visage. Adherance to a path is still unmistakably visible, despite this exceptional beauty, but rather than evoking fear or disgust, your dark radiance is intense and sexually compelling.

Born in Shadow (2 point merit)

Your spirit is particularly attuned to the dark depths of the Abyss. Once per turn, you can activate one of the first 2 dots of Obtenebration without spending Blood, though you must meet all other requirements. Alternately, once per turn you may use this merit to increase the radius of your Shroud of Night without spending Blood (See **Chapter Four: Disciplines, Shroud of Night, page 148**).

Walk the Abyss (3 point merit) (Abyss Mysticism)

Occult scholars among the Lasombra claim that Obtenebration rises from a different realm, a dark and primordial void known as the Abyss. These mystics constantly search for terrible truths and philosophical answers as they attempt to unlock the secrets of its depths. Unlike Thaumaturgy, Abyss Mysticism is not blood magic. It is, a form of communion, a spiritual portal between the practitioner and the Abyss.

You are trained in one of the arts of Abyss Mysticism. By focusing on a familiar destination, chanting for five full turns, and then stepping through a pool of shadow, you can travel into and through the Abyss. You may bring up to three willing companions with you on this journey. Time and distance are subjective in the Abyss, and there's no predicting when you will arrive at your destination, no matter how nearby or far away.

Anytime you utilize Walk the Abyss, you must make a test with your Storyteller (no test pool is used). If you win the test, you spend one hour in the Abyss before arriving at your destination. If you tie, you spend three hours in the Abyss, and if you lose, you spend six hours in the Abyss before you arrive. Traveling through the Abyss is dangerous and terrifying, even for those experienced in such things. Each hour spent in the Abyss inflicts 1 level of aggravated damage, which cannot be reduced or negated. Further, this damage cannot be healed until you are once more on the physical plane.

This is an Abyss Mysticism merit. Characters possessing this merit are considered Abyss Mystics and can purchase items which require Abyssal Mysticism.

Bloodline: Kiasyd (4 point merit)

You are a member of the Kiasyd bloodline, a freakish, alien brood that prefers to maintain an isolated, studious existence. The Kiasyd have connections with the fae and are extremely fascinated with ancient or forbidden lore. Your in-clan disciplines are Dominate, Mythreceria, and Obtenebration.

Malkavian Clan Merits

Expanded Consciousness (1 point merit)

You have special insight into the universe, and your consciousness has expanded beyond the understanding of more limited minds. You gain a second Mental attribute focus in addition to the normal Mental focus selected during character creation.

Bloodline: Ananke (2 point merit)

You're a member of the Ananke bloodline, the keepers of the ancient temples. These Malkavians are obsessed with haruspexy, the art of divining the future through the entrails of recently dead creatures (and humans). Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Dementation, and Presence.

Bloodline: Knights of the Moon (2 point merit)

You're a member of the Knights of the Moon bloodline, who do not manifest Dementation. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Dominate, and Obfuscate.

Labyrinthine Mind (3 point merit)

Your mind is a twisted nest of madness and disconnected ideas, and any character who attempts to non-consensually pull information out of your mind risks driving herself insane. Firstly, you receive a +3 bonus to your defense test pool when resisting Dominate, Dementation, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Corruption. Secondly, characters who attempt to pull information from your mind gain one of your Derangement flaws (of your choice). The invader receives this flaw as though she had purchased it; if you believe you are Julius Caesar, the invader now believes *she* is Julius Caesar (not that you are). Derangements inflicted by Labyrinthine Mind last for one hour.

Sophistry (4 point merit)

You see the flaws and fallacies of the universe, the broken edges and shattered reflections that ripple out from every action. You occasionally remember things that didn't happen or have alternate-timeline impressions of people you know. This gives you a distorted perception of the world, but it can be useful when your life is in danger. You side-step blows before they are thrown; you move out of the radius of explosions, or away from falling objects, before they strike. Even Mental and Social powers have a difficult time invading your mind, as you are fortified within these strange ripples of insanity. Once per game session, when you are called upon to resist a Physical, Mental, or Social challenge, or when you are required to make a test that could result in injury, you may spend 1 Blood to automatically win the challenge or avoid the situation entirely. Sophistry can be invoked at any time, even before your turn in the initiative order. When Sophistry is used to avoid an attack, your opponent is considered to have failed to affect you. In the case of Mental and Social challenges, this result may prevent you from being immediately targeted again by the same power. For more information see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, Maximum Attacks Per Round, page 282**.

Nosferatu Clan Merits

Unseeing Eye (1 point merit)

You cannot be targeted by supernatural powers that track or identify you at range, unless you are already within the user of the power's line of sight. This includes tracking powers, such as the ritual Illuminate the Trail of Prey, and observation powers such as Clairvoyance and Scry. Note that this merit doesn't block normal uses of Auspex, only those that allow a viewer to watch over you remotely. If a remote-viewing power (such as Clairvoyance or Scry) is used to spy on your location, rather than on you directly, the power functions normally for everything in that area except you. Although the user can see the location and anyone else within it, you are inaudible and invisible to the user of the remote-viewing power.

Hidden Advantage (2 point merit)

Your Nosferatu heritage grants exceptional talent with the powers of Obfuscate. Individuals using Auspex (or similar powers) do not automatically realize there is an Obfuscated person nearby when they are near you. Additionally, your Unseen Presence remains active even if you are asleep or in torpor. For this aspect of Hidden Advantage to function, you must activate Unseen Presence before going to sleep (or before falling into torpor). Your Unseen Presence can be penetrated with Auspex (or similar powers) without awakening you.

Pliable Blood (3 point merit)

While other clans often reject members of their lineage whose blood mutates into strange or different native powers, the Nosferatu never cast away family. The bond between Nosferatu is so close-knit that there is no distinction between bloodline and parent clan. You may choose one common or uncommon discipline to possess as a fourth in-clan discipline. You cannot create your character with a free dot (or dots) of this fourth in-clan discipline, but you can teach this discipline, and it is considered in-clan for all other powers or effects. You pay in-clan XP costs to purchase this discipline. You may choose from these common and uncommon disciplines: Auspex, Celerity, Dementation, Dominate, Fortitude, Presence, Protean, Quietus, and Serpentis. This merit cannot be combined with other merits that give your character additional in-clan disciplines.

Unnatural Adaptation (4 point merit)

Your Embrace left you horribly mutated, more so than most of your clanmates. Because of this revolting mutation, you may choose two of the following special abilities:

- ***Patagia:*** A thick membrane stretches between your arms and your torso. If you fall from a damaging height, you can spread your arms and use these proto-wings to glide safely to the ground. If you have 2 or more dots of Potence, you can fly three steps per turn by spending both your simple and standard actions.
- ***Webbed Fingers:*** Your fingers and toes are overlong and have a thick membrane between them, allowing you to swim extremely fast. You may spend a simple action to swim at normal speeds (walking or running). You gain an additional step to this movement rate for each dot of the Athletics skill you possess.
- ***Gaping Maw:*** Your mouth is overlarge and filled with large, pointy teeth (or tusks, or otherwise menacing features). You can bite to inflict damage without first grappling your opponent. When you drain Blood, you drain 2 points per standard action instead of the standard 1 point.
- ***Slimy:*** Your body is coated with a thick layer of slime. You can use a simple action to automatically escape from a Grapple even when pinned by a supernatural power (such as Thaumaturgy: Movement of the Mind).
- ***Grappling Appendages:*** Your arms are elongated, strangely jointed, or covered with horrific suckers. You do not need to spend Willpower to perform the Grapple combat maneuver, and you receive a +2 bonus when attempting to Grapple.

Toreador Clan Merits

Artist's Blessing (1 point merit)

The potential maximum level of all of your Craft and Performance skills is increased by 2 (normally this raises your potential maximum to 7). Additionally, you gain the first 3 dots of any one Craft or Performance skill for free. If you already purchased this skill, your XP for that purchase is refunded. If you assigned creation points to the chosen skill, you may reassign those points to a skill in which you have no points assigned.

Bloodline: Ishtarri (2 point merit)

You're a member of the Ishtarri bloodline, which devotes itself to the perfection of movement, whether in dance or battle. Ishtarri are extremely passionate and have difficulty resisting their vices. Your in-clan disciplines are Celerity, Fortitude, and Presence.

Bloodline: Volgirre (2 point merit)

You're a member of the Volgirre bloodline, a secret lineage of depraved, darkly creative artisans. These vicious, licentious creatures give the other Toreador a bad name, indulging in cruel works of art, which are beautiful beyond mortal comprehension. You have the default Toreador in-clan disciplines, and you can purchase the first 2 dots of Vicissitude as an out-of-clan discipline, without a teacher.

Absent Sway (3 point merit)

Whether you dance, paint, sing, or practice any type of art, your work invokes true emotion. When you create art or undertake a performance, you can choose one appropriate emotion or state of thought to be reflected in that endeavour. Anyone viewing the art or observing the performance feels that emotion. If an individual wishes to take an action that runs contrary to the chosen emotion, such as attacking someone in the presence of a painting that invokes calm, she may spend 1 Willpower. If she does so, she ignores all Absent Sway effects for the next hour.

The effects of Absent Sway are passive, not aggressive, and encourage observers to feel emotion or enter a certain state of mind. The emotion encouraged by the art is felt by the victim, but Absent Sway does not force the victim to act in any specific manner. You might paint a picture that provokes viewers to feel the emotion "anger." The manner in which the individual responds to feeling anger is up to the player of that character. However, if the character wishes to act in some manner that is diametrically opposed or contradictory to the emotion encouraged by the Absent Sway, she must spend 1 Willpower. For example, if she was in the presence of the painting that evoked "anger," she would not have to punch the person beside her, but she would be forced to spend a point of Willpower if she wanted to start peace negotiations, or announce she has forgiven her enemies for their past slights.

Absent Sway cannot affect individuals in combat and has no effect once combat starts, but the power can make it difficult for characters to start combat in the first place. Absent Sway only functions when placed on art that is of significant size or easy to observe. Only characters who can plainly see the art or performance are affected by Absent Sway.

A character does not have to spend a point of Willpower to overcome Absent Sway if acting upon the emotion caused by the art would cause the character harm or prevent the character from acting in self-preservation.

Dancer's Grace (4 point merit)

You have an athletic body and were Embraced at the height of your physical prowess. Once per turn, you gain a free retest when defending against an attack that allows you to resist with your Physical attribute + Dodge test pool. This retest can be used before or after the normal Willpower retest, and is an exception to the rule limiting retests to one per challenge. This effect can be used during Celerity rounds, but can only be used once in a given turn.

Tremere Clan Merits

Thaumaturgic Expertise (1 point merit)

You can purchase a path of Thaumaturgy in addition to the Path of Blood. This additional path is learned without a teacher and is purchased at in-clan XP costs, but is not considered an in-clan discipline. For example, when using the Dominate power Possession, these Thaumaturgic paths cannot be brought along. You can purchase this merit multiple times, thus allowing you to learn multiple paths of Thaumaturgy.

Bloodline: Telyav (2 point merit)

You are a member of the Telyav bloodline, a group of Lithuanian pagan Tremere believed to be extinct by the majority of the parent clan. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Presence, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Blood.

Talisman (3 point merit)

You possess a magical talisman. Your talisman must be a straight, rigid item between five inches and six feet long. Ancient Tremere sometimes carry staves and wands, while a more modern or subtle Tremere may carry a cane, a drum stick, or a baton. As long as you are holding it in or touching it with your hand, you receive a +2 bonus to all Thaumaturgy test pools. If your talisman is broken, lost,

or stolen, it is unavailable until you remake it, a process which takes four game sessions or two months, whichever is greater. Only you can use your talisman; other characters gain no benefit from your talisman.

Many talismans may be wielded as melee weapons, but that is not their primary purpose. If a talisman is sturdy enough to be wielded in melee, it should be built using the improvised weapon rules (giving it one weapon quality). Telyavetic Tremere who buy this merit can choose their talisman to be an Athame (or other bladed implement appropriate to a pre-Christian religion). Some religions scorn the use of an Athame as a weapon, but if wielded in combat, an Athame has the weapon qualities Concealable and either Fast, Silver, or Cold Iron.

Countermagic (4 point merit)

You are extraordinarily adept with magic and can pull apart the threads of a spell as well as you can weave them. You gain a +3 bonus to defensive test pools when resisting Thamaturgy. Additionally, you can use a standard action and spend 1 Blood to target an individual or area and attempt to dispel active thaumaturgical effects. If you target an individual, you must make a challenge (Mental attribute + Occult versus the target's (Mental attribute + Willpower). If successful, all active thaumaturgical powers affecting your target end, and all magical items on the target become defunct for one hour. If you target an area, you can make a test (using your Mental attribute + Occult, difficulty 12) to dispel all rituals within five steps of you. Targeting an area has no effect on magic directly affecting another individual, but it does dispel rituals, wards, and items that are not in an individual's direct possession.

Tzimisce Clan Merits

Blood of the Tzimisce (1 point merit)

You share your clan's connection to the land and, through the spirits of the land, you hear tales and whispers of lore dating as far back as the days of legendary Enoch. These spirits serve and protect you, guarding the place where you sleep. You receive a +3 bonus to all attack test pools (Physical, Social, and Mental) when you are in your haven. This bonus applies to all pools except defense pools. Additionally, the spirits teach you ancient knowledge and share long-lost tales. You gain 2 free dots of the Lore skill (including specializations as per purchasing dots of that skill), and your maximum level of the Lore skill is increased by 2. If you've previously spent XP on the first 2 dots of the Lore skill, that XP is refunded. If you used creation points to purchase the first 2 levels of Lore, you may reassign those points to a skill in which you have no points assigned.

Szlachta (2 point merit)

Each time you purchase a Retainer, you can choose for that Retainer to be either a hellhound (if crafted from an animal) or a szlachta (if crafted from a human). You must pay all XP costs to gain this Retainer, as per usual. A character must have at least 3 dots of Vicissitude in order to use this merit, and your loyal monstrosities may be further modified by your Vicissitude powers.

When you purchase this Retainer, assign one of the following benefits to them, due to this merit:

- **Armored:** This creature's skin has been toughened and hardened with spikes, chitenous plating, or other natural protection. The Retainer gains 2 additional Healthy wound levels.
- **Over-Muscled:** You have given this creature additional musculature, raising its physical strength and capacity. The Retainer has a free Potence specialization.
- **Lithe:** You have lengthened this creature's bones, given it additional joints, and narrowed its physique, making it far more dexterous. With a simple action, this creature can automatically break free from any Grapple. Additionally, Lithe creatures have a +2 bonus to Dodge-based defense test pools and a +2 bonus to initiative.
- **Acid Spit:** You have done terrible things to this creature's organs, mutating and contorting its internal chemistry. Once per turn, your Retainer can use a Ranged attack to inflict 2 points of aggravated damage. Ghouls with an Athletics specialization get a bonus to their Ranged attack pools (see the **Chapter Three, Character Creation, Retainers, page 104**).
- **Built for Combat:** Your creation is built to fight. It has claws, and its limbs are arranged for maximum efficiency. Your ghoul has a free Brawl specialization and inflicts aggravated damage with brawling attacks.
- **Flight:** Your beast has leathery wings, capable of carrying it awkwardly aloft. Your creation can fly at normal speeds (three steps per simple action). Only hellhounds (animal creations) may receive this option.

Bloodline: Carpathian (3 point merit)

Long ago, when the Tzimisce joined the Sabbat, some members of the clan resisted. These archaic nobles refused to cultivate the use of Vicissitude, calling it a corruption of their pure blood. They rule small domains in Eastern Europe and rarely venture out into the modern world. Your in-clan disciplines are Animalism, Auspex, and Dominate.

Carpathians can never learn Vicissitude, but may learn Protean as an out-of-clan discipline, without a teacher.

Bloodline: Koldun (4 point merit)

Those Tzimisce who practice the rare art of koldunic sorcery, or koldunism, claim to be the original creators of blood magic. These vampires are deeply connected to the land, enslaving ancient earth spirits to do their bidding. The kolduns rarely teach their blood magic to outsiders, even others of their clan, preferring to exist in small lineage-broods, considering themselves superior to other vampires. Your in-clan disciplines are Animalism, Auspex, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery. You can also purchase one other path of Thaumaturgy of your choice. This additional path of Thaumaturgy can be learned without a teacher and is purchased at in-clan costs, but is not considered an in-clan discipline. For example, when using the Dominate power Possession, this additional path is not considered in-clan and cannot be brought along.

Ventrue Clan Merits

Aura of Command (1 point merit)

As the royalty of vampire society, the clan of Kings brooks no disobedience from mere peons. Mortals and ghouls cannot resist your Presence and Dominate powers. When targeting a mortal with Presence or Dominate, you automatically succeed; the mortal cannot form a defense test pool. This effect also applies to techniques with prerequisites that include Dominate or Presence.

Bloodline: Crusader (2 point merit)

You are a member of a stern, demanding bloodline of the Ventrue clan. Once reviled as aberrant, the Crusaders have begun to earn more respect from the elders in modern nights. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Dominate, and Fortitude.

Paragon (3 point merit)

You are either an established leader within the Ventrue or an up-and-coming star in the clan. The line of Kings looks to you to be an example, and many younger members of the clan seek your approbation and approval. This provides the following benefits:

- The amount of money available to you from the Resources background is doubled.
- You receive one additional action per Influence you control (Elite or Underworld).
- Additionally, you have attracted the attention of a lesser Ventrue who wishes to ride your coattails towards greatness. This lieutenant is a low-ranking Ventrue neonate NPC, perhaps your childe or some distant lineage relation, and is built as a level 6 Retainer. Unlike normal Retainers, this lieutenant has access to three of the following backgrounds: Resources, Haven, Herd, or Influence (Elite or Underworld). Your lieutenant has 3 dots in one of these backgrounds, 2 in a second, and 1 in a third. This lieutenant cannot learn techniques or elder powers. If the lieutenant dies, you lose access to this merit for four game sessions or two months (whichever is greater), reflecting your search for a suitable replacement.

Regal Bearing (4 point merit)

As the dictates of the kings and queens of old were instantly obeyed, you can unleash the force of your personality in a magnificent flash. Once per game session, you can use any one Presence power instantly, without expending an action. You can activate this merit even before your initiative. You must pay the normal cost and make the normal tests involved in activating the Presence power. Regal Bearing can be used to augment standard powers, but cannot be used in conjunction with elder powers or techniques.

Caitiff Merits

Auspicious (1 point merit)

You may have been born under a lucky star, or perhaps your genetics simply adapted to the Embrace more naturally than others. Whatever the case, the Embrace had an auspicious effect on your state of being. This merit replicates any other general merit with a cost of 3 points or less. For example, you can purchase Auspicious and choose that it will duplicate the Rugged merit, which ordinarily costs 3 XP. Auspicious then provides you the benefits of the Rugged merit for only 1 XP.

Remember that a character cannot purchase the same merit twice. This not only means you cannot buy Auspicious twice, but also means that you cannot purchase Auspicious to duplicate Rugged and then also purchase the Rugged merit at its original cost in order to double that merit's effects. Auspicious only replicates general merits and cannot be used to purchase clan merits or rarity merits.

Eclipsed Blood (2 point merit)

Your blood is thinner than most, even among vampires of your generation. Because of this, you never fully adapted to your undead state. You have no trouble staying awake during the day and regain 1 point of Willpower per day, even if you do not spend any time resting. Additionally, you take normal damage from sunlight, as opposed to aggravated damage. Damage from sunlight cannot be reduced or negated, but can be healed as per the normal rules for healing damage.

Vestiges of Greatness (3 point merit)

By default, Caitiff choose three in-clan disciplines from the following list: Animalism, Auspex, Celerity, Dominate, Fortitude, Obfuscate, Presence, or Potence. Characters who purchase this merit choose two in-clan disciplines from that list and one from the following list of disciplines: Dementation, Protean, Serpentis, Quietus, Obtenebration, Vicissitude, or Chimeristry. This merit can only be purchased at character creation.

Lesser Clans

Baali Clan Merits

Infernal Heritage (1 point merit)

The Baali prefer to Embrace individuals who already possess demonic blood; those whose ancestors, somewhere among their family line, had intercourse and begat a child upon a demon. Such souls, already tainted by their heritage, easily fall into infernalism and usually become particularly powerful. This merit duplicates the mechanics of both the Infernal Power merit and the Path of Evil Revelations merit. Baali can purchase both the Infernal Power merit and the Infernal Heritage merit, if they so choose. A character cannot purchase the Infernal Heritage merit and the Path of Evil Revelations merit; a character with this merit has already converted her Morality to that path.

Bloodline: Angellis Ater (3 point merit)

You are a member of the Azaneali bloodline, also known as the Angellis Ater or "Black Angels." This bloodline began among the Lasombra, but was poached (and its blood altered) by the infernal magic of a Baali named Azaneal. These satanic shadow-weavers delight in corrupting and tormenting earnest followers of faith, and will do anything they can to tear down such an individual's belief. Your in-clan disciplines are: Daimoinon, Dominate, and your choice of either Potence, Presence, or Obfuscate.

Cappadocian Clan Merits

Necromantic Insight (1 point merit)

You can purchase an additional path of Necromancy in addition to the Mortis Path. This additional path is learned without a teacher and is purchased at in-clan costs, but is not considered an in-clan discipline. For example, when using the Dominate power Possession, these Necromantic paths cannot be brought along. You can purchase this merit multiple times, allowing you to learn multiple paths of Necromancy.

Bloodline: Samedi (2 point merit)

You are a member of the Samedi bloodline, an independent group of repugnant, rotting vampires who practice voudon. Your in-clan disciplines are Fortitude, Obfuscate, and Thanatosis.

Pierced Shroud (3 point merit)

You draw power from the energy of death. Anytime a sentient creature (mortal or supernatural) dies within your line of sight, you immediately gain 3 Blood. This Blood acts in all ways like normal Blood points. This effect does not allow you to hold more Blood than your normal maximum. The death of non-sentient beings, such as animals, and the death of constructs, such as golems, does not provide this benefit.

Bloodline: Lamia (4 point merit)

You are a member of the Lamia bloodline, which consists of women once sworn to protect their Cappadocian masters. There are very few male Lamia, but they have been known to exist. Your in-clan disciplines are Fortitude, Necromancy: Mortis Path, and Potence.

Ravnos Clan Merits

Waking Dream (1 point merit)

You are deeply in touch with the realm of dreams from which Chimerstry springs. Once per session, you may utilize a simple chimerical illusion as though it were real. This temporary personal reality lasts for one full turn. During this turn, you could run up a chimerical staircase, cut a real rope with an illusionary knife, or use a chimerical bar to lever a heavy object aside. This effect only applies to the Ravnos or inanimate objects the Ravnos attempts to affect. Waking Dream cannot be used to directly harm or help any other character.

Bloodline: Brahman (2 point merit)

In India, the Ravnos clan was once organized in a rigid, caste-like system. In theory, one's place in the castes (called *jati*) was inherited from one's sire, and these jati were immutable. In modern nights, only one jati still exists. These Ravnos, known as Brahman, are philosophers and gurus tasked with discovering the truth behind reality's illusion. Your in-clan disciplines are: Animalism, Auspex, and Chimeristry.

Escape Artist (3 point merit)

Notorious tricksters, Ravnos often find themselves trapped in sticky situations. Over the centuries, the clan has developed methods of escaping the consequences of their actions. Ravnos with this merit have the ability to slip away when no one is looking, escaping even the most stalwart prison or restraint. Physical attacks do not prevent the

character from fair escaping, unless the attack successfully does damage or unless the Ravnos is grappled. Characters who are physically restrained or imprisoned (not grappled) may study their surroundings for three turns, after which they find a way to escape their bonds. This merit only affects the Ravnos and does not allow the Ravnos to escape from a situation with no logical exit, to escape mental restraints like Dominate, or to move through solid objects.

Salubri Clan Merits

Righteous Fury (1 point merit)

Your faith and the fury of your spirit, when unleashed, is a palpable thing. You receive a +3 bonus to Brawl and Melee attack test pools when you are targeting a character who possesses demonic powers, infernal merits or investments, or the Daimoinon discipline. Additionally, you receive a +1 to your Brawl and Melee attack test pools when you are targeting diablerists or members of Clan Tremere. These bonuses do not stack; if more than one bonus applies, you receive the greater bonus. Righteous Fury requires a conscious act of faith, you must declare that you are using Righteous Fury when you announce the target of your character's attack. If that target doesn't meet the qualifications, this merit provides no bonus. All characters are aware of a successful use of this merit; brilliant white light erupts from the Salubri's fist (or weapon), radiating through the blow with the terrifying radiance of faith. Vampires who see this effect may not recognize it, but they feel a perceptible fear wash over them at the sight. This light does nothing to reduce the Salubri's reputation as an infernalist; on the contrary, faith could evince from any number of sources — including evil ones. The successful use of this power does not differentiate, so it is not possible to tell what aspect of the target (diablerist, demonist, Tremere or all of the above) has triggered Righteous Fury's effect.

Spiritual Armor (2 point merit)

Centuries of faith and dedication are carried within Salubri blood. As long as you have no Beast traits, you can spend 1 Blood when you are targeted by a demonic power, abilities granted by infernal merits or investments, or the Daimoinon discipline. If you do, you automatically resist the use of that power. This effect can be used at any time, even before your initiative in a combat round. A character with this merit cannot learn demonic powers, purchase infernal merits, utilize infernal investments, or learn the Daimoinon discipline.

Bloodline: Healer (3 point merit)

When the Salubri clan was first founded, the members of this clan were peaceful healers and mystic visionaries. Only after Saulot returned from the East did the clan evince the fury of its blood. You are a throwback to that more peaceful time: a member of the Healer bloodline. Your in-clan disciplines are Auspex, Fortitude, and Obeah.

Rare Bloodlines

The following bloodlines are not associated with clans, but rather occurred independently, usually through unusual circumstances. They are considered clans for the purposes of character creation; you do not need to purchase them with a bloodline merit, but may choose one for your character as if it were a clan. Be sure to check your chronicle's settings guide, as most of these vampiric offshoots are uncommon or rare. You may be required to purchase a rarity merit to portray these vampires in your game.

Daughter of Cacophony Merits

Supernatural Aria (1 point merit)

Your voice is unparalleled, and you have been trained well in order to use it to best advantage. With the purchase of this merit, your potential maximum level of the Performance: Singing skill is increased by 3 dots; if your original cap was 5, then your new potential maximum becomes 8. Further, the XP cost to purchase Performance: Singing is halved (round up).

Soaring Octaves (3 point merit)

The sheer beauty of your song attracts attention and causes rapture in even the coldest heart. If you have the Presence power Entrancement, you can use it on any individual who is listening to you sing. You may do so even if the target is not within your line of sight and even if the target is not focused on you and does not consciously realize that you are singing. (This is an exception to the rule listed under **Chapter Four: Disciplines, Gaze and Focus, page 113**). This effect cannot be used through remote means, such as the Melpominee power Phantom Speaker, an audio recording, or over a telephone; the target must hear your voice first-hand.

Gargoyle Merits

Flight (1 point merit)

Vampiric Gargoyles are as unique and different-looking as their architectural namesake. Among their number you may see a variety of horns, spikes, twisted features, dog-like faces, or a varying number of fingers. A few among this bloodline even sprout wings. Some Gargoyles' wings are small and purely ornamental. Your wings, however, are fully functional. With this merit, you can fly at the same speed you can move (three steps per action). This is true flight, such as a bird

or other aerial creature, and is not limited to mere gliding. If your wings are broken or removed, you must heal them before you can again use the power of flight.

Dark Statue (3 point merit)

Your Embrace did not merely give you the appearance of stone, it also granted you some of that stone's resilience and passivity. You can use your standard action to transform into a statue of yourself, made from solid stone. While in this form, you can perceive the area around you and spend Blood to heal, but you cannot use disciplines, and you are completely immobile. You are also immune to damage from sunlight and fire, and you automatically resist fear frenzy triggered by sunlight. While this effect is active, you gain three additional health levels. Dark Statue lasts as long as you'd like, and may persevere through sleep or torpor. You can end the Dark Statue effect with a simple action.

General Merits

"There are only two things in this world: fear and love.
Choose one, and you deny the other.
It is an ugly choice … but it is the only one with meaning."

— Delizbieta of the Dark Eyes

The following merits may be purchased by all vampires, regardless of their clan or bloodline, unless otherwise stated in the merit.

Acute Sense (1 point merit)

One of your senses is exceptionally sharp, and you gain an advantage from its use. You can choose to augment your sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste. When using this enhanced sense, you gain the effects of the Auspex power Heightened Senses. If you already have that power, you do not have to spend a point of Blood to enact the Heightned Senses effects that would otherwise require spending Blood.

Additional Common Discipline (4 point merit)

It is said that the blood of the first vampire could support all disciplines and had no intrinsic disposition. Your blood holds a faint trace of that quality and manifests four in-clan disciplines rather than three. Choose one common discipline as a fourth in-clan discipline. You do not start with a free dot (or dots) in this fourth in-clan discipline, you can teach this discipline, powers that affect in-clan disciplines (such as Possession) affect it, and you pay all costs to learn this discipline as if it were native to your clan. You may select from the following common disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Celerity, Dominate, Fortitude, Obfuscate, Potence, and Presence. This merit cannot be combined with other merits that give your character additional in-clan disciplines.

Additional Uncommon Discipline (5 point merit)

Choose one uncommon discipline as a fourth in-clan discipline. You do not start with a free dot (or dots) in this fourth in-clan discipline, you can teach this discipline, powers that affect in-clan disciplines (such as Possession) affect it, and you pay all costs to learn this discipline as if it were native to your clan. You may select from the following uncommon disciplines: Protean, Dementation, Serpentis, and Quietus. This merit cannot be combined with other merits that give your character additional in-clan disciplines.

Ambidextrous (2 point merit)

Most people have a single dominant hand, either the right or left. Once per turn, when attacking with weapons (melee or firearms), you can use the qualities of your main weapon and one of the qualities from a second weapon in your off hand, allowing both to augment your attack. You cannot use the same bonus twice in a single challenge. For example, you cannot choose Accurate twice in order to receive a +4 bonus. Both weapons must logically be able to hit your opponent in order to apply this advantage; thus, you cannot use this merit to apply an offhand sword's quality when using a pistol's ranged attack. Ambidextrous can be used during Celerity rounds, but can only be used once per turn. For more information on one-handed and two-handed weapons, see **Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment, page 515**.

Arcane (1 point merit)

You are mystically shrouded from notice. People you interact with briefly will not remember your presence unless you have been specifically pointed out. Paper trails related to you disappear, and computer records randomly become corrupted, misplaced, or accidently erased. This effect gives no benefit to Stealth and doesn't handicap people who know you personally, such as other characters, but individuals who you meet in passing have difficulty recalling details about who you are. This is both a benefit, and potentially a mild annoyance.

Blasé (3 point merit)

You've seen everything, done everything, and been everywhere. You are notoriously difficult to impress, and you have a knack for looking at facts without emotional coloration. You gain a free retest when resisting the effects of Dementation, Melpominee, and Presence. This retest can be used before or after the normal Willpower retest, and is an exception to the rule limiting retests to one per challenge.

Calm Heart (1 point merit)

You have a great deal of control over your emotions and can maintain your calm even in outrageous situations. You are considered to have 2 fewer Beast traits when resisting frenzy, Additionally, increase your test pool to resist frenzy by +3. Brujah characters cannot take this merit. This restriction does not apply to members of the True Brujah bloodline.

Clear Sighted (3 point merit)

You have the unusual ability to see with great clarity, overcoming distractions, illusions, and hypnotic effects. You gain a free retest when you are targeted by the disciplines Chimeristry, Obfuscate, or Mytherceria. This is a defensive retest; you cannot use Clear Sighted when using Auspex (or similar powers) to see through another individual's already established Obfuscate or to actively pierce Chimerical illusions. This merit does give you a free retest when resisting powers like Horrid Reality, or when trying to keep track of someone attempting to disappear using Vanish From the Mind's Eye. This retest can be used before or after the normal Willpower retest, and it is an exception to the rule limiting retests to one per challenge.

Code of Honor (2 point merit)

You adhere to a personal code of ethics. The specifics of this code must have restrictions as well as ideals. Restrictions might include "I cannot allow a woman to be injured," "I cannot set foot on holy ground," or "I can never own, carry, or use a weapon." Ideals might include "I must always show generosity and charity," "I must kneel and show respect to every Prince, no matter how I feel about her personally," or "I must accept any quest offered to me." This code must be genuinely restrictive and must be approved by the Storyteller prior to play. A Code of Honor cannot replicate any moral or ethical restrictions your character must already maintain, such as the basic precepts of Humanity or those of your Path of Enlightenment. Your character must follow her code strictly; your Storyteller can remove this merit without refund if you repeatedly violate this code.

One per hour, when someone attempts to use a Social or Mental power to make you violate this personal Code of Honor, you gain a +2 wild card bonus to your defensive test pool to resist that power. However, if you willingly violate your personal Code of Ethics, even under great duress, you lose access to this merit for two game sessions or one month, whichever is greater.

Daredevil (2 point merit)

You are good at taking risks and even better at surviving them. When attempting exceptionally dangerous Physical actions, such as leaping from one moving car to another, your test pool increases by 3. If you engage multiple opponents on your own, you receive a +2 bonus to your Physical defense test pools.

Efficient Digestion (1 point merit)

Your physical systems are extremely efficient, and you gain more than the usual nourishment from blood. When feeding from animals, the amount of Blood points you gain is not reduced by half. When feeding from mortals, you gain an additional point of Blood for every point you consume. This merit doubles the effectiveness of the Herd background when used during a game session. For example, if a character with this merit and 3 dots of Herd spends five minutes out of play, she gains 6 Blood rather than the standard 3. This merit does not allow you to exceed your Blood pool maximum. Efficient Digestion only works on mortal or animal blood; it does not work on vampire blood, including vampire blood ingested by ghouls.

Efficient Learner (2 point merit)

Your mind is well-adapted to mastering difficult knowledge, and you have always been quick to learn new skills. When learning a power from another character, your instructor is not required to spend Willpower to teach you. Additionally, you are not required to spend a downtime action to learn a discipline.

Golconda Seeker (5 point merit)

You are on the path to *Suspire*, researching and working toward the mythical state of enlightenment known as *Golconda*. Purchasing the Golconda Seeker merit indicates that you have discovered actual, useful information helping you along the path to Suspire. Your intense efforts to control the Beast have altered your physiology slightly, and as such you gain a slight advantage over your vampiric condition. You emanate a feeling of serenity, a tangible reflection of the weakening of the Beast. Your Storyteller will work with you to determine which specific myths your character has heard and how much knowledge your character possesses about Golconda.

To make an attempt to reach Golconda, you need to have at least 4 points of the Lore skill, including Golconda lore. Additionally your Morality must be Humanity, at rating 5 or higher. Although purchasing the merit Golconda Seeker provides your character with clues about achieving Suspire, keep in mind that successfully achieving Golconda is exceptionally rare. The majority of seekers will fail and eventually succumb to their Beasts. Those who fail often turn bitter, watching a new generation foolish enough to try where they have failed.

Choose one of the following benefits when you purchase this merit:

- You can spend 2 additional Blood points per turn.
- You do not need to spend a point of Blood to wake each evening. You also naturally regenerate 1 point of Blood per day, without feeding.
- You no longer suffer the penalties of your clan weakness.

If your Humanity dips below rating 5, you lose access to the benefits of this merit until you repurchase your Humanity. If your Humanity drops below 4, you must remove this merit entirely, with no refund of XP.

Please note that having this merit does not in any way guarantee that you will *reach* Golconda, as this state is incredibly rare and difficult to achieve. It only denotes that your character is a seeker along the path, with more knowledge than most. For further information regarding Golconda, please see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 303**.

Infernal Power (3 point merit)

You swore your soul to a demon, devil, or other dark entity (as you identify such things according to your character's personal beliefs), and that diabolic creature imbued you with supernatural power. Nearly all supernatural creatures fear and hate infernalists and will kill characters with Infernal Power without question or remorse. Additionally, if you fail to obey your demonic master's orders or displease the demon, you immediately lose access to this merit. Further, you take 5 points of aggravated damage, which cannot be reduced or negated by any means, for your failure to obey. This does not free you from the infernal compact; it is only an expression of your master's wrath. To regain the use of this merit, you must fulfill a task assigned by your infernal master: one that is always cruel, inhumane, and vile. If you fail to complete that task within 30 days, you meet Final Death. There is no escaping this fate.

Characters with Infernal Power must choose one of the following infernal gifts. Each infernal gift has two effects, one minor and one major. When you choose a gift, you gain access to both effects provided by that gift.

- **Gift: Demonic Fire**
  - *Minor Effect:* Your Infernal Power grants you resistance to fire. Flaming weapons or incendiary weapons inflict normal damage instead of aggravated damage. Additionally, by expending a simple action (and no need for kindling or other fuel), you can create a small ball of greenish-black flame in the palm of your hand. This flame is approximately the size of a baseball. While holding demonic fire, your hand-to-hand attacks cause aggravated damage.
  - *Major Effect:* By expending a simple action, you can sheath your body in an aura of greenish-black flame for the next five minutes. You can end this effect at any time prior to the end of its duration by expending another simple action. While you are within this aura, your clothing and equipment are not damaged by fire and your Brawl and Melee attacks inflict aggravated damage. Anyone foolish enough to Grapple you, or who is grappling you when you activate this effect, takes 3 points of aggravated damage.
- **Gift: Profane Contract**
  - *Minor Effect:* You are authorized by your demonic master to forge lesser contracts, offering another character infernal power in exchange for a portion of her immortal soul. The target of this effect cannot be forced into the bargain through supernatural powers or threats of violence, although she may be coerced through politics, general persuasion, treachery, or other social maneuvers. When she signs the contract, you become her infernal master, and she becomes your infernal servitor. The target gains access to her choice of one minor infernal effect, without needing to purchase the Infernal Power merit. The demon that bestows the infernal pact upon you gains power over any soul who willingly accepts an infernal contract from you. Your demonic master can rescind power from either of you, if it desires.

    If your servitor disobeys or displeases you, you have the option to punish her by inflicting 5 points of aggravated damage, which cannot be reduced or negated by any means. You may also choose to strip the target's infernal power and to require that she perform a dark task in order to regain the power. You must assign a task that is possible to achieve, but it can be as difficult or easy as you desire. If the target doesn't complete your task within 30 days, she meets Final Death. As with any infernal bargain, a lesser contract can only be negated if the target dies, or if you die. If you temporarily lose access to your Infernal Power merit, you cannot use any of these effects against your servitor, nor can you create new contracts. However, your underlings do not lose their powers simply because yours are in abeyance.
  - *Major Effect:* As long as you maintain at least one Profane Contract with another player-character, you may call upon your Infernal Power, step through the fires of hell, and appear at a place on

the physical realm that is sacred to your demonic master, such as a diabolic temple or your infernal altar. To do so, you must concentrate for three full turns while chanting in an infernal language. When you appear at your chosen site, you may choose to spend one minute there and then return to the location you just left. Or, you may choose to remain at the place where you have traveled. You can use this effect once per game for each lesser contract you currently hold.

- **Gift: Unholy Regeneration**

  › *Minor Effect:* If you have any damage in your Incapacitated wound track, you automatically regenerate 1 point of normal damage per turn without spending Blood. If you have no remaining normal damage, but still have aggravated damage in your Incapacitated wound track, you heal 1 point of aggravated damage every three turns.

  This merit heals a character on the her initiative during the everyman round; this power has no effect during Celerity rounds. This merit ceases to function if the character has no wounds in the Incapacitated wound track. Healing provided by this merit doesn't require an action or an expenditure of Blood.

  › *Major Effect*: If you are damaged to the point of torpor or Final Death, you immediately resurrect in a blast of greenish-black flame. You resurrect at full health. For the next five turns, you receive a +5 wild card bonus to all defensive test pools. Before the end of that time, you must kill another character and verbally condemn your victim's soul into your master's power. If you fail to achieve this goal in the allotted time, you meet your Final Death permanently and irrevocably, regardless of health or any other supernatural power.

  You cannot use this effect if your infernal master is the one who damaged you to the point of torpor or Final Death, or if your initial death resulted from something other than taking damage. This effect can be used once per game.

Simply being an infernalist does not create a visible stigma on a character's aura. A diabolist does not show taint or corruption until she utilizes an infernal power. When she does (and while that power is in effect), the character's aura shows the clear corruption of infernal taint. Further, anyone who witnesses you use a major infernal effect will automatically notice your infernal taint whether or not they are using Auspex.

A character can never permanently lose this merit. Demonic compacts are inviolable, and there is no way to escape a bargain once you have become part of the infernal chain of command. The only way out of such an agreement is death — and even then, the character's soul is forever damned into the service of her diabolic master.

Intense Vitality (3 point merit)

The curse of Caine runs strongly in your veins. You can spend 1 more Blood point per turn than your Generation permits. Neonates and Ancilla can purchase this as a 2 point merit, while Elders of any generation must pay the full 3 point cost. Characters who diablerize above 9th generation must spend an additional XP to offset the increased cost. If your character is unable to pay this increased cost, or if this increased cost would bring the character over the 7 point merit cap, you lose this merit, and the XP spent to purchase it is refunded.

Iron Will (3 point merit)

By achieving a level of mental control worthy of martial arts masters or intensely dedicated scholars, you have mastered a rigid thought structure. You can use this internal resolution to focus your mind, resisting torture, intimidation, and powers that directly attempt to control you. You gain a free retest when resisting the effects of Auspex, Animalism, and Dominate. Iron Will cannot be used to retest attempts to pierce Obfuscate or Chimerstry, but it does grant a retest when you attempt to resist powers such as Telepathy or Psychic Assault. This retest can be used before or after the normal Willpower retest and is an exception to the rule limiting retests to one per challenge.

Light Sleeper (1 point merit)

While the dawn renders most vampires sleepy and sluggish, you have the unusual capacity to force yourself fully awake. A character with this merit can remain vigilant for up to one hour after sunrise and wakes up one hour before sunset. Additionally, you can awaken instantly at any sign of trouble or danger and do so without sluggishness or hesitation. You ignore any penalties for acting during the daylight hours, regardless of your level of Humanity or number of Beast traits.

Loremaster (1 point merit)

You are a veritable font of knowledge and have spent a great many years studying history, discovering secrets, and hoarding valuable information. You can assign two Lore specializations for each dot of the Lore skill you purchase, rather than one. Additionally, you receive a +3 bonus anytime you make a challenge using your Lore skill.

Lucky (2 point merit)

Like most tricksters, fools, and madmen, your life has been a series of fortuitous coincidences and second chances. Whether you rely on this luck or just fall into it, you lead a charmed existence. If an opponent achieves an exceptional success against you, you downgrade it to a normal success. You can use this benefit once every five minutes or once per combat.

Magic Resistance (3 point merit)

Legends say that the first vampire did not have a natural aptitude for magic. Your blood may be a throwback to that state, or it may simply be naturally resistant to enchantment. You gain a free retest when resisting the effects of Thaumaturgy, Necromancy, Sabbat ritae, enchanted rituals, and the powers of mages. This retest can be used before or after the normal Willpower retest and is an exception to the rule limiting retests to one per challenge. However, you can never learn any path or rituals of Thaumaturgy, Necromancy, or any other form of blood magic. If you possess blood magic when you purchase this merit, you must remove those powers, and do not receive a refund of any XP spent on those powers.

Medium (1 point merit)

In your mortal life, you may have been a spiritualist or a shaman, or perhaps your brush with death left a portion of your spirit trapped within the Shadowlands. Whatever the reason, you are a channel to the Shadowlands, and you possess the natural affinity to see and hear ghosts, and occasionally glimpse your surroundings in the Shadowlands. This merit does not grant any ability to control or command ghosts, nor does it give you any mystic ability to understand wraiths who cannot speak a language you know.

Natural Linguist (1 point merit)

Some individuals have excellent minds for retention and association, capable of learning multiple languages with ease. You can assign two language specializations for each dot of the Linguistics skill you purchase. Additionally, you receive a +3 bonus anytime you're called upon to make a challenge using Linguistics.

Necromantic Training (5 point merit)

Necromancers closely guard their knowledge, and those who know Necromancy's secrets – like the Giovanni – rarely share mastery of their art. Somehow, in your past, you were trained by a necromancer or studied ghastly texts, and you have gathered enough skill to become proficient in one path of Necromantic magic. With this merit, you can learn a single path of Necromancy, and you can purchase its powers at out-of-clan costs. If your character learned this discipline in her history, you must justify such education in the character's background. If you wish to purchase Necromancy after your character enters play, you must purchase the merit first.

Oracular Ability (2 point merit)

You see omens of the future. You might use techniques such as casting the bones, reading predictive cards, utilizing mystic boards, studying astrology, or undergoing drugged hallucinations. Conversely, you might have visions thrust upon you even if you try to prevent such divinations. You can draw advice from these omens, as they provide hints of the future and warnings of the present. You can, once per game, ask your Storyteller for a clue about relevant plots. In addition, small flashes of insight come when most needed; once an hour you can sacrifice a standard action in order to immediately use a simple action. This ability allows you to use the simple action at any time, even before your initiative.

Personal Masquerade (1 point merit)

Although your aura is pale, and you have most of the spiritual hallmarks of a vampire, your flesh retains a semblance of the human condition. You appear alive and healthy, your skin is warm to the touch, and you can pretend to be human more easily than other vampires. Additionally, you have the capacity to eat and drink as a mortal does and can even savor the taste of such refreshments. While you do not derive nourishment from this food, the ability to eat is a benefit to a vampire who is pretending to be human. A character on a Path of Enlightenment cannot possess this merit. If you purchase a Path of Enlightenment while you have this merit, you must remove Personal Masquerade, and your XP are not refunded.

Reputation (2 point merit)

Your accomplishments are well known beyond the boundaries of clan and sect. Even vampires of other sects and groups have heard of you and know your reputation. You can carry one more fleeting status trait than your normal status limit allows. Should your reputation significantly tarnish, your Storyteller can remove the additional fleeting status until you recover from any scandals.

Rugged (3 point merit)

You may be larger than other people, more resistant to hardships, or have tougher skin, but for whatever reason, you have a greater capacity to withstand injury. Characters with this merit gain 1 additional health level in each wound track, resulting in four Healthy levels, four Injured levels, and four Incapacitated levels. This merit works in conjunction with the Stamina focus bonus granted by Fortitude; a character with both of these advantages possesses five health levels in each wound track.

Skill Aptitude (2 point merit)

Due to some facet of your history, whether it is intense training or simply natural talent, you are prodigally gifted with a single skill. Choose one skill and raise your character's potential maximum number of dots in that skill by 1. You must still spend XP as normal to purchase that still to its maximum level. You can purchase the Skill Aptitude merit multiple times, but each time you do, you must apply the merit to a different skill.

Slippery Customer (2 point merit)

Either you are extremely lithe, incredibly dexterous, or amazingly sharp-witted; whatever the reason, you have the uncanny ability to avoid damage. You gain a +3 bonus to your Dodge-based defense test pools.

Thaumaturgic Training (4 point merit)

Thaumaturgists closely guard their knowledge, and those who know Thaumaturgy's secrets – like the Tremere – rarely share mastery of their art. Somehow, in your past, you were trained by a thaumaturge or sorcerer, or you gained access to forbidden texts, and you have gathered enough skill to become proficient in one path of Thaumaturgy. With this merit, you have the capacity to learn a single path of Thaumaturgy, and you can purchase its powers at out-of-clan costs. If your character learned this discipline in her history, you must justify such education in the character's background. If you wish to purchase Thaumaturgy after your character enters play, you must purchase this merit first.

Unbondable (4 point merit)

There is something strange and powerful lurking in your blood, providing it with the ability to make foreign vitae lose its influence over your emotions. You are immune to the blood bond, including the lesser bonds of the Vinculum. Tremere characters, including those in Tremere bloodlines, cannot take this merit.

Unyielding (4 point merit)

Whether you call it being stubborn, intractable, or just plain ornery, your character has a fire inside her that just won't quit — no matter the circumstances. Increase your maximum permanent Willpower to 7. You also begin each game session with 7 Willpower, rather than the standard 6.

Versatile (3 point merit)

You've always been capable of multi-tasking, splitting your attention to accomplish two goals at once. Choose one attribute category (Physical, Social or Mental) and select an additional focus for that attribute. For example, a character with this merit can focus her Physical attribute in both Strength and Stamina.

Whisper of Life (1 point merit)

Perhaps you did not entirely die when you were Embraced, or perhaps the vampiric blood in your system altered your physiology less than others. You register as a mortal on all attempts to determine your creature type. Further, your aura is unnaturally bright for a vampire, and animals cannot sense your Beast (they act as though you are a mortal). If your Morality drops to 3 (temporarily or permanently), this merit ceases to function until your Morality is once more raised above 3. A character on a Path of Enlightenment cannot possess this merit.

Morality Merits

Some vampires forgo the petty mortal concerns embodied by the concept of Humanity. These vampires reason that since they are no longer human, they have no need to apply the sentiments of the living to themselves. Such vampires seek out alternative moral codes: Paths of Enlightenment.

The following merits represent learning one Path of Enlightenment. For more information on how to adopt and use Paths of Enlightenment, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, Alternate Paths of Enlightenment, page 305**. A character can possess only one Morality merit. Paths represent a fundamental shift in the character's ethics and personality, and it is impossible to adhere to more than one Morality path at a time.

It's important to remember that a path shapes how you play your character, for better and for worse. One of the most compelling parts of LARP is to see your character fail to achieve her goals or live up to her ethics. Even as a character on Humanity should occasionally have to compromise her morality or outright fail to live up to her beliefs, so too should a character on a Path of Enlightenment occasionally fail or question her ethics. Being on a Path of Enlightenment does not make one perfect, nor does it make one robotically capable of living up to her goals. Failures, conflicts, and crises of faith should occur often on any path of Morality.

Remember to talk to your Storyteller about your character's Path of Enlightenment and exactly what constitutes a transgression of those ethical beliefs. Be sure to occasionally show your character struggling with her enlightenment and failing to uphold those beliefs, just like a character following Humanity occasionally has ethical crises. Those emotional moments make the game special, and allow your character to shine.

Path of Blood (3 point merit)

The Path of Blood is practiced almost exclusively by Assamites, particularly those who reside in the mountain of Alamut. The founding principle of this path states that the childer of the Assamite Antediluvian, Haqim, must render bloody judgment upon all other vampires. Adherents to the Path of Blood attempt to convert others to their code, believing that vampires can only be redeemed through Haqim's wisdom. This path is rare, even among Assamites; one can follow the beliefs of Haqim and be redeemed without actually adopting the path. Followers of the Path of Blood are dangerous, often addicted to diablerie and willing to kill vampires and harshly judge mortals with the slightest provocation, so long as it benefits the Children of Haqim.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin in an effort to follow the teachings of the Assamite Antediluvian, Haqim, or in a direct attempt to convert others to the Path of Blood. If you voluntarily ignore an opportunity to better your generation, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily act against another Assamite – or allow another Assamite to be injured, harmed, or defeated – you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Dervishes."

Members of the Assamite clan can purchase this merit for 2 points, rather than 3.

Path of Caine (3 point merit)

The adherents to the Path of Caine are fanatical occultists, loremasters, and historians, obsessed with the study of Caine and the mythical first city of Enoch. They search for signs of Gehenna and revelations predicting Caine's return. In all ways, they embrace their vampiric nature, reviling anything that forces them to deal with humanity or to act in any way humane. Founding precepts of the path include meditation and introspection, along with a complete focus on purging all vestiges of Humanity. It is imperative that individuals on the Path of Caine be well educated in the myths and history of Caine and Enoch; characters wishing to pursue this path should have a dot of Lore with a focus in the Book of Nod.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while following the dictates of Caine as expressed in the *Book of Nod* or while obtaining lost occult knowledge. If you voluntarily ignore an opportunity to study occult knowledge, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily act humane, interact with mortals other than as cattle, or deny your vampiric needs, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Noddists."

Path of Cathari (3 point merit)

The Path of Cathari derives from the Albigensian heresy of the Middle Ages, which taught that God is dualistic in nature. Followers believe that God created both light (good) and dark (evil); they defined good as spiritual and tied to the soul, and evil as as the material world wherein souls are tempted and tested. As believers in reincarnation, Albigensians believe that humans must be tested during their time on Earth, and vampires must perform this duty. Followers of Cathari believe that Caine gave his childer the means to rule the wicked world and test its mortal inhabitants in order to see if they deserve grace. Those on the Path of Cathari tempt humans and non-Sabbat, engaging in sexual vice, creature comforts, and decadence as well as more spiritual outlets, attempting to become a dark and inhuman creature wholly devoted to her vampiric role.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, so long as you commit that sin while causing others to indulge their baser natures or while indulging in a new, as-yet-untried vice. If you voluntarily allow another person to remain innocent, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily kill instead of causing someone to question their own morality or virtue, encourage another to exercise restraint, or deny your own vices, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Albigensians."

Path of Chivalry (3 point merit)

Vampires created the Path of Chivalry during the Dark Ages, when honor and nobility were more tangible concepts than in modern nights. Since then, its variations have also been called the Path of Lordship or Path of Kings. Those who follow this path believe that they are superior beings, a cut above all other vampires and significantly more noble than mere humans. They attest that vampires were born to rule humanity as man rules over animals.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while defending the innocent or upholding the cardinal virtues: charity, justice, temperance, and courage. If you strike an unarmed opponent, disrespect a superior, or fail to provide hospitality to someone in need, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you fail in your duty, tell a lie, or show fear or cowardice, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. This is an old path, predating most others. Followers of this path are called "Scions."

Path of Death & the Soul (3 point merit)

The Path of Death & the Soul (also called the "Path of Bones") is devoted to understanding the nature of the immortal soul and unraveling the mysteries of death. Its followers seek to learn as much about the spirit world as possible, in order to comprehend the purpose of life, death, and undeath. They believe that the soul is constant and eternal, forever experiencing a cycle of death and rebirth — a cycle which vampires have somehow, inexplicably, escaped. To understand death, they must divest themselves of the trappings of life. Emotion is the enemy of logic. Death is not to be feared.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while actively seeking to understand the mysteries of death or the nature of the soul. If you voluntarily ignore an opportunity to study death, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily act on emotion or show regret, remorse, or empathy, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. This path is also called the Path of Bones, and followers of this path are called "Gravediggers."

Members of the Giovanni clan can purchase this merit for 2 points, rather than 3.

Path of Ecstasy (3 point merit)

Practitioners of this path revel in luxury instead of degradation. They sate the Beast by glutting its appetite. They glorify pleasure, reveling in the most decadent extremes of vampiric sensation. The Followers of Set initially created the Path of Ecstasy; they see pleasure as a means of worshipping their Antediluvian, and this path is inextricably linked to the worship of Set. Adherents to the Path of Ecstasy believe that pursuit of pleasure is a spiritual obligation. Those who spurn luxury and hedonism are misguided and must be educated or coerced. Resisting temptation is defying the very essence of one's vampiric nature.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while actively pursuing hedonistic pleasure or coercing another to do the same. If you voluntarily ignore an opportunity to experience a new sensation, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily show regret or remorse for your depravity, or allow an innocent to go undefiled, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Astartites."

Members of the Setite clan can purchase this merit for 2 points, rather than 3.

Path of Evil Revelations (3 point merit)

Followers of the Path of Evil Revelations fully revel in the darkness of the vampiric state and believe that a vampire's role is to promote ultimate evil in the physical world. They seek out and serve entities of the infernal: demons, devils, or dark spirits. By serving these monstrosities, the vampire establishes a place in the infernal hierarchy in exchange for servitude and the sacrifice of souls. Ultimately, this path embraces evil as a tool, practicing debased rituals and unleashing horror on the world. These individuals serve their masters' desires, and if they perform their tasks well, they are rewarded with dark magic and other investments of demonic power.

Other vampires hate and fear followers of this path. Both the Camarilla and the Sabbat seek out and destroy such practitioners, forcing those on Evil Revelations to be subtle and stay hidden, even as they seek converts – and sacrifices – within vampiric society.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while acting in service to the infernal. If you voluntarily show true compassion or fail to advance your master's goals, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily defy or disobey your infernal master, or if you share infernal secrets with those who are not dedicated to your master's will, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Corruptors."

Path of Feral Heart (3 point merit)

Vampires are the ultimate predators, and those who follow the Path of Feral Heart embrace their savage, predatory nature. Barbarians and savages, they hone their instincts and accept the bestial drives that accompany the vampiric state. A follower of this path feels that the Beast is a natural part of her existence, and that a vampire should learn to accept and even encourage its cunning and vicious instincts. These vampires have little interest in civilization, education, or technology. They do not care for politics and spend their existence actively abstaining from anything that could come between them and their animalistic nature.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while actively following your primitive urges or hunting your prey. If you use technology or engage in politics, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you show fear or mercy, abandon a hunt, or kill outside of a hunt, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Beasts."

Path of Heaven (3 point merit)

According to myth, vampires are cursed, created when Caine killed his brother and defied God's laws. Some accept this burden and choose to embrace darkness and evil. Others see it as a challenge, striving toward salvation and seeking God's forgiveness not only for their own sins, but also for Caine's. Those on the Path of Heaven see the Beast as a tempter, an incarnation of evil that seeks to draw them into hell. They turn to religion – Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, or another institution – to guide them toward eternal peace. Many adherents are priests, striving to inspire others to hope that God has not truly forsaken the vampiric race.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while actively following the precepts and commandments of your faith. If you commit an act of vice, fail to proselytize your faith, or fail to speak out against corruption and sinfulness as defined by your faith, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you allow anyone to transgress those precepts without being punished, murder innocents, or aid the infernal (knowingly or not) you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Faithful."

Path of Harmony (3 point merit)

The Path of Harmony is a gentler path than most, espousing the animalistic nature of vampirism — but its followers pursue a balance with nature, rather than utter domination. They attempt to balance the intellect and emotions of Humanity against the instinct and savagery of the Beast: the balance of predator and prey. Such a balance is extremely difficult to reach, and upsetting the natural balance – of a vampire or of her environment – is against this moral code.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while actively attempting to balance your nature. If you act on any kind of emotional or instinctual extreme, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily resist frenzy, kill for any reason other than survival, or ignore your vampiric needs for blood and safety, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Harmonists."

Path of Honorable Accord (3 point merit)

Followers of the Path of Honorable Accord are extremely lawful, following a specific three-fold code of commandments: the Tower of Duty, the Tower of Honor, and the Tower of Courage. They twist these rules for their own benefit, using them to entangle (and destroy) others whenever possible. Despite the name, these vampires are not honorable. While they are often virtuous, they are by no means good. Such a vampire epitomizes cruelty, intolerance, tyranny, and absolute authoritarianism. By holding to these laws, an adherent to Honorable Accord seeks to better herself — and rule others. A follower of the Path of Honorable Accord adheres rigidly to her society's laws, such as the Camarilla's Traditions, the Sabbat's Code of Milan, and so forth, and also to any commands or restrictions placed on her by a ruler in that society, such as a Prince's dictate or the Regent's edicts. This path is not a Code of Honor. It is absolute, unquestioning, inflexible obedience to the Rule of Law, even when those laws are inherently unjust.

Knights have no sense of mercy, emotion, or even interest in anything other than adherence to the absolute letter of the rules. They keep their word because it is a contract, not because they have an emotional commitment; they tie their sanity to the fact that a covenant, once made, must be obeyed. Emotions, compassion, ethics, and morals are meaningless. Where another individual might spare someone who broke the law out of absolute necessity, a follower of this path has no mercy, no virtue, and absolutely no sense of fairness. She has the law, and the law is everything.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while following the absolute letter of the law. If you voluntarily pass up an opportunity to benefit from exploiting a loophole in the rules, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily transgress against the law, disobey a command from a superior, break your word, place personal concerns over duty, or fail to severely punish a transgressor against the law, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Knights."

Path of Lilith (3 point merit)

The Path of Lilith states that the first woman created by God was not the submissive and gentle Eve; she was the tempestuous, wise, and demanding Lilith. For insisting on equality with Adam, she was cast out of the Garden of Eden. The followers of this path worship Lilith, attempting to follow in her footsteps and learn from her example. They seek wisdom through pain and adversity, and they preach Lilith's superiority over Caine.

Obviously, because the Path of Lilith reveres Lilith over Caine, it walks the line of heresy within the Sabbat. Because its followers vocally espouse the worship of an ancient and the tales of the Book of Nod, the Camarilla considers them heretics as well. Followers of the Path of Lilith are well advised to hide themselves, lest they be destroyed.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while seeking enlightenment or knowledge through pain. If you voluntarily ignore an opportunity to make another individual suffer in order to gain wisdom or learn a lesson painfully, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily deny Lilith's superiority, rely on another, or feel remorse for an individual who is suffering (or has suffered), you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Bahari."

Path of Metamorphosis (3 point merit)

Adherents to the Path of Metamorphosis are strange, alien creatures who attempt to carve away everything recognizably human-like about themselves and transform into something more profound. Of all paths, this may be the most inhumane, as its followers actively disdain and revile all things having to do with humans, humanity, or the human condition. These vampires are cold, utterly inhuman, and exactingly scientific. Some say they are loners, but it is more accurate to say they are more interested in research and experimentation than in participation and exploration.

They are scientists, but they are also spiritualists, focusing on attaining a more perfect state of being. A Seeker eliminates gender and physical boundaries first, and then works to revise personal mental and social constraints until it is no longer recognizably human by any comparison. This path was developed and is practiced primarily by Clan Tzimisce, but other vampires, notably the Gangrel, are also found following this path.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while performing a scientific experiment or actively attempting to further chrysalis into something new. If you voluntarily share knowledge for no benefit, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you ignore an opportunity to alter yourself, seek apotheosis, or perform a new experiment, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Seekers."

Members of Clan Tzimisce can purchase this merit for 2 points, rather than 3.

Path of Night (3 point merit)

Vampires who follow the Path of Night embrace a dark, deterministic viewpoint on their damned state. They believe that vampires must torment all agents of good, promoting evil and defiling innocence wherever possible. Their intent is to remind humanity that it should be afraid of vice and of the creatures who walk the night. Some adherents to the Path of Night are motivated by religious fervor, while others are truly nihilistic in their views of good and evil. A few even go so far as to abhor the touch of light entirely, shrouding themselves in fabric or shadows, and even tearing out their eyes so to more fully unify with darkness.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while attempting to shock others with your evil, undermine another's authority, or pointedly violate the orders of someone who thinks she's in charge of you. If you voluntarily fail to act on an opportunity to spread evil, tempt others to damnation, or terrify the faithless, you lose Morality as though you've committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily follow another character's orders or repent of your evil, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. This merit encompasses all roleplay variants of the Path of Night, including Righteous, Allied, etc. Followers of this path are called "Nihilists."

Members of Clan Lasombra can purchase this merit for 2 points, rather than 3.

The Three Towers

Like most things associated with Honorable Accord, the base precepts of the path are simple. Long ago, they were written down in a three-part folio called "The Towers." When translated into English, it totals 72 pages. The three chapters are the Tower of Duty, the Tower of Honor, and the Tower of Courage. The Tower of Duty is a listing of rules of conduct. The Tower of Honor is the spiritual chapter of the codex, detailing six different stories – the Tale of Blood, the Tale of the Lone Wanderer, the Tale of the Midnight Court, the Tale of the Kine, the Tale of the Wolf, and the Tale of Dawn – which describe adherence to logic, tyranny, and the complete authority of law. The Tower of Courage is an allegorical story of a knight's journey from darkness, through the horrors of war, to a place of cold and dreadful understanding. Knights are expected to keep a copy of the code with them at all times.

Path of Orion (3 point merit)

For vampires on the Path of Orion, both one's human nature and one's Beast are impediments to progression. The species as a whole will progress, they say, only when vampires accept their purpose as hunters, destroying man and Beast alike. To these individuals, undead existence is a quest to find and overcome the greatest challenges, the most dangerous enemies, and ultimately, themselves. By facing and destroying the strongest combatants, a follower of the Path of Orion finds purification. They know that they must not only overcome their own Beasts, but also the Beasts of all vampires.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while actively pursuing enemies or designated prey to be killed. If you show mercy or sympathy, or if you hunt a foe a weaker than yourself, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you voluntarily ignore a threat, refuse a challenge, turn away from a worthy hunt, or show cowardice or weakness, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Stalkers."

Path of Paradox (3 point merit)

A path created and primarily followed by members of the Ravnos clan, the Path of Paradox teaches that existence is fluid and malleable. Nothing is real, nothing is static, and all things can be changed through an act of will. The Ravnos call this path "Mayaparisatya," and the path owes much to Hindu teachings. According to this arduous and demanding path, mortals follow a cycle of life and death — a cycle that has somehow eluded vampires. Due to this, the undead have lost their dharma and have no true destiny. Those vampires who ignore their dharma must be educated and enlightened — or destroyed. A vampire must penetrate the illusions of reality and see the truth beneath or she will never find salvation. This is much like accepting two conflicting truths and finding ultimate meaning in the paradox between.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when revealing a truth to someone unaware of that information, or when erasing a karmic debt. If you voluntarily ignore an opportunity to pursue a hidden truth, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you hinder change or fail to promote chaos, or allow others to ignore their dharma and stagnate, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Rakshasa."

Members of Clan Ravnos can purchase this merit for 2 points, rather than 3.

Path of Power & the Inner Voice (3 point merit)

When one has immortality, supernatural prowess, and an eternity to squander, the only true acquisition is that of authority and dominion over others. Followers of this path believe that power and control are the only goals worth pursuing, and that by bending the world to her will, a vampire creates order, stability, and meaningful victories. In some circles, this path is called the "Path of Domination," for those who follow it are tyrannical and authoritative — but also strangely protective of those who serve them. Unifiers demand to be feared and respected, and do not tolerate weakness or meaningless failure; being bested is one thing, simply being unable to achieve is another. They are consummate politicians and strategists, willing to do anything and everything to achieve authority.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin in order to directly increase your personal power, whether physical or political, or to prevent yourself from losing such power. If you voluntarily give up authority, allow your followers to be abused by anyone other than you, defy a superior you are not willing to directly challenge, or pass up an easy opportunity to gain power, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Unifiers."

Path of Scorched Heart (3 point merit)

Adherents to the Path of Scorched Heart believe that the Beast can only be controlled by systematically eradicating every emotion. They espouse that the heart is a weakness to the vampiric condition; it should have died with the rest of one's mortal flesh. All falsehood and weakness are products of emotions, and one can only reach truth through cold logic and reserved scholarship. The heart must not be allowed to rule one's actions. The only way to overcome the Beast is to turn your heart to metaphorical ash. Although Phoenicians recognize a crude distinction between the concepts of good and evil, they only see benefit in practicality. Followers of this path consider most vampires to be weak, emotional simpletons, and Phoenicians strive to use those weaknesses against their enemies.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin completely without sentiment or emotional reasoning. If you place someone else's needs above your own, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you act on emotion, show trust in another, or fail to apply logic in a crisis, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Phoenicians."

Members of the True Brujah bloodline (and only that bloodline, not the entire Brujah clan) can purchase this merit for 2 points, rather than 3.

Path of Typhon-Set (3 point merit)

Also called the Path of Sutekh or the Path of Typhon, the Followers of Set created this path as a means of freeing oneself from moral taboos and the influence of the material world in order to best serve the Antediluvian, Set. This path is a religious one, preaching that Set will one day return to cleanse the Beast from his followers and shape the world in his image. When that day comes, Set's true followers will undergo an apotheosis and be blessed by their god. Adherents to this path believe that Set was truly one of the gods of Egypt, and that his immortality is passed on to them, carrying them through death and granting them vampiric unlife. They refuse the myths of Caine and worship Set wholeheartedly. They seek to find Set and return him to the world; to convert other vampires to his service; and to corrupt and defile hope, innocence, and purity wherever they discover it.

System:

You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin in the active service of Set. You must make every attempt to corrupt vampires to the worship of Set, especially those seeking Golconda, or else gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 1 sin. If you fail to take advantage of another person's emotional weaknesses or fail to take every measure to acquire knowledge that may aid in Set's return, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. Followers of this path are called "Theophidians" or "Temple Guards."

Members of the Viper bloodline (and only that bloodline, not the entire Setite clan) can purchase this merit for 2 points, rather than 3.

General Flaws

"Hatred, too, is an art."

— Jean-Marc d'Harfleur, Toreador Archon

The following flaws may be purchased by characters of any clan.

Addiction (2 point flaw)

You suffer from an addiction to a substance, which must be present in the blood you drink. This can be alcohol, nicotine, hard drugs, or simply adrenaline. Mechanically, a character's addiction is broken down into one of three categories: amphetamines, hallucinogens, or sedatives. When you take this flaw, you must choose one of these three categories to represent your character's addiction. You may take this flaw up to three times, each time choosing a different kind of drug, and suffering all of the penalties. For more information on drugs and toxins, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, Drugs and Poison, page 286**. At the start of the game, or anytime the character feeds, you receive your addiction's penalty, as follows, for one hour:

- **Amphetamine:** You receive a -1 penalty to all Mental challenges and all challenges requiring coordination or mental dexterity.
- **Hallucinogen:** You are agitated and cannot regain Willpower for the next hour.
- **Sedatives:** You suffer a -5 penalty to challenges based on the Investigation or Awareness skills.

Amnesia (1 point flaw)

You are unable to remember anything about your past, yourself, or your family, whether mortal or vampiric. You have no knowledge of your past paramours, enemies, or allies. Your origins and the circumstances behind your Amnesia are for the Storyteller to determine, and she is encouraged to make your backstory as interesting as possible, so that it might haunt your present and affect your character's story.

Archaic (2 point flaw)

The constant influx of modern technology confuses and enrages you. Modern things signal an increase in mortal power and a palpable shift away from the world you understand. You cannot purchase the following skills: Computer, Drive, Science (any modern science), or Security. Further, you cannot operate machinery or technology invented in the last 100 years. Note: Players with this flaw should roleplay ancient or archaic perspectives on other skills where appropriate, such as the use of herbs and poultices when performing the Medicine skill, rather than modern drugs and equipment.

Awkward Mobility (2 point flaw)

You have difficulty moving quickly or keeping up with those around you. You might be short, possess a club foot, have a hunchback, or walk with a limp. You take two steps per movement action instead of the standard three.

Bad Sight (2 point flaw)

Your sight is defective, and even with corrective glasses or contacts, you cannot see with complete acuity. You suffer a -2 penalty to all of your Physical ranged attacks, including attacks with guns and thrown weapons.

Beacon of the Unholy (3 point flaw)

You radiate a conspicuous evil, one that catches mortal attention and leaves a lingering feeling of unease. Devout mortals, and mortal hunters with True Faith, automatically realize you are a vampire. You may be descended from a mortal lineage that historically interacted (interbred) with demons, you may be suffering under a demonic curse, or you may actually be an infernalist. Any time you use a discipline's 4th-dot power or above, your aura shows the signs of infernal corruption. You cannot enter sacred sites, such as churches, mosques, synagogues, or other places of worship. Powers of faith, including the True Faith of mortal hunters and the powers of the Salubri, always deal an additional point of damage on a successful attack.

Beast in the Mirror (2 point flaw)

Mirrors betray your monstrous nature. Anyone, mortal or vampire, who sees your reflection in a mirror discovers your Beast leering back at them. Your Beast appears on cameras that rely on mirrors, but not on modern digital equipment. Any time you see your reflection, you gain an automatic Beast trait. Beast traits gained from this flaw do not count towards Morality loss, but do count towards a character's likelihood to frenzy. Like all Beast traits, these traits remain until you rest for a full day. For more information on Beast traits and Morality sins, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, Gaining Beast Traits, page 300**.

Bestial Instinct (2 point flaw)

Your Beast loves to fight and won't back down from a challenge. When it sees an opportunity to break free, it lunges to the fore with dangerous abandon, tearing at your spirit with ardent claws. Every time you gain one or more Beast traits, you take a point of aggravated damage. This damage cannot be reduced or negated.

Blood Rot (5 point flaw)

You are afflicted with an insidious vampiric disease that rots your blood, turning your veins and flesh a mildewed black. As your putrid vitae moves through your veins, this disease spreads, corrupting your flesh in patchy rivulets of sodden mold. Every time you spend a point of Blood, you take a point of normal damage. This damage cannot be reduced or negated. Blood spent to heal does not trigger this effect. This disease is not contagious, but appearing in public while you are suffering the visible effects of Blood Rot is considered a breach of the Masquerade.

Bound to the Earth (2 point flaw)

Some vampires are inextricably tied to their domains of origin, and they must rest in the proximity of at least two handfuls of native soil: earth from a place important in their mortal days. This earth may be the soil from your birthplace or earth from the graveyard where you underwent your Embrace. Each night spent without this physical connection to that land inflicts a cumulative -1 penalty to all of your attack test pools (to a maximum of -5). These penalties remain until you rest for a full day amid your earth once more.

Blunted Fangs (2 point flaw)

Your fangs are blunted, rather than being sharp like those of other vampires. As a result, your bite does not do aggravated damage. Your bite also does not invoke the Kiss, and you must feed through more vicious means.

Cannot Cross Running Water (2 point flaw)

You cannot cross running water unless you are at least 50 feet above it. For the purpose of this flaw, "running water" must be at least the size of a stream three feet across or some larger body of water. When you cross running water, you lose 1 Willpower. That Willpower cannot be regained until you rest for a full day,

Careless (1 point flaw)

It's hard for you to pay attention to detail, and when you get into combat, you tend to act first and think afterwards, even when it means you end up going in circles or forgetting simple things. You make plenty of mistakes in your everyday existence, such as leaving things behind or letting simple tasks slip your mind. Your attacks do not count against another player's ability to declare a fair escape, unless you are currently grappling your target. A character you attack prior to her initiative in a round may still declare a fair escape in that round. Also, if someone declares her intention to fair escape, you cannot prevent her from fair escaping by declaring that you intend to use a Physical action against her later in that round. For more information on fair escape, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 277**.

Childlike (4 point flaw)

You are very childlike in appearance. This may be because you are small of stature, or it may be because you were Embraced during a period of history when an early teenager was considered of marriageable age. It is against vampiric custom to Embrace children, and many consider such vampires to be both a significant breach of the Masquerade and a disgusting practice. Further, it is difficult for you to disguise the fact that you aren't maturing, and it is difficult for a child to spend time in public during the late hours vampires must keep. Characters with this flaw have a starting Physical attribute maximum of 5, rather than 10. This number can be increased with bonus attribute traits.

Conspicuous Consumption (3 point flaw)

You cannot simply draw nourishment from the blood of mortals; you must also consume your victim's heart, liver, and other blood-rich tissue. This requirement necessitates the deaths of all of your victims. A character with this flaw starts each evening with a Beast trait and gains an additional Beast trait each time she feeds. You do not get a degeneration challenge to reduce Beast traits gained through this merit. Characters with this flaw may eat flesh as though they had the merit Personal Masquerade. Characters with Conspicuous Consumption do not receive the other benefits of Personal Masquerade and cannot use it to eat normal food (only the flesh consumed while feeding).

Curiosity (2 point flaw)

Your incredible Curiosity often overrides your common sense. You can't help it! There are so many wonderful things in the world, so many secrets to uncover, and so many mysteries to understand. If you fail to explore something new or unknown, your maximum Willpower is reduced by 1 for the remainder of the evening. This penalty is cumulative; if you refuse more than one intriguing opportunity, your Willpower maximum continues to decline.

Cursed (1 point flaw)

You suffer from a minor supernatural curse due to your karmic debt to the universe or an enemy with a twisted sense of humor. This curse is specific and detailed; it should relate to some archetypal flaw in your character, such as hubris. Like all flaws, remember that a Storyteller should not allow a curse that does not meaningfully impact your character. A curse must be attached to a skill in which you possess at least 1 dot. When the curse is triggered, you receive a -1 penalty to test pools with that skill. You may purchase this flaw up to three times. Some examples:

- A Nosferatu who was a governess in life carries a dying boy's curse, stating that children younger than 10 can always see through her Obfuscate. While the player will portray this specific effect in her story, she has also associated this curse with her Stealth skill. Further, when in the presence of children younger than 10, her Stealth-based pools are reduced by one.
- A Kiasyd has been cursed by tricksy faeries. Milk curdles in his presence, and insects die when they come within three paces of his location. Whenever the Storyteller indicates that that the faeries are actively plaguing him, the Kiasyd's player must roleplay those effects. He has associated this curse with his Awareness skill, and therefore his Awareness-based pools are reduced by 1 when this occurs.
- An archaeologist Lasombra believes that she was cursed for opening an ancient Egyptian tomb. The curse states that the Lasombra will "suffer a twisted tongue when she most needs clarity." The Lasombra's player has associated this curse with her Linguistics skill. Whenever she is attempting to translate one language into another, she roleplays her uncertainty and grammatical mistakes. Further, all pools based on her Linguistics skill are reduced by 1 when she is under pressure.

Dark Fate (5 point flaw)

Something has altered the course of your unlife, consigning you either psychologically or supernaturally to a tragic end. Perhaps you have grown bored with eternity and subconsciously seek ways to end your existence, or perhaps something you've done in the past has caused fate to become your enemy. However it came to pass, your end is near, and you will not escape it easily. If you ever fall into torpor or are staked, you instead meet your Final Death.

Dark Secret (1 point flaw)

You have a secret from your past, which would cause great embarrassment if uncovered by your enemies. If your secret is publicly revealed, you must buy off this flaw, as per the rules for removing flaws on **page 236**. Like all flaws, remember that a Storyteller should not allow a Dark Secret that does not impact the character's possible survival if it is revealed or that copies a difficulty inherent to the character type. A character cannot have more than one Dark Secret. Some examples of Dark Secrets include:

- You have a lover in another sect or who is an infernalist
- You have committed a crime that is punishable by sect's laws
- You have betrayed your clan or lineage

Death Sight (2 point flaw)

Your sight never truly recovered from your death, and since your Embrace, it has refused to accurately portray the world around you. Everyone you see (mortal, vampire, or other) appear withered and dead. Buildings seem decrepit, and your surroundings hold no beauty and no vibrancy. All of your Investigation pools are at a -2 penalty, and you cannot use the Auspex power of Aura Perception to determine a creature's type. Lastly, you cannot visually tell the difference between a living person and a vampire, even one on a path.

Deep Sleeper (2 point flaw)

You have trouble waking during the day, even in dangerous situations. Your Morality is considered two lower for the purposes of staying awake during the day and in determining the penalties you suffer during daylight hours.

Disease Carrier (4 point flaw)

Your blood carries a lethal and highly contagious disease. This disease can be anything from the Black Death, to rabies, to smallpox. Mortals whom you feed upon always contract this disease, and it is usually deadly. When you feed from a Stamina-focused mortal, she recovers within five days. Other mortals always die. When you spend a downtime action to feed, you must spend an additional downtime action to feed safely, or else you are knowingly murdering mortals by spreading your disease. If you do not feed safely, you gain Beast traits at the beginning of the next game, as though you committed murder. If you must feed during game, you must spend twice as long to feed, or you have not fed safely, and you immediately suffer this same penalty. For more information on Beast traits and morality sins, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, Gaining Beast Traits, page 300**.

Dull (2 point flaw)

Life has become far more exciting since your Embrace… but sadly, you haven't. You're prone to talk about bland things, and you don't handle furor or emotional stimulation very well. When others get passionate, you boggle, harrumph, and withdraw. This makes it difficult for you to express your deepest feelings and inner motivations. You don't receive the retest usually given by a character's archetype.

Eerie Presence (1 point flaw)

You radiate an otherworldly air that causes nervousness and unease in the people around you. The exact nature of this Eerie Presence is specific to each vampire and can take many different forms. You should speak with your Storyteller to determine the exact strangeness conferred upon your character by this flaw, but all types of eerie Eerie Presence are disconcerting and potentially a breach of the Masquerade. You may take this flaw up to three times for different aspects of your strange nature, but each must be distinctive and unconnected from the rest. You cannot take Eerie Presence twice and claim your eyes are purple *and* glowing. You can take Eerie Presence twice and say your eyes glow and you constantly emit a stench of decay.

Some possible examples include:

- Glowing or unusually colored eyes
- Cold breeze following the character
- Unearthly scent of roses or of grave earth
- Permanent fangs that cannot retract
- Forked tongue or scaled skin
- Cast no reflection (as per the Lasombra clan weakness)
- Plants wither as you approach and die at your touch

Flesh of the Corpse (5 point flaw)

Your flesh does not fully regenerate once it is damaged. While you are able to heal yourself to the point of full functionality, your skin still retains cuts, tears, bullet holes, etc. Every time you are hit by a Physical attack that does 2 or more points of damage, you also suffer an immediate -1 penalty to your Physical attribute (to a maximum penalty of -5). This penalty is not removed if you heal the damage; it remains until the character rests for a full day.

Fragile Bones (4 point flaw)

Your body is less hardy than most and cannot endure as much injury. Your bones may be more brittle, and your physical stature may be slight or delicate. If you take more than 2 points of damage from a single blow, one of your limbs (chosen by your attacker) is broken. This limb is useless until that damage is healed. If one or both of your character's legs becomes broken, you can only move one step per action, by limping or crawling. If either of your character's arms becomes broken, you suffer a -5 penalty to Brawl and Melee attack test pools, unless the character has the Ambidextrous merit, in which case, you only suffer a -3 penalty. A character with a broken arm cannot use two-handed weapons. A character with two broken arms cannot make Physical attacks unless she is capable of biting without grappling or she has more than two other useable limbs (such as tentacles summoned by Black Metamorphosis or limbs created with Vicissitude).

Gehenna Prophet (2 point flaw)

You suffer from visions of apocalyptic disaster and premonitions of wide-scale destruction. The universe is wrong somehow, and karmic balance will return to make everyone suffer. You have waking nightmares and visions of a hellish future that never occurred. Some say this is a byproduct of a difficult Embrace; others say it is a premonition of Gehenna or a vision of a Gehenna that never occurred. You must use all of your will to tell the difference between the real world and the one that haunts you. Every time your Willpower decreases, you lose a little more of your grasp on reality and sink into these nightmarish visions. If you run out of Willpower, you fall into torpor. This flaw is often found in Cappadocians, Malkavians, Nosferatu, and Ravnos.

Grip of the Damned (2 point flaw)

There is no ecstasy or pleasure in the Kiss when you feed; mortals suffer horrific agony from your bite. You must Grapple your prey to ensure that they cannot escape. You cannot close the wounds you cause after drinking others' blood. Feeding from mortals counts as a level one Morality sin. For more information on Beast traits and Morality sins, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, Gaining Beast Traits, page 300**.

Hard of Hearing (2 point flaw)

Your hearing is defective, and even with corrective equipment, you cannot hear with complete acuity. This can be dangerous under some circumstances, as you cannot rely on your hearing to warn you of danger. You suffer a -2 penalty to Awareness and Investigation test pools based on hearing.

Haunted (1 point flaw)

A vengeful ghost torments you from beyond the grave. Though it usually limits itself to phantasmal moaning, eerie manifestations, and the occasional detrimental effect, this ghost is committed to causing you harm. It does its best to make your eternity miserable and to hasten the day when you will join it in death. You can see and hear this ghost whether or not you have the Medium merit or possess any of the paths of Necromancy.

Hunted (4 point flaw)

Your name, face, and history are known to hunter organizations, werewolves, or an opposing sect. If you attract attention, the hunters will come for you. You must spend 2 downtime actions each month to avoid the individuals who are actively seeking your Final Death. If you fail to do this, you enter the game with your Healthy wound track filled with aggravated damage.

Infamous Brood (3 point flaw)

You come from an infamous brood. Any officer of your sect can expend any status trait (abiding, innate, or fleeting) in order to give you the *Warned* status trait.

Illiterate (1 point flaw)

Through lack of education or as the result of a condition like dyslexia, you are unable to read or write. This flaw makes it impossible to access any dots in the following skills: Academics, Computer, or Science. Your Storyteller may likewise choose to limit the number of dots you may access in Lore or Occult.

Impatient (2 point flaw)

You have no patience for standing around and waiting. You want to do things now — forget the slowpokes trying to hold you back. You vastly prefer acting on impulse without caring about the consequences. Every time you are forced to wait or be patient instead of acting immediately, you must spend 1 Willpower to wait without acting for five minutes. If you do not spend this Willpower, you react with extreme anger, lashing out at the source of your delay.

Inept (3 point flaw)

Your Embrace was a difficult one, and perhaps fate did not intend you to be a member of the clan that chose you. You have no skill with one of the native disciplines of your clan. You do not start with a free dot of this discipline, and you must pay out-of-clan XP costs to purchase this discipline, although you do not require a teacher. You must purchase this flaw at character creation. This flaw cannot be removed.

Intolerance (1 point flaw)

You have an unreasoning dislike of a certain thing. This may be a clan, a bloodline, a type of creature, or a specific type of person. You will persecute these individuals to the extent of your ability, even jeopardizing alliances and your own reputation to see them besmirched. If forced to work with such a person, you suffer a -2 penalty to all of your non-defensive test pools.

Known to be Dead (1 point flaw)

As a mortal, you lived in the area where the chronicle is set (or you possess a high Fame background), and those who love you believe that you are dead. If you use your real name, if your photograph gets out, or if you are spotted by people who knew you, uncomfortable questions will be asked. If it happens too often, mortal hunters will quickly realize your undead nature.

Lesser Generation (1 or 2 point flaw)

A character with this flaw must have either 1 or 2 dots in the Generation background; elders of any Generation cannot possess this flaw.

The 1st and 2nd dots of the Generation background (Neonate or Ancilla) cover a wider variety of generations than the three elder dots. A Neonate, with 1 dot of Generation, could be from 15 to 11 steps removed from the mythical first vampire. An Ancilla, with 2 dots of the Generation background, could be either 10 or 9 steps removed.

If an Ancilla takes this flaw, she is 10th generation. If a Neonate takes this flaw, you may choose to be 12th or 13th

generation. If you choose 13th generation for your character, then this is a 2 point flaw, rather than 1. If you wish your character to be a truly thin-blooded vampire of 14th or 15th generation, you must purchase the Thin Blooded flaw rather than the Lesser Generation flaw. You cannot purchase both Lesser Generation and Thin Blooded.

If a character with Lesser Generation diablerizes and gains a generation that places her at the default point of your Generation background, you must remove this flaw and repay its XP cost. This change occurs when a Neonate character diablerizes and brings her generation from 12th to 11th or when an Ancilla character diablerizes from 10th to 9th generation.

Low Pain Threshold (3 point flaw)

You are a gentle, soft creature, not known for your tenacity. You may have come from a decadent society, or from noble stock who never had to perform any significant physical labor. Because of this, you have 1 less health level in both your Injured and Incapacitated wound tracks. Your Healthy levels are not affected by this flaw.

Magic Susceptibility (2 point flaw)

You are susceptible to blood magic, as well as to spells of mages or the hedge-magic of mortals. You cannot spend Willpower to retest Thaumaturgy, Necromancy, or other forms of magic.

Methuselah's Thirst (4 point flaw)

You have difficulty drawing nourishment from human or animal blood. Vampire blood still affords full nourishment, which causes you to be in danger of the blood bond, and may lead you to the forbidden hunger of Amaranth. You always come into play with half your Blood pool; no amount of downtime actions can cause you to come into play at full Blood. Characters with this flaw cannot benefit from the Herd background. You may feed to full if you feed from other vampires. This flaw primarily occurs in Master or Luminary Elders.

Nightmares (1 point flaw)

You experience horrendous nightmares when you rest during the day, and those images haunt you during the waking hours. You rarely get a full day's sleep, and it is difficult for you to overcome your agitated Beast. When you sin against your Morality, your mind fixates on those events, playing them (and other emotionally painful incidents of your past) over and over while you sleep during the day. You lose Beast traits at a rate of 1 per day of rest, rather than losing all Beast traits with a single day's sleep.

Necrophile (1 point flaw)

You are obsessed with the dead. Your haven is distastefully decorated with severed and mutilated body parts. You talk to the dead, whether you can hear them talk back or not, dance with them, make art out of them, and enjoy their company. This might make it difficult to have guests over for a chat. Should mortals discover your haven, it will certainly cause a Masquerade breach and receive all manner of attention from the media. You must spend at least 10 minutes in the company of true corpses each night. If you do not, you suffer a -1 penalty to all test pools until you have fulfilled this requirement. This penalty is not cumulative.

Notoriety (2 point flaw)

You have a bad reputation among other vampires. This may be from something you have done in the past or it may be derived from your sire, lineage, or other connections. You do not receive passive bonuses from fleeting status traits.

Obvious Predator (2 point flaw)

Mortals instinctively sense that there's something wrong with you. Your Beast is strong, and something about you makes other people realize that you're dangerous. Mortals react poorly to you, as you exude a blatant air of menace. Further, the Beast overcomes your better nature and makes it difficult for you to remember your true priorities. You suffer a -2 penalty on all interactions with mortals who are unaware of the supernatural world. Further, you cannot purchase the Contacts, Allies, or Influence backgrounds.

One Eye (3 point flaw)

You may have lost an eye before the Embrace, or it may have been removed by some permanent effect, such as Vicissitude. For whatever reason, you cannot regenerate it under any circumstances. You suffer a -5 penalty to all of your Physical ranged attacks, including attacks with guns and thrown weapons.

Overconfident (2 point flaw)

You have an exaggerated and unshakable opinion of your own worth and capabilities. You trust your own abilities over anything another person could offer, even in situations where you risk defeat. Because you aren't actually invulnerable and omnipotent, such overconfidence can be dangerous, and when you do fail, you quickly find someone or something else to blame. You cannot benefit from the assist attacker or assist defender mass combat tactics, unless the person assisting you is following an order that you have just issued.

Permanent Wound (3 point flaw)

You suffered injuries during or immediately before the Embrace, which your sire did not repair. This wound cannot be healed, but it does not bleed, and you may be able to hide it under bandages or clothing. You have two fewer Healthy wound levels.

Poseidon's Call (3 point flaw)

Your stability is directly tied to the weather. You calm as skies clear and grow progressively more bloodthirsty as a storm mounts. If you don't sleep on or under naturally occurring water (in a boat on a lake, river, or ocean; or beneath the waters of a stream), you cannot spend Willpower the next night.

Pied Piper (1 point flaw)

Animals flock to your presence, whether you want them to or not. These animals are of a distinctive species, and those who know to watch for such creatures can easily tell when you are in the area. Their presence makes it fairly easy to track your movements, locate your whereabouts, and potentially discover where you make your haven. You have no capacity to control these creatures unless you use Animalism on them, and even if you do so, more will come to take the place of the ones you send away. When you choose this flaw, you must choose the species of animal. These animals will not harm you unless directed by someone else who has Animalism, and the animals can see through your supernatural powers of concealment, making it impossible for you to hide from them.

Prey Exclusion (1 point flaw)

Something in your psychology or religious beliefs prohibits you from hunting a certain type of mortal prey. You might refuse to feed on drug dealers, policemen, innocents, or Buddhists. You gain no nourishment from such individuals. If you witness other vampires feeding on your excluded prey, you must attempt to stop this defilement, violently if necessary. If you fail, you gain a Beast trait.

Repelled by Religion (3 point flaw)

In legend, vampires can be driven away by holy symbols and cannot enter blessed or sacred ground. Your blood is tied to the origins of those myths. It might be that you suffer residual religious guilt or that your Beast hates and fears religious devotion. For whatever reason, when a mortal formally presents a symbol of her faith (whatever that may be), you cannot directly harm the mortal, nor affect her with powers, nor come within five steps of her. If you come into contact with a holy symbol, you take a point of normal damage each turn you are in contact with it. Also, you cannot enter a site which is designated by your Storyteller as holy ground. If you are forced to do so (or carried onto such territory), you suffer 3 points of aggravated damage each turn you remain there. This damage cannot be reduced or negated.

Short Attention Span (4 point flaw)

You've never been good at concentrating, and your will is somewhat shaky on your best days. If you must concentrate to continue using a power or ability, your use of that power ends after a single turn and must be reactivated if you wish to continue using it. In addition, your permanent Willpower is reduced by 1.

Short Fuse (2 point flaw)

You rage at the world, not because of injustice or because you have a score to settle. The truth is that you're just always angry. You are considered to have 1 additional Beast trait when determining if you must test for frenzy and determining that test test's difficulty.

Slow Healing (3 point flaw)

The vitae in your veins is sluggish, and your control over your blood is imperfect at best. Although you are capable of forcing this blood to coalesce into your flesh and heal your wounds, you do so with great difficulty. You must spend an additional point of Blood anytime you wish to heal a point of damage. This penalty applies when you use Blood points to heal yourself, but does not penalize your use of healing powers on other characters through the use of powers such as Blood Rage from the Path of Blood.

Slow Reactions (3 point flaw)

You don't think fast, and your movements have never been especially sure. You have a slow reaction time. It isn't your fault that you're slow on your feet, but it does hold you back a bit — especially in combat. Your initiative is reduced by 5.

Stolen Potential (3 point flaw)

Something terrible happened to you in your past. Perhaps you were struck by a potent Baali curse, or perhaps you were injured, handicapped, denied social interaction, or suffered a psychologically damaging childhood. Choose one attribute at character creation. You do not receive a focus in this attribute. You must purchase this flaw at character creation.

Thin Blooded (3 point flaw)

The derogatory slur "Thin Blooded" refers to those vampires whose Embrace is farthest removed from the original vampiric progenitor: vampires of the 14th or 15th generations. These individuals are always Caitiff, as their vitae is unable to support the traditional hallmarks of a clan. Prophecy

states that Thin Blooded vampires will bring about the End Times. During the Nights of Turmoil, these vampires were hunted nearly to extinction by paranoid elders who feared this prophecy was coming true.

The blood of such unfortunate vampires is exceptionally weak, and such a creature cannot learn vampiric disciplines as extensively as true Neonates. Some barely appear undead, and others are plagued by eerily realistic dreams of ancient nights. You cannot create blood bonds, nor Embrace childer, nor create or sustain ghouls. Beneficially, sunlight inflicts only normal damage to you, and all your tests to resist frenzy are made as though you have 1 Beast trait less than you currently possess.

Only characters with 1 dot in the Generation background (Neonate) can purchase this flaw. Your character is a 15th or 14th generation vampire (your choice). If your character ever diablerizes and gains 13th generation, you must exchange this flaw for the Lesser Generation flaw (**page 263**), and repay the difference in XP. Thin-blooded vampires have three in-clan disciplines (as per Caitiff), but begin play with only 2 free dots of disciplines: 1 dot in two of those in-clan diciplines. Further, you can never raise any discipline (in- or out-of-clan) higher than the 4th dot.

Thirst for Innocence (1 point flaw)

The sight of innocence arouses a terrible bloodlust in your Beast. It cannot stand the fact that such people exist, and seeks to tarnish, corrupt, or destroy anything pure.

Trouble Magnet (1 point flaw)

Whenever weird stuff occurs, it happens to you. You have terrible luck, and misfortune follows at your heels, tearing you down whenever it has an opportunity. Whenever the Storyteller needs to randomly determine a negative result, such as determining which character is hit by a falling rock, or where the beat cop is patrolling at any given time, no test is made; you always suffer the consequence of bad luck.

Vulnerable to Silver (2 point flaw)

You may be descended from the mortal cousins of lupines (or other were-creatures), you may have some astrological connection to the moon, or you may suffer from some primitive superstition. Whatever the case, you have a notable vulnerability to silver. When you are successfully struck by a weapon with the Silver quality, you take aggravated damage rather than normal damage.

Weak-Willed (3 point flaw)

Your mind is weak, easily disturbed, or confused. You tend to be a follower and rarely speak up for yourself. Because of this weakness, you are highly susceptible to the disciplines of Dominate and Dementation. You cannot spend Willpower to retest when resisting these disciplines.

Weak Stomach (3 point flaw)

Some people are soft-hearted, others have a general squeamishness about blood. It's possible that you may even be bulimic. You have trouble keeping blood down after you feed. Calculate your Blood pool as though your character has 1 less dot in Generation. Neonates with this flaw reduce their maximum Blood pool by 2.

Derangements

"Everyone should be loved to the point of madness. Anything else is but a reflection of the moon in a pond; ephemeral, short-lived, and without substance."

— Mina Allaire,
Malkavian antitribu

Derangements are representations of mental illnesses. Real mental conditions are not funny. They are debilitating and difficult, and some are even frightening. They should be played with scary seriousness, not as amusing quirks or silly, cartoonish behavior.

A character who possesses the skill Science: Psychology may spend 10 minutes talking to a person suffering from a derangement and make a static challenge using her Mental attribute + Science: Psychology skill with a difficulty of 10. If she is successful, she may lower the target's current Derangement traits by one. No character can be targeted with more than one successful application of Science: Psychology per game. Your character cannot use this skill on herself to remove her own Derangement traits. Malkavians may never be reduced below 1 Derangement trait.

All derangements are 2 point flaws. The following system allows you to build a custom derangement that fits the exact psychosis of your character.

Creating a Derangement Customized to Your Character

Each derangement has a trigger: a situation, object, or condition that sets off that derangement. Storytellers should not allow players to take triggers that are extremely rare, and Storytellers should not allow derangements that do not meaningfully impact a character.

You may choose the same derangement multiple times, as long as you choose different triggers for each.

Severe Derangements

If you voluntarily take a very commonly occurring derangement trigger, or if you choose to extend or increase the penalties of your derangement, the Storyteller can choose to give you 1 extra XP (making your derangement a 3 point flaw). If you are not playing the extreme liability, your Storyteller can remove this benefit at any time.

Derangement Concepts

Most derangement concepts can be represented with more than one mechanic. For example, pyromania could make you entranced by fire, or it could compel you to start fires. Both are valid derangement options.

Think of the system for creating a derangement this way. If a character's derangement trigger is water, the specific outcome and reaction will be different according to that character's derangement type:

Incapacitated	When you see a significant source of water (a pond, stream, or erupting fire hydrant), you enter a fugue-like trance state.
Compulsion	When you are insulted, you want to drown things, preferably the offender. You will settle for sinking her prized belongings into a watery grave.
Phobia	When you see water, you become terrified and begin to desperately try to get away from the source.
Destruction	When under pressure, you try to drown people or other living things, using water to fulfill your dark desires.
Obsession	You will do anything to possess objects that resemble or glorify water. It is inviolably sacred to you.
Belief	You believe that the ocean contains evil spirits who must be pacified with blood sacrifices on the turn of the full moon.

Derangement Traits

While playing, when you encounter a situation that triggers your derangement, you have three options.

1. You can respond to that trigger with an obvious but mild derangement response, clearly roleplaying the day-to-day dysfunction caused by your derangement. If you roleplay in this way, you neither gain nor lose Derangement traits.
2. You can resist the compulsion to respond to the trigger and show no obvious sign of your derangement. If you do this, you must mark a Derangement trait on your character sheet.
3. Lastly, you can respond to the trigger with a severe response, roleplaying the frightening and unstable depths of your character's derangement. A severe response lasts for five minutes. Responding in such a way will eliminate all current Derangement traits on your sheet, resetting the character to 0 Derangement traits.

If a character reaches 3 Derangement traits (usually by resisting her derangement for too long), she is on the edge of a psychotic break. When her derangement is next triggered, you *must* roleplay a severe response. This response eliminates all your character's Derangement traits, and her level resets to 0 Derangement traits.

If you have more than one derangement, any triggering of a derangement gives you Derangement traits, which are counted in total. When you reach 3 Derangement traits, regardless of which Derangement is next triggered, that trigger provokes a severe response and subsequently erases all Derangement traits accrued.

Malkavians always have 1 Derangement trait. Resetting a Malkavian's Derangement traits places her at 1, rather than 0.

Example:

August, the Malkavian elder, has the derangement trigger of Evading Justice, linked to the Derangement: Destruction. He has been trying to maintain his cool while listening to a particularly infuriating speech, as the new Prince of San Francisco lifts a blood hunt on a criminal that August knows is guilty. Due to this continued provocation, the Malkavian elder has reached 3 Derangement traits.

After the speech, the Prince's childe approaches August and asks him what he thinks about the pardon. She mentions that earlier in the night, she spent a great deal of Influence to ensure that a mortal murderer in her employ wouldn't be arrested by the police. That's it. August has had enough, and he experiences a psychotic break.

"Justice must be appeased. Someone… must be ***punished****," he growls, stalking off with a malicious glimmer in his eye. August goes out into the parking lot of the gathering and identifies the Prince's car and driver. After only a few moments as the focus of August's wrath, the Prince's loyal retainer is a bloody, gibbering madman. To further appease his inner demons, August drags the driver in front of the Prince's childe and Dominates her to kill the man. She falls upon her father's favorite servant and butchers the man in front of the shocked populace. As her Humanity erodes, horrifying her sire and his entire court, August vanishes into Obfuscate, snarling, "Thus shall the punishment fit the crime."*

Derangement Descriptions

Derangement: Incapacitated

When you encounter your derangement's trigger, you enter a state that makes coherent action impossible. You might fall into a fugue state, regress into the mindset of a child, or be paralyzed with unbelievable bliss.

Examples:

- When you see someone singing, you fall into a trance and listen to her with ecstatic joy.
- When you feed, you fall into a state of blind ecstasy, reveling in the nuances of the blood's taste.
- When someone yells at you, you regress to the memory of your childhood abuses, shivering and huddling in terror.

While affected by the Incapacitated derangement, you cannot take actions and cannot move. The effects of the Incapacitated derangement end if the trigger disappears (or leaves), after five minutes pass, if you take damage, or if another character aggressively targets you with a supernatural power.

Derangement: Compulsion

When you encounter your derangement's trigger, you must perform some predefined action associated with your derangement. You find it difficult to take any other action until your Compulsion has been fulfilled.

Examples:

- When someone asks you a difficult question, you ramble, compulsively answering with complex mathematical descriptions.
- When you see small, unattended valuables, you compulsively put them in your pockets.
- When you see a group of similarly shaped objects, such as seeds, socks, or bricks, you are compelled to stop and count them.

When your derangement is triggered, you suffer a -3 penalty to all attack test pools until you fulfill your Compulsion or until five minutes pass. This penalty persists even if the opportunity to fulfill your Compulsion passes. For example, when a compulsive liar tells the whole truth, she might spend the next five minutes distractedly imagining what she should have said. Defense test pools are not penalized by the Compulsion derangement.

Derangement: Phobia

When you encounter your derangement's trigger, you become terrified and must leave the area. Although it is normal to be frightened of things that can hurt you, such as fire, sharks, etc., a Phobia is an irrational, overwhelming condition.

Examples:

- You fear fire the size of a torch or larger.
- You fear vampires over 300 years old.
- You fear open spaces and cannot bear to be outside a closed-in area.

When your derangement is triggered, you must leave the area and retreat to somewhere safe. To willingly stay within three steps of your derangement's trigger, you must spend 1 Willpower per turn. If forced to stay within three steps of your derangement's trigger, you will attack whoever or whatever is preventing you from leaving the area; you must try to escape by any means necessary.

Derangement: Destruction

When you encounter your derangement's trigger, you feel the urge to cause destruction or harm.

Examples:

- You believe yourself to be superior to all other vampires. When someone challenges your authority, you respond with violence.
- You gain sexual pleasure from demeaning others or from being demeaned.
- When a ritual fails, you believe it means that there are traitors within the sect. You respond to a failed rite by harming those involved, in order to punish them for their lack of faith.

When the Destruction derangement is triggered, you must cause harm — either mental or physical. The target of your aggression doesn't have to be the same as whatever triggered it, but that is the most satisfying course of action.

Derangement: Obsession

When you encounter your derangement's trigger, you must possess or control it.

Examples:

- You are the ultimate art collector, and when you see a piece of exceptional art, it must be yours.
- That Neonate Toreador is interesting and clever. She should be working for you.
- Those people are keeping secrets, and you won't rest until you find out what they're hiding.

When your derangement is triggered, you must attempt to acquire that which you are obsessed with. Any time you find yourself within five steps of your derangement's trigger, you feel the urge to acquire it by any means available. You immediately gain one Derangement trait, unless you take specific steps towards possessing or controlling it.

Derangement: Belief

You perceive the world differently than most people and respond poorly when your beliefs are challenged. Many individuals have strong beliefs, but characters with the Belief derangement take their beliefs to the point of delusion and do not trust people who challenge their thoughts.

Examples:

- You are the most qualified person to lead in any situation. Anyone who says differently is a mindless fool.
- The glassy eyes of stuffed animals are gateways to hell, and the only thing that keeps you safe from the devil's gaze is the aluminum foil hidden under your hat.
- You are the reincarnated soul of Julius Caesar.

Anyone who challenges your belief, attempts to convince you that you are wrong, or who mocks your belief is considered either an enemy or dangerously stupid. Anytime you're forced to work alongside such a person, you suffer a -2 penalty to all attack test pools throughout the duration of the partnership. (You spend a great deal of energy looking over your shoulder.) This penalty applies whenever you cooperate with such a person. Your animosity toward triggering individuals need not be permanent — they can attempt to alter your character's opinion by offering a physical and verbal apology, so long as it is genuine. This method only works once per night; if the offender repeats the transgression, the character will not believe a second apology, no matter how sincere it seems.

Sample Derangements

- *Ritual Freak (Compulsion):* Anytime you meet up with two or more of your packmates, you feel the urge to perform a ritual (normally the Vaulderie).
- *Ritual Freak (Destruction):* Anytime a ritual fails, you feel the urge to drive anyone who might be responsible insane.
- *Megalomania (Belief):* You're the most competent person in the world, and anyone who disagrees shouldn't be trusted.
- *Megalomania (Destruction):* Anytime someone challenges your authority, you get violent. If you can't attack the person who insulted you, you break inanimate objects instead.
- *Glossal (Phobia):* You are frightened of speaking clearly, fearing that enemy spies are watching you at all times. You will only speak in riddle, rhyme, and vague innuendo. If forced to state information clearly, you become convinced "they" are about to attack, and you will flee.
- *Multiple Personalities (Belief):* When you hear a bell ring, your personality shifts. You become the fantasy hero of your character's favorite novel series, Lord Malic. Anyone who says differently is a spy from a neighboring kingdom, trying to trick you into an act of war.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Six: Core Systems

"No, no! The adventures first, explanations take such a dreadful time."
— Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass

Rules define the actions that characters can take in the universe they share — this is integral to the game. For the purpose of building dramatic tension, the Storyteller leverages game mechanics to determine the odds of the character succeeding in a challenge, and she then utilizes a randomizer (rock, paper, scissors) to adjudicate whether or not the character was successful in the challenge.

Roleplaying should not end merely because a challenge has begun. In fact, roleplaying keeps challenges dynamic and enjoyable, and helps the players avoid hard disputes. Experienced players can integrate a challenge into their roleplaying so seamlessly that outsiders don't even know that anything unusual is going on.

Players should work together to educate each other on the rules and work with the Storyteller to create the most dynamic and enjoyable scene possible. Compromise and cooperation are the bywords of the game. Arguments over the rules can wreck both the momentum and the mood of a game. It is perfectly reasonable to present a calm argument to the presiding Storyteller, but her final decision should be accepted with grace and good sportsmanship in order to keep the game fun.

There are two types of challenges, static and opposed. Both types of challenges are resolved by running one or more *tests*. All challenges involve at least one test. Sometimes, you must perform more than one test to resolve a challenge.

- **Static Challenges**: tests performed against the Storyteller
- **Opposed Challenges**: tests performed against another player or an NPC

Tests are resolved by playing rock, paper, scissors.

- **Rock**: Beats scissors and ties with rock.
- **Paper**: Beats rock and ties with paper.
- **Scissors**: Beats paper and ties with scissors.

The player who loses the first test in a challenge may retest by spending a point of Willpower. You may retest any challenge type (Physical, Social, or Mental). The results of the second test are final.

Static Challenges

A static challenge is used to resolve simple scenarios that do not involve another character. Some examples of scenarios that might be adjudicated this way include: picking a lock, hotwiring a car, climbing a wall to reach a skylight, resisting frenzy, or remembering a key detail from an Archon's warning.

Step One: Defining the Challenge and Assigning a Difficulty Rating

The Storyteller defines the nature of a static challenge and assigns it a difficulty rating based on the table below.

Type of Difficulty	Difficulty Rating	Example
Easy	5	Climbing a ladder
Standard	8	Climbing a ladder during a chase
Difficult	15	Climbing a ladder during a chase in the rain
Challenging	20	Climbing a ladder during a chase in the rain while your enemy is shooting at you
Epic	30	Climbing a ladder with a broken leg during a chase in the rain while your enemy is shooting at you

Sometimes the Storyteller might leave notes on prop objects or in locations indicating the type of static challenge that must be won for something to occur. For example, the Storyteller might leave a note near a computer indicating that a character must prevail in a static challenge using the Computer skill against a difficulty rating of 15 in order for the character to access the information it contains. These challenges may be made with the Storyteller or with a nearby player.

Step Two: Identifying the Test Pool

All static challenge test pools are determined by this simple formula:

Attribute + Skill + Wild Card = Test Pool

Attributes are your character's quantifiable natural talents and are divided into three categories: Physical, Social, and Mental.

Skills are your character's learned abilities, such as Driving, Athletics, or Subterfuge.

Wild Card represents the added bonus you receive from equipment, other characters, merits, disciplines, or other odd environmental factors. It is possible to receive more than one wild card bonus. This value is modified at the discretion of the Storyteller.

Example: *Vincent the Nosferatu attempts to pick the lock on the back door of a deserted church. His test pool is Physical 3 (attribute) + Security 5 (skill) + Lock Pick Set 1 (wild card) for a total of 9. If Vincent had Auspex, the Storyteller could grant the player an additional wild card bonus of +1 for using Heightened Senses to listen to the tumblers while trying to pick the lock.*

Step Three: Rock, Paper, Scissors

The next step is to perform a test. To make a test, play rock, paper, scissors with your Storyteller.

Winning the Test

If you outright win the first rock, paper, scissors test, compare your test pool to the challenge's difficulty rating. If you have a greater test pool than the challenge's difficulty rating, you score an exceptional success. Exceptional successes often provide additional beneficial effects, such as inflicting more damage.

If you lost or tied the first test in this challenge and then won after retesting, or if your test pool is equal to or lower than the difficulty rating, you score a normal success.

Losing the Test

If you lose the test, you fail the challenge and suffer consequences determined by the Storyteller or the appropriate rules.

Tying the Test

If you tie, compare your test pool to the challenge's difficulty rating. If your test pool is greater than the difficulty rating, you succeed. Otherwise, you fail the challenge. It is not possible to score an exceptional success if you tie — you must win the test outright for an exceptional success.

Step Four: Retests

Players may spend a point of Willpower to retest a failed static challenge. You may retest any challenge type (Physical, Social, or Mental) with Willpower. Since the target of a static challenge has no Willpower, it can't retest. The results of the second test are final.

Multiple Retests:

Most challenges are resolved with a single Willpower retest, but some challenges can be retested with merits or with an overbid. Using a merit or an overbid to retest doesn't

prevent a Willpower retest from being used, but there can never be more than one Willpower retest per challenge. For example, if you retest the first test with an overbid and the second with a merit, you (or your opponent, if she loses the test) can still retest with Willpower, as long as no more than one Willpower retest is used per challenge.

Static Challenge Variations

Simple variations add complexity to static challenges at the Storyteller's discretion.

Automatic Success

If your test pool is equal to or more than double the difficulty rating, the Storyteller may allow you to automatically succeed on a static challenge to speed up gameplay. Challenges are fun, but they can slow down important roleplaying when the outcome of a challenge isn't in doubt.

Example: *Your character's test pool for hot-wiring a car is 11 (Physical 6 + Security 5), and the difficulty rating is only 5. Since your test pool is more than twice the difficulty rating, you succeed automatically. You don't need to complete a challenge or make a test because the outcome isn't in doubt.*

Unskilled Tests and Critical Failures

If you try to perform an action without having the appropriate skill and lose the test, you fail spectacularly. For example, if you critically fail picking a lock, you might damage the lock and make it inoperable.

Remember that you only critically fail if you don't have the appropriate skill and you lose the test. If you have the correct skill or if you tie the test, you do not critically fail (even if you lose the overall challenge).

Example Static Challenge

Vincent the Nosferatu attempts to pick the lock on the back door of a deserted church before the sun rises.

1. The Storyteller determines the difficulty rating of the challenge. She decides that this lock is of standard quality and assigns a difficulty rating of 8.
2. The player uses the standard formula to calculate his test pool: Physical 3 (attribute) + Security 5 (skill) + Lock Pick Set 1 (wild card) for a total of 9.
3. Vincent throws a rock, paper, scissors test with the Storyteller. The Storyteller throws rock and Vincent throws scissors, losing the test.
4. Vincent really needs to break into this church to find shelter. The player decides that he will spend a Willpower to retest. This time, they both throw paper, resulting in a tie. Since Vincent's test pool (9) is higher than the challenge's difficulty rating (8), he wins.

Result: Vincent works furiously at picking the lock as the colors of dawn start to brighten the horizon. He fumbles a little, but manages to pick the lock at the last minute.

Opposed Challenges

Opposed challenges resolve interpersonal conflicts between two player-characters or non-player characters (NPCs) with different goals. An opposed challenge occurs whenever the target of a challenge is another character or an object within another character's immediate control. Every opposed challenge includes an "attacker" and a "defender" — terms used to identify who is acting against whom, even though the opposed challenge might not actually involve a physical, damage-dealing attack.

Scenarios with multiple opposed challenges are resolved via the process for complex scenarios (see **page 276**).

Step One: Defining the Challenge and Your Victory Condition

When you target another individual with an opposed challenge, indicate which character you wish to affect and announce your *victory condition*. A victory condition is the stated, desired result that will occur if you win this challenge. If you lose the challenge, your victory condition does not occur.

Keep in mind that your victory condition needs to be logical within the continuity of the scene and consistent with the type of challenge initiated. All victory conditions must be approved by the target player or the Storyteller. (If there is some disagreement, the Storyteller makes the final decision about whether or not a victory condition is acceptable.)

Examples of victory conditions include: grappling your opponent, using a discipline, or intimidating your opponent via a Social opposed challenge.

Line of Sight: To attack a character, you must be able to see her. If you can't see your target, you must use the Fighting Blind combat maneuver (see **page 281**).

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Step Two: Determining the Attack Test Pool

The following simple formula determines all attack test pools, identical to the formula used for static challenges:

Attribute + Skill + Wild Card = Test Pool

The attribute and skill should reflect the type of attack; for example, challenges involving shooting a gun use Physical traits and the Firearms skill.

Step Three: Determining the Defense Test Pool

The type of challenge (Physical, Social, or Mental) determines which formula the target uses to calculate her defense test pool.

Physical Challenge Defense Test Pool

Physical Attribute + Skill + Wild Card = Test Pool

Again, the skill should reflect the appropriate type of defense against the attacker's skill. For example, avoiding a knife attack requires Dodge.

Mental/Social Challenge Defense Test Pool

Defending against Mental and Social challenges requires a different formula, as follows:

Social or Mental Attribute + Willpower + Wild Card = Test Pool

Willpower quantifies how well a character can resist Mental and Social challenges. Note that defense test pools use your character's current Willpower, not your character's total permanent Willpower. Therefore, the more Willpower you spend, the more vulnerable you become to Social and Mental challenges. It is to your advantage to save Willpower points for when you really need them. For more information, please see Willpower and regaining Willpower, **page 288**.

Step Four: Rock, Paper, Scissors

Next, play rock, paper, scissors with the target player.

Winning the Test

If you outright win the rock, paper, scissors test, check to see if you've scored an exceptional success by comparing your attack test pool to the target's defense test pool. If your attack test pool is greater than your opponent's defense test pool and you have won *every* test involved in the challenge, including all retests, you score an exceptional success. If you lost or tied one of the retests involved in this challenge, or if your test pool is equal to or lower than your opponent's, you score a normal success.

An exceptional success grants you a bonus in addition to winning your challenge. Damaging attacks that score an exceptional success inflict an additional point of damage. Supernatural powers often list specific bonuses for achieving an exceptional success.

Note that only the attacker can score an exceptional success. You might score an exceptional success when you are trying to shoot a mugger or seduce a bouncer, but you cannot score an exceptional success when resisting a Mental attack or dodging a bullet.

Losing the Test

If you lose the rock, paper, scissors test, you fail, and your target is unaffected.

Tying the Test

If you tie, compare your attack test pool to the target's defense test pool. If your pool is greater than the defender's, you achieve a normal success. Otherwise, you fail in your challenge. It is not possible to score an exceptional success if you tie — you must win the test outright for an exceptional success.

Step Five: Retests

The loser of an opposed challenge may spend a point of Willpower to retest the challenge. Only the loser may retest, and the results of the second test are final. For the retest, both characters should use the same test pools that they used for the initial challenge. Spending a Willpower to retest will reduce your ability to resist future Mental/Social challenges, but will not reduce the players' pools in the challenge they are currently retesting.

Example: *Edward attempts to light Julian on fire with a flame thrower and wins the initial test. Julian doesn't want to be set on fire, so he decides to spend a point of Willpower to retest. The results of this second test are final; no matter who wins or loses, there will be no further tests for this challenge.*

Retests and Exceptional Success

If you lose the initial test in a challenge and discover that your opponent's test pool is large enough to score an exceptional success, it's a good idea to use Willpower to retest. Remember, your opponent can only score an exceptional success if she wins every test involved in the challenge.

Overbidding

If your test pool is equal to or greater than double your opponent's test pool, you gain a free retest. This is an exception to the rule limiting opposed challenges to a single retest. The overbid retest and the Willpower retest can be used in any order.

Example: *Your attack test pool for punching is 12, and your opponent's defense test pool is only is only 6. Since your test pool is equal to double your opponent's test pool, you receive a free overbid retest. You may use this before or after using a Willpower to retest the challenge.*

Opposed Challenge Complications

Simple variations add complexity to opposed challenges at the Storyteller's discretion.

Unskilled Tests

If you try to perform an action without having the appropriate skill and lose the test, then you fail spectacularly. For example, if you critically fail while trying to shoot someone, you might graze yourself or launch a spent cartridge into your eye.

Remember that you only critically fail if you don't have the appropriate skill and you lose the test. If you have the correct skill or if you tie the test, you do not critically fail (even if you lose the overall challenge).

Relenting

At any time before the actual test is performed, a player may choose to acquiesce and admit defeat. Characters who relent lose the challenge automatically. If the relenting character's test pool is less than the attacker's, then the attacker scores an exceptional success; otherwise, the attacker scores a normal success.

Retrying Failed Attacks

If you target someone with a Physical opposed challenge and fail, you may try again on your next initiative. If you target a character with a Mental or Social opposed challenge and fail, the target is immune to your power or action for the next 10 minutes. Note that this immunity only extends to the power or action used and not an entire discipline.

Example*: If you try to use the Presence power Entrancement on a police officer and fail, you can't try again next round. You must wait for 10 minutes to pass, and for the situation to change significantly, before trying again. You may, however, target the officer with a different Presence power, such as Dread Gaze.*

Example: Physical Opposed Challenge

Situation: Vincent the Nosferatu managed to break into the church. A hunter, armed with a shotgun, waits inside.

1. The hunter, controlled by the Storyteller, chooses his victory condition: shooting Vincent. Since Vincent doesn't want to get shot, he opposes the action.
2. The Storyteller calculates the hunter's attack test pool using the standard formula: Physical 7 (attribute) + Firearms 3 (skill) + Shotgun 2 (wild card) for a total of 12.
3. Vincent's player calculates his defense test pool using the standard formula: Physical 3 (attribute) + Dodge 2 (skill) + Cover 1 (wild card) for a total of 6.
4. The player and the Storyteller throw rock, paper, scissors. They tie. Since the hunter has a greater attack test pool, he wins the test.
5. Vincent really needs to get out of the way and hide before the sun comes up. The player decides that he will spend a point of Willpower to gain a retest. He plays rock, paper, scissors again, winning against the Storyteller this time, succeeding in the test.
6. Normally only the loser of the initial test would be able to use a retest, but the hunter's attack test pool (12) is twice Vincent's defense test pool (6). The Storyteller decides to take advantage of the overbid rule to gain an additional retest. Sadly, the Storyteller wins the test and the challenge. The hunter's test pool is greater than Vincent's, but the hunter did not win the first two tests, so he does not qualify for an exceptional success.

Result

Vincent catches a glimpse of the barrel of the shotgun and tries to dodge, but he's too slow. He is hit by the shotgun blast. Luckily the hunter did not win all of the tests involved in the challenge. If he had, the hunter would have scored an exceptional success and Vincent would have taken an additional point of damage (see **Health and Damage, page 285**).

Example: Social Opposed Challenge

Situation: Vincent the Nosferatu has a hunter chasing him. Vincent is wounded and doesn't have time to fight this enemy, so he attempts to scare the hunter away using Dread Gaze.

1. Vincent's player declares his victory condition: using Dread Gaze to scare away the hunter.
2. Vincent's player determines his attack test pool as usual: Social 10 (attribute) + Intimidation 5 (skill) for a total of 15.
3. The Storyteller calculates the hunter's defense test pool using the standard formula: Social 3 (attribute) + Current Willpower 6 for a total of 9.
4. The player and the Storyteller throw rock, paper, scissors. The Storyteller wins the test.
5. Vincent asks if he qualifies for an overbid retest. Since the hunter's defense test pool is 9, Vincent would need an attack test pool of 18 or more to qualify for an overbid retest. Since Vincent's attack test pool is 15, he cannot use an overbid retest on this challenge.
6. Vincent really needs to get rid of his attacker, so he decides to spend a point of Willpower to retest. They throw rock, paper, scissors once again, and this time Vincent wins. Since the hunter doesn't have a large enough defense test pool to qualify for an overbid retest, and Vincent has already retested with Willpower, the challenge is over. Vincent has won.

Result

Vincent pokes his head out from cover and glares at the hunter using his vampiric power. The hunter is unable to resist Vincent's power and flees for his life.

Complex Scenarios (Combat)

"The Devil can cite scripture for his purpose."

— William Shakespeare,
The Merchant of Venice

Combat in Mind's Eye Theatre is thematic and cinematic rather than hyper-realistic. These rules prioritize speed, flexibility, and ease of use over realism. These scenarios can include wonderful tension and character drama if the Storyteller properly sets the tone.

Some conflicts can be resolved by running one or two opposed challenges. However, when two or more characters engage in an extended conflict, the Storyteller should use the complex scenario system.

Measuring Time

Initiative: *Initiative* is the order in which characters take their actions. A character's initiative is equal to her Physical or Mental attribute, whichever is greater. For example, a character with 5 Physical attributes and 8 Mental attributes has an initiative of 8. If two or more characters have the same initiative, the character with the higher Mental attribute goes first. If both characters have the same Mental attribute, the character with the highest Physical attribute goes first. If both characters have the same Physical attribute, the character with the highest Social attribute goes first. If both characters have the same Social attribute, randomly determine who goes first.

Turn: Complex scenarios resolve via a series of *turns*. Each turn includes at least one *round* of actions and represents roughly three seconds of time, during which the combat unfolds.

Round: Turns are broken down into one or more rounds. By default, a turn has one round (called the everyman round). In the everyman round, each character takes her actions. The character with the greatest initiative goes first and characters act in the initiative order until all players have taken their actions. Once all characters have acted, the completed round ends. Some characters have the ability to act more than once per turn. These additional actions are resolved in special rounds, called Celerity rounds, that take place after the everyman round. Once all rounds have been resolved, the current turn ends and a new turn begins.

Actions

Each character may take up to two actions, one standard and one simple, per round on her initiative.

Standard Action: Any action that requires a challenge (static or opposed) or requires your character's full attention is a standard action. Examples include kicking down a door, punching a mugger, climbing a wall, or picking a lock. If there is confusion, the Storyteller determines if your action requires a static challenge or an opposed challenge. Actions that require a challenge are always standard actions, even if the target doesn't resist your challenge. If you choose to forgo your standard action, you gain an additional simple action instead. Note that you cannot forgo your simple action to gain another standard action.

Simple Action: A simple action is something your character can do without a static challenge or an opposed challenge. Examples of simple actions include readying a weapon, using a supernatural power on yourself, or running around a corner. The difference between a standard action and a simple action is often decided by whether or not it requires a challenge.

Movement

You may use a simple action or standard action to move up to three steps. If you use both your standard action and simple action to move, you may move up to six steps on your initiative.

Advanced Movement

Trying to move by jumping, climbing, swimming, or other unusual means requires a standard action instead of a simple action and often requires a static challenge. For example, climbing a sheer cliff requires a standard action to move three steps and may require a static challenge.

Fair Escape

Fair escape simulates the ability of a character to escape from a dangerous scenario without the player bounding over furniture or diving out of windows. This rule allows players to avoid combat when logical and appropriate without going through cumbersome challenges to see if they can escape the current scenario. Attempts to fair escape automatically fail if there is no logical way for you to leave the area. For example, you cannot fair escape if you are grappled or in a locked room with no windows.

To use this rule, wait until the start of your initiative, raise your hand, and announce that you wish to try and fair escape. You may attempt to fair escape any time you have the opportunity to expend an action, even during Celerity rounds.

To successfully fair escape, you must avoid being involved in any Physical challenges for a full round (or Celerity round); in addition, Mental and Social challenges versus your Physical attribute also block an attempt to fair escape. If you are attacked before your initiative, your attempt to fair escape automatically fails (even if the attack missed). When you declare your intention to fair escape, other players who have not acted yet have the opportunity to announce that they plan to physically attack you later in round. If no one declares intent to attack, you fair escape immediately.

If someone declares the intent to attack, your fair escape is put on hold. If you are attacked later in the round, your fair escape fails. If you are not attacked, then your fair escape succeeds at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted. If you fail to escape, you can take steps or other actions, but not until after your fair escape attempt fails. If it is not possible for your character to be physically attacked in the current round, then your attempt to fair escape automatically succeeds.

Example: *On his initiative, Bobby the Brujah attempts to fair escape from a pack of 10 gang members. Bobby hasn't been attacked yet, but one of the gang members says that he plans to shoot Bobby later in the round. Bobby's actions are put on hold until the gang members have acted. Later in the round, one of the gang members does attack Bobby, causing his fair escape attempt to fail. Once his attempt fails, Bobby activates Celerity and uses his simple and standard actions to run away from the gang members, moving six steps. When the Storyteller begins to resolve the first Celerity round, Bobby announces that he will attempt to fair escape again. Since none of the gang members can act in Celerity rounds, Bobby's attempt to fair escape automatically succeeds.*

These rules are meant to hasten play, not complicate it. Always try to employ common sense when using fair escape. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of the success of an attempted fair escape. Once you've fair escaped from a combat, you cannot return until the combat is over.

Lying Prone

Sometimes, you want to duck for cover, but there isn't anything to hide behind. By using a simple action to drop to the ground, lying on your stomach, you gain a little protection. Lying prone doesn't prevent you from acting on your initiative, but it does limit your movement. While prone, you can crawl up to one step by using a simple action. Alternately, you may use a simple action to stand up and move one step. If you're lying prone on the ground and an opponent targets you with a Physical ranged attack from more than three steps away, you get a +2 concealment bonus to your defense test pool. If an opponent physically attacks you from within three steps while you are prone, you suffer a -2 penalty to your defense test pool.

Step One: Mediation

Players attempting to create a dynamic scene may elect to agree upon an outcome rather than use mechanics to resolve a challenge. It is possible for players to handle mediation without the assistance of a Storyteller, but if there is any disagreement at all, the Storyteller arbitrates.

Sometimes, to keep the story flowing, players might agree to an outcome that furthers the stories for all of the characters. For example, Julian might simply want to escape the scene with his life, but Edward wants to give Julian a solid thrashing before the escape. If all players agree to an outcome that the Storyteller approves, then the players will end the complex scenario and return to roleplay as quickly as possible. If the players can't come to an agreement over the outcome, then proceed to the next step. For more information on mediation, please see **Chapter Eight: Storytelling, page 351**.

Step Two: Storyteller Assessment

Once phase two begins, the Storyteller immediately freezes the scene. Players stop talking and remain still to help the Storyteller process the scene. The Storyteller discusses what is happening with the players to determine which characters will be directly involved in the combat scene.

Step Three: Order of Action

Every character participating in combat may expend actions on or after her initiative. When combat begins, the Storyteller determines which action started the combat and resolves it. Once the first action is resolved, all other actions are resolved according to initiative order.

The Storyteller counts down the initiative, starting with the player who has the highest number. When your initiative is called, raise your hand and declare one standard action and one simple action in any order you wish. You might use a simple action to draw a gun and then use a standard action to shoot. Alternately, you might use a standard action to punch someone and then use a simple action to move.

Once the first player is finished, play proceeds in initiative order, from highest to lowest, until all characters have had an opportunity to act. Once everyone has taken their actions, a new round begins. Once all rounds have been resolved, a new turn begins.

Surprise Action

When your character starts a combat, take one action, either your simple or standard action, outside of the initiative order. This action (often called a surprise action) is resolved before else can respond. Your remaining action resolves normally, when your initiative comes up.

Example: *You start a combat by using your simple action to draw a gun. Later, when your initiative comes up, you use your standard action to shoot. If you were holding the weapon before the combat started, you could use your standard action to fire, starting the combat, and when your initiative comes up, use your simple action to move behind cover.*

Delaying Your Actions

You might want to delay your initiative so that you can take your actions after another character or if a certain condition occurs. When you choose to delay your actions, you may act at any point later in the initiative order of that round. If you delay your initiative until another character's natural initiative, the individual acting on her natural initiative resolves her actions first. If two or more characters delay their actions until the same moment in a round, the character with the highest initiative goes first.

You can use one action and delay the other until later in the round. If you choose not to take any actions in a given round, your initiative is increased by 5 on the next round in which you have actions. You only gain this bonus if you forgo both of your actions. This bonus is not cumulative. If you delay your action for multiple rounds, you only receive the standard +5 bonus to your initiative.

Ending the Round

Once all players have used (or delayed) their actions, the round is over.

Step Four: Celerity Rounds

Once the first round (the everyman round) has ended, characters capable of acting at supernatural speeds may take additional actions. These extra actions resolve in a series of special rounds called Celerity rounds.

Characters capable of acting on the first Celerity round take their actions in initiative order, skipping characters who cannot act on that round. After resolving all actions in the first Celerity round, the Storyteller progresses to the second Celerity round, and the third Celerity round.

Once all Celerity rounds have been resolved, the Storyteller begins a new turn. This new turn starts with an everyman round.

You can only take Physical actions during a Celerity round. You may move, attack, or activate a Physical power, but you cannot engage in any Mental or Social challenges.

Example: Combat

Situation: Delilah the Gangrel has tracked down Melvin the Nosferatu, looking for some payback.

Turn 1

Delilah walks up behind the unsuspecting Melvin and tries to hit him with a baseball bat. Since swinging the bat is the action that kicks off the combat, the Storyteller resolves it before anyone else can act. Hitting another character requires a challenge and will therefore consume Delilah's standard action. Delilah's attack test pool is 15 (Physical 9 + Melee 4 + Baseball Bat 2). Melvin's defense test pool is 7 (Physical 3 + Dodge 4). Delilah loses the initial test but wins with her

overbid retest. Melvin isn't terribly worried about being hit with a baseball bat, so he opts to save his Willpower for later. Melvin is hit and takes 2 points of damage: 1 (base) + 1 (Potence).

1. ***Melvin (Initiative 12)***: Using his simple action, Melvin draws a knife. With his standard action, he attempts to stab Delilah. Melvin's attack test pool is 9 (Physical 3 + Melee 4 + Knife 2). Delilah's defense test pool is 12 (Physical 9 + Dodge 3). Melvin ties the initial test, but loses because his test pool is less than Delilah's. Hoping to impress her enough to back down, Melvin spends a Willpower to retest. Melvin manages to win his retest, but Delilah is one tough Gangrel. The knife slides off of her supernaturally tough skin, inflicting no damage (1 (base) -1 (Fortitude). The Storyteller allows Melvin to monologue without requiring an action, so he shouts, "Stop hitting me you crazy Gangrel!"

2. ***Delilah (Initiative 9)***: Having used her standard action to kick off the combat, Delilah is left with only a simple action. Seeing Melvin's knife, she uses her simple action to draw the shotgun she strapped to her back.

Since neither character has a power that allows them to act on Celerity rounds, the turn ends, and a new turn begins.

Turn 2

1. ***Melvin (Initiative 12)***: Doing some quick math, Melvin realizes he's not winning this fight. He uses his simple action to take three steps away from the enraged Gangrel, and he uses his standard action to activate the power Vanish from the Mind's Eye. Melvin's test pool to vanish is 16 (Mental 12 + Stealth 4). Delilah's test pool is 10 (Mental 4 + Willpower 6). Melvin ties the initial test, but his superior pool allows him to win the challenge. Eager to vent her rage, Delilah spends a Willpower to retest, but loses the second test as well. Melvin vanishes and the scene ends.

Types of Attacks

Test Pools

Complex scenarios allow for a number of different attack types. By default, a successful attack inflicts 1 point of normal damage. If you score an exceptional success while attacking, you inflict an additional point of damage.

When a vampire is engaged in a Physical challenge (whether attacking or defending) she may spend Blood to temporarily boost her Physical attribute. See **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 294**.

Unarmed Attack

When attempting to punch, kick, or otherwise harm someone with an unarmed attack, your Physical attribute + Brawl form your attack test pool and are compared against your opponent's Physical attribute + Dodge. By default, successful unarmed attacks inflict 1 point of damage. To use an unarmed attack, you need to be within two steps of your target.

Melee Attack

When attacking someone with a melee weapon (such as a knife, sword, or club), use your Physical attribute + Melee versus your opponent's Physical attribute + Dodge. By default, successful melee attacks inflict 1 point of damage. To use a melee attack, you need to be within two steps of your target.

Thrown Attack

When throwing a weapon at your target, use your Physical attribute + Athletics versus your opponent's Physical attribute + Dodge. By default, successful thrown attacks inflict 1 point of damage. To use a thrown attack, you need to be within 10 steps of your target, and you must use a weapon with a quality that allows it to be thrown, such as Balanced (see **Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment, page 516**).

Firearms Attack

When firing a weapon at your target, use your Physical attribute + Firearms versus your opponent's Physical attribute + Dodge. If your character is Wits-focused, you can use your Mental attribute instead of your Physical attribute when making a ranged attack. By default, successful firearms attacks inflict 2 points of damage. The range of a firearms attack depends on the weapon used. See **Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment, page 517**.

If your ranged weapon is archaic, such as a bow, crossbow, etc., you can use your Athletics skill instead of Firearms when making a ranged attack.

Mental/Social Attacks

When attempting a Mental attack, use your Mental attribute + appropriate skill versus your opponent's Mental attribute + current Willpower. When attempting a Social attack, use your Social attribute + appropriate skill versus your opponent's Social attribute + current Willpower.

Combat Maneuvers

A combat maneuver is a fighting move that can give you a brief edge against your opponent. When you want to do something tricky or launch an attack that does more than simply inflict damage, you must use a combat maneuver.

To use a combat maneuver, you must declare which maneuver you're using before the test is made and spend a point of Willpower. You can only activate a single combat maneuver per round.

Any character may attempt to use a combat maneuver as long as she has a logical way to incorporate the specific combat maneuver into her attack. For example, you might try to Grapple someone with your bare hands or with a net, but you cannot attempt to Grapple someone by shooting at her with a sniper rifle.

If you are Strength-focused, you may perform one of the following combat maneuvers once per combat without spending Willpower: Disarm, Grapple, Knock Down, or Pierce the Heart.

If you are Dexterity-focused, you may perform one of the following combat maneuvers once per combat without spending Willpower: Burst of Speed, Disarm, Fighting Blind, or Quick Draw.

If you are Stamina-focused, you cannot be Knocked Out or Knocked Down by a combat maneuver unless your attacker has a higher Physical attribute than you.

Most Social and Mental actions can't benefit from combat maneuvers, but there are exceptions. Fighting Blind can be used in conjunction with any type of action. For example, you may attempt to Entrance someone you can't see, if you use the Fighting Blind maneuver.

- **Burst of Speed:** This combat maneuver allows you to take your simple action immediately, out of order, and then take your standard action on your normal initiative. This maneuver doesn't allow you to take an additional action, but it does allow you to use your simple action before your initiative. If you try to act at the same time as another character, the character acting on her natural initiative goes first. If two players use Burst of Speed at the same time, the character with the highest initiative goes first.
- **Blinding Attack:** If you succeed with a Blinding Attack, your opponent suffers 3 less damage (minimum 0), but is blinded until she spends two simple actions clearing her eyes.
- **Disarm:** Modify your attack test pool by -2. If you succeed in the challenge, you force your target to drop one item of your choice. Picking the item up requires a standard action. If you are Dexterity-focused and have a free hand, you may choose to end up holding the disarmed object. Normally this maneuver can only be used on an object the target is holding in her hands, but the Storyteller may allow you to use this maneuver to take unsecured items off the target, such as a cord tied around her neck, a hat, or a rod sticking out of her pocket. Disarm cannot be used to remove large or secured items, such as a jacket or chain mail.
- **Grapple:** If you succeed with a Grapple attack, your opponent takes 3 less damage (minimum 0) and is grappled. While grappled she can't move and cannot use her standard action to take a Physical action. She can escape from your Grapple by using a simple action and besting you in an opposed challenge (Brawl or Melee). Upon escaping, the target regains full use of her standard action. (She doesn't have to wait until the next round to use it.) You relinquish your Grapple if you take any action that targets anyone other than the character you're grappling, or if you move more than one step per round. If a single character is being grappled by more than one opponent, she need only best one opponent to escape. If the grappling characters cannot decide who will resist the attempt to break out, the Storyteller decides. As long as your character is grappled, she is considered the target of a Physical challenge each round (allowing others to only target her with one additional Physical attack per round). (See **Maximum Attacks Per Round, page 282**.)
- **Knock Out:** If you surprise your target, you may attempt to knock her unconscious. Modify your attack test pool by -2. If you succeed, your target is unconscious for 10 minutes. You can only use this maneuver during the first round of combat, and you can't use it if your target is expecting an attack. (Some supernatural creatures, such as vampires, cannot be knocked unconscious.)
- **Quick Draw:** You can draw one weapon or other small item on your person without using a simple action.
- **Knock Down:** If you succeed with a Knock Down attack, your opponent takes 1 less damage (minimum 0) and ends up lying on the ground. (See the rules for prone characters above.) While prone, your opponent may use an action to crawl one step. A prone character can use a simple action to stand up and move up to one step.

- **Fighting Blind:** If you can't see your opponent, you must use this combat maneuver to attack her. If you don't use this combat maneuver, your attack will automatically miss.

- **Pierce the Heart:** If your opponent's wounds are in the Incapacitated wound track, you may attempt to use a melee or ranged weapon to Pierce her Heart. Modify your attack test pool by -3 when attempting this maneuver. If you hit a mortal with this attack, she is instantly killed. If this attack hits a vampire and your weapon has the staking quality, the vampire is staked. A successful Pierce the Heart maneuver stakes Stock NPCs regardless of how much damage they currently have, since they do not utilize wound tracks. For more information on the staking quality see **Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment, page 517**.

Noticing Attacks

All characters understand that gunshots and bolts of flame are dangerous, but not all attacks are violent or obvious. Subtle attacks often go unnoticed and Mental/Social attacks often provoke non-violent responses. For example, a police officer who realizes that you're trying to fast-talk your way past him won't be pleased, but he's unlikely to try and shoot you. Note that failing to notice an attack doesn't prevent you from resisting it, but it does stop you from retaliating.

Physical Attacks

Everyone notices Physical attacks within line of sight and/or hearing range. Most Brawl and Melee attacks can only be noticed by characters with a line of sight, unless the combatants are making a lot of noise. All Firearms attacks will be noticed by characters within earshot, unless those attacks are modified by some form of mechanical or magical silence.

Mental/Social Attacks

If you fail a Mental or Social attack, the target and everyone who witnesses it will realize what happened within the limits of their understanding. For example, if you try to flirt your way past a bouncer and fail, everyone will realize what's happened (flirting isn't difficult to understand). If you fail while attempting to use Entrancement, the same bouncer and most people will feel a brief chill and think that you're a bit weird. A mortal who understands vampires (like a ghoul or a hunter) would realize that you tried to use a supernatural power, but might not know which one, unless she has the appropriate lore or experience. A fellow vampire would realize that you attempted to use a power and would likely be able to guess which one, if she has the appropriate lore or experience.

A character with the Awareness skill may attempt to notice nearby Mental and Social attacks even if the attacker succeeds on her test. If you are looking at someone who successfully uses a power or at the power's target (or if you are the power's target), you may make an opposed challenge using your Mental attribute + Awareness versus the target's Mental attribute + Willpower or Mental attribute + Subterfuge (target's choice) to determine if you understand what happened.

If the source of a supernatural power isn't within line of sight, characters who notice the power will know what direction the power came from. For example, if someone hiding on a nearby rooftop successfully uses a Mental power on the Prince, any character with the Awareness skill who is looking at the Prince when the challenge takes place has the opportunity to notice the attack.

Mass Combat

"It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets."

—Voltaire

Mind's Eye Theatre is intended for theatrical combat, providing characters a feeling of risk, danger, and the potential of deep personal loss. Most conflicts happen in a one-on-one environment, but on occasion, larger battles and epic, climactic fights occur. When that happens, Storytellers should use the *mass combat* system. This system allows many characters to be involved in a single conflict, without burdening the Storyteller or slowing the game down in miniscule rules trivia. This system is designed to heighten drama, allowing both the attackers and the defenders to have a fair chance at victory.

Remember that a Storyteller's first job is to make sure everyone's having fun. It's often better to break a large combat up into smaller clusters, thus allowing individual characters to stand out and have dramatic moments. It's neither fun, nor realistic, to have 10 characters standing in line, dealing damage one after the other to a single, overwhelmed target. Nor is it beneficial to the game for players to spend the majority of a night's game in combat rather than roleplay. Combat has its place and can increase tension, provide drama, and help the World of Darkness feel gritty and dangerous. Still, remember first and foremost: this is a game, and games are meant to be fun for all participants.

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Maximum Attacks Per Round

As noted previously, combat turns are broken down into individual rounds, beginning with an everyman round and continuing through each Celerity round until all character actions have been completed.

During an individual round, a character can only be targeted by a limited number of challenges:

- One Social challenge
- One Mental challenge
- Up to two Physical challenges

This limitation on the number of attacks within a single round applies even if a particular challenge fails. If a character is targeted by, but successfully resists, a Social challenge, that character cannot be the target of another Social challenge until the next round.

During a mass combat scene that contains three rounds, a character could be targeted in the following ways:

- Everyman: She could be targeted by one Mental and one Social power and two Physical attacks.
- First Celerity Round: She could be targeted by two additional Physical attacks.
- Second Celerity Round: She could be targeted by two additional Physical attacks.

Characters cannot ordinarily use Social or Mental powers during Celerity rounds. Although the maximum attack limits are the same, during a standard Celerity round, players will likely only need to track the number of Physical challenges. For more information on Celerity rounds and combat turns, see **Order of Action, page 278**.

Challenges resulting from your own powers, friendly actions that require a challenge to perform, and static challenges, do not count towards these maximum attack limits. For example, a character testing to overcome your Majesty is not considered to be targeting you with a Social power, and thus would not prevent you from being targeted by someone else's Dread Gaze during the same round. Allowing an ally to contact you with Telepathy during a combat round will not prevent a hostile Mental power from targeting you in that same round.

Storytellers should be aware that unethical players may try to abuse these maximum limits. A character cannot have an ally target them and cause minimal damage (or use a trivial effect) in order to avoid being targeted by more dangerous challenges in that round. If the Storyteller suspects that players are attempting to abuse the system, such players should be given a single, strong warning — and then told to leave the game if such behavior continues. Cheating is reprehensible, and players who resort to such tactics are exhibiting extremely childish behavior.

Mixed Challenges

A *mixed challenge* is a challenge that compares two different character attributes. A power with a mixed challenge might require a character to make a Mental + (skill) challenge versus the target's Physical + (skill or Willpower) test pool, or so forth.

When you utilize a mixed challenge, the type of challenge is determined by the defender's resistance attribute for the purpose of maximum attacks per round. For example, the above challenge uses the defender's Physical attribute, and would count against the maximum number of Physical challenges a defender can be targeted by for that round.

Mass Combat Tactics

In a mass combat situation, you may take the normal range of actions, use any appropriate powers and disciplines, and utilize combat maneuvers exactly as you would in solo combat. Additionally, you may choose to spend an action to perform one of the following mass combat tactics:

- Assist Attacker
- Assist Defender

Mass combat tactics can only be used to augment or defend against Physical attacks. Individuals using Social or Mental challenges against a target, or being targeted by such challenges, cannot receive assistance from mass combat tactics.

Assist Attacker

Instead of using your standard action to attack, you may instead expend your standard action to "Assist an Attacker," thus boosting another character's attack. It is often a good idea to assist other attackers if you suspect that an enemy will reach her maximum Physical attacks this round. This way, you can still contribute to the combat even if there are more people attacking than can target an individual during a given round.

When you assist an attacker, you must choose the individual you are going to help and offer to assist her. The attacker can refuse your assistance, in which case you cannot target her with this tactic and do not expend your standard action. If the

target accepts your assistance, spend your standard action and describe how your character is helping with the attack. This allows the character you are assisting to perform one of the standard combat maneuvers without expending Willpower for that maneuver. Both attacker and assistant must agree on the specific combat maneuver to be applied. No other pools, powers, weapon qualities, or other advantages belonging to the individual assisting the attacker apply to this attack.

Example: *Two Brujah lovers, Celia and Montague, are in desperate combat against their Nosferatu enemies. Seeing that Montague wants to pin one of their attackers, Celia offers to assist attacker, and Montague accepts her assistance. Celia chooses to distract the Nosferatu with a raucous yell, allowing Montague the chance to attempt a Grapple combat maneuver on that opponent for free.*

A player may choose to spend her standard action and assist an attacker at any time during the round, even before her turn in the initiative order. A player may also hold her standard action, waiting for the opportunity to assist an ally later in the round. A player cannot choose to assist an attacker if she has already used her standard action that round, or if she has no standard action during that round.

Only one combat maneuver can be applied to a challenge through the assist attacker tactic. Even if two or more characters offer to assist an attacking character, the attacker only receives one free combat maneuver. It is possible to have two combat maneuvers in effect on a single challenge, by adding the free assist attacker combat maneuver to a challenge in which the attacker is also spending a point of Willpower or taking advantage of an attribute focus.

Assist Defender

Once per round, when one of your allies is attacked, you may expend your simple action in order to move up to three steps to the defender and shield her from that attack. Characters using the assist defender tactic become the target of the incoming attack.

When you assist a defender, you must choose the individual you are going to assist and offer to assist her. The defender can refuse your assistance, in which case you cannot target her with this tactic, and do not expend your simple action. If the target accepts your assistance, spend your simple action and describe how your character is defending her from the attack. Thereafter, make the challenge against the attacker as though you had been the original target of the attack. If you win the challenge, you negate the attack, preventing it from affecting either you or the original defender. If you fail, the attack affects you as though you had been targeted normally.

Example: *Our Brujah, Celia and Montague, are overwhelmed by the power of their Nosferatu assailants. Seeing one lunge toward Celia with a massive sword in his hands, Montague offers to assist defender, and Celia accepts his assistance. Montague leaps in front of the sword's slash before it can hit his beloved, and the attacker makes the challenge with Montague as if he had been the original target of the blow.*

A player may choose to spend her simple action and use the assist defender tactic at any time during the round, even before her turn in the initiative order. A player may also hold her simple action, waiting for the opportunity to assist an ally later in the round. A player cannot choose to use the assist defender tactic if she has already used all of her simple actions for that round, or if she has no simple action during that round. Assist defender does not use a character's standard action; even if she expends a simple action to use assist defender, the character acts normally on her standard action when her initiative arrives.

When you use the assist defender tactic, both you and the original defender are considered to have been targeted with a Physical attack for the purpose of determining maximum attacks per round. A well-coordinated group of defenders

Stock NPCs and Mass Combat

On occasion, Stock NPCs will become involved in mass combat scenes. Remember that Stock NPCs are background characters. While they can be useful, they should never be given as much attention or allowed as many options for drama and glory as an actual player character. When a Stock NPC uses the assist attacker tactic, she provides a +1 bonus to the attacker's Physical attack. When a Stock NPC uses the assist defender tactic, she provides a +1 bonus to the defender's Dodge-based defense test pool. Like a normal use of mass combat tactics, no action or defense can be modified by more than one mass combat tactic. If a player-character and a Stock NPC wish to modify the same attack or defense, the Storyteller should always favor the player-character over the Stock NPC.

can use assist defender tactics to avoid being overwhelmed by a superior force — at least, for a little while.

An attack cannot be redirected by assist defender more than once. If two or more characters wish to assist a defender against a single attack, the character with the higher initiative has the first option to utilize this tactic. If she does so, any other hopeful defenders stand down without expending their simple actions.

A character can only use assist defender once per combat round, even if she has multiple simple actions to spend during that round. A character cannot use this tactic if she is incapable of moving to within two steps of the character she wishes to assist. Characters lying prone, or prevented from moving through some other means, cannot use this tactic.

If you utilize the assist defender tactic against an area of effect attack (an attack that targets multiple individuals), you assist only the character you have chosen to defend. The others are still targets of the assault, as per normal rules. If the area of effect attack originally targeted both the defender and the individual using assist defender, the character using the assist defender tactic makes only one test with the attacker. If the character using assist defender wins the challenge, she negates the attack, preventing it from affecting both herself and the original defender. If she loses the challenge, she takes twice the damage or suffers twice the effect of the incoming power (once for herself, and once for the character she was protecting). Each effect or damage from this attack is applied singly and can be reduced by armor or Fortitude as though the defender had been struck by two separate attacks.

A character cannot assist a defender if she is not solid. However, it is possible to make yourself the target of an attack that will not harm you, as long as you could have been a possible target of that attack. For example, a cloud of mist jumping in front of a shotgun blast will have no protective effect. However, a Gangrel who is immune to fire may leap in front of a gout of flame. If she is successful, the flame will strike the Gangrel, even if the damage inflicted will be reduced to nothing.

If the attacking character does not wish to use her declared Physical attack against the individual who declared the assist defender tactic, she may choose to lose her standard action and not attack at all this round. The simple action used to enact the assist defender tactic is also lost, but any movement performed as part of that tactic is completed. Both the defender and the secondary defender are considered to have been targeted by an attack for the purpose of determining their maximum attacks per round.

Order of Actions in Mass Combat

In some circumstances, both an attacking character and a defending character may choose to utilize mass combat tactics to modify the same challenge. A Storyteller resolves this situation in the following order:

1. On her initiative, the initial attacker declares her intent to attack with a Physical challenge, describes the nature of her attack, and targets the initial defender.

2. A second attacker declares her intent to assist the initial attacker. The initial attacker accepts the assistance.

3. The second attacker spends her standard action and describes the nature of her collaboration. The Storyteller agrees the second attacker's action is possible (and useful) and grants the attackers a free combat maneuver to add to the attack. The two attackers decide which combat maneuver they will apply.

4. Before challenges are attempted, the Storyteller asks if any characters would like to declare the intent to use the assist defender tactic. If so, the initial defender may choose to accept the assistance.

5. The second defender spends her simple action, takes steps toward the initial defender, and makes herself the new target of the attack.

6. At this point, the attacker may choose to continue with the attack against the new target or to abandon the attack and lose her standard action. If she chooses to continue the attack, she may apply a second combat maneuver to the attack through the normal methods, such as by spending a Willpower or taking advantage of an attribute focus. The free combat maneuver gained from assist attacker cannot be altered.

7. The Physical challenge for the attack is performed between the original attacker and the second defender. This is a standard challenge, run exactly as if the secondary defender had been chosen as the original target of the attack.

8. If the secondary defender wins the challenge, she negates the attack, preventing it from affecting either herself or the original defender. If she loses the challenge, she takes the damage or suffers the effect of the incoming attack. In either case, the original defender takes no damage and suffers no effect.

9. Both the original defender and the secondary defender note that they have been attacked by a Physical challenge this round.

10. This challenge is over. Players then proceed to the initiative of the next character involved in the mass combat.

Health and Damage

Every character has at least 9 health levels, divided among three wound track categories: Healthy, Injured, and Incapacitated. When your character takes damage, you must first mark off your Healthy wound levels, then your Injured wound levels, and finally your Incapacitated wound levels.

Character Sheet Example

○ ○ ○ – Healthy

○ ○ ○ – Injured

○ ○ ○ – Incapacitated

These levels represent your character's general state of health, as follows:

- **Healthy**: As long as you do not have any points marked off within your Injured or Incapacitated wound tracks (three wounds or less), you may operate normally.
- **Injured**: If you have one or more points marked off in your Injured wound track, you are Injured. There is no immediate mechanical disadvantage to being Injured, but some attacks work more effectively on Injured characters.
- **Incapacitated**: If you have one or more points marked off in your Incapacitated wound track, you are Incapacitated. Incapacitated characters lose their simple action every round until they heal all of their Incapacitated health levels.

***Example**: An elder attacks Nixx and inflicts 4 points of normal damage. Nixx's player must mark off all of his Healthy levels and the first level of Injured, leaving him with 2 Injured levels remaining. Later, Nixx suffers an additional 3 points of damage at the hands of a jealous lover, so he must mark off his last 2 Injured levels and his first Incapacitated level, leaving him with 2 Incapacitated levels remaining. While his remaining health level is in the Incapacitated track, Nixx is only able to take one standard action per round.*

Stamina Focused

Stamina-focused characters don't suffer any penalties for being in the Incapacitated wound track. Attacks that have a greater effect on Injured or Incapacitated characters are not blocked by the Stamina focus.

Damage Types

Normal Damage

Normal damage comes from attacks that slash, pierce, or bash your opponent. Unless otherwise noted, assume your attack causes normal damage.

Aggravated Damage

Some supernatural creatures are especially vulnerable to certain types of attacks. Vampires are particularly susceptible to fire and sunlight, while werewolves are famously vulnerable to silver weapons. When a character is hit by an attack to which she is particularly vulnerable, she suffers aggravated damage.

Falling Damage

You take 1 point of damage for every 10 feet you fall. For example, falling off of the roof of a single-story house causes 1 point of damage, while falling from the 15th floor of an office building would most likely be fatal.

Suffocation

When unable to breathe, mortal characters take 1 point of damage every three turns. This damage cannot be reduced or negated while the character is unable to breathe, such as being underwater or in a room filled with unbreathable gas. Stamina-focused characters take damage every five turns, instead of the standard three.

Staking

If you have a weapon with the staking quality, you can attempt to stake a vampire, so long as that vampire is Incapacitated. Staking requires you to use the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver. It imposes a -2 penalty to your attack test pool, but if successful, the target falls into a damage-induced torpor until the stake is removed. Staked vampires automatically awaken when the stake is removed, unless they are also out of health levels.

Normally it is not possible to use the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver unless the target is within the Incapacitated wound track, but a vampire who is in torpor, asleep, or otherwise helpless can be staked, with the Storyteller's permission.

Drugs and Poison

Poisons are natural or synthetic chemicals designed to harm humans. Drugs and alcohol are often used recreationally to produce feelings of euphoria, but they have severe side effects and can be used by unscrupulous people to incapacitate or kill.

Undead characters are immune to many of the effects of drugs, alcohol, and poisons. Vampires cannot be knocked unconscious and are not inconvenienced by organ failure. Most vampires are incapable of directly absorbing drugs, alcohol, or poison, but they may feel some of the effects by drinking the blood of a mortal who has ingested such chemicals.

Doses: A dose is the amount of chemical that can affect a character in a single turn. Baring supernatural powers, a character can only be subjected to one dose of a poison or drug per turn.

Drug and Poison Types

- **Alcohol**: When you ingest a dose of alcohol (a glass of beer, a shot of whiskey, etc.), make a static challenge using your Physical attribute + Survival against a difficulty rating of 10. Stamina-focused characters receive a +3 wild card bonus to this test. Each time you ingest a new dose you must test again against a cumulative +2 difficulty. For example, if you have three drinks, you must make three challenges. The first has a difficulty of 10, the second has a difficulty of 12, and the third has a difficulty of 14. Each time you fail to resist a dose of alcohol, you gain a cumulative -1 penalty to all Mental challenges and all challenges involving coordination or manual dexterity (including combat). The negative effects of alcohol fade at a rate of 1 point per hour.

- **Hallucinogen**: When exposed to a hallucinogen, your ability to tell the difference between fantasy and reality is impaired, and you suffer a -5 penalty to all challenges based on Investigation or Awareness. Intelligence-focused characters reduce this penalty to -3. The effects of a dose of hallucinogen last for one hour. Additional doses do not increase the penalty, but add to the duration on a one-for-one basis. For example, if you inhale a hallucinogen for three turns you will experience hallucinations for the next three hours. The effects of hallucinogens fade if you sleep for eight hours, no matter how many doses are affecting the character.

  If you interact with another character for more than a few moments while hallucinating, you must make a static challenge using your Mental attribute + Investigation against a difficulty rating of 10. Failure means that you do or say something that alerts the person you're dealing with to the fact that you're hallucinating.

- **Knock Out:** When exposed to a dose of a knock-out drug, you must make a static challenge using your Physical attribute + Survival against a difficulty rating of 5. Each turn that you are exposed to a knock-out drug, you must test again with a cumulative +2 difficulty. For example, if you breathe knock-out gas for 3 turns, you will need to make three challenges. The first difficulty rating is 5, the second will be 7, and the third will be 9. If you fail such a challenge, you lose consciousness for one hour. Note that undead characters cannot be knocked unconscious.

- **Amphetamine**: When you ingest a dose of a stimulant, you become twitchy and hyperactive, and you cannot sleep or rest for the next hour. Additional doses do not increase the penalties, but add to the duration on a one-for-one basis. If you are exposed to more doses of a stimulant than you have dots in your Physical attribute in one 24-hour period, you suffer major organ failure and will die without medical attention. Stamina-focused characters can ingest three additional doses of stimulants before suffering organ failure. Undead characters are immune to organ failure.

- **Toxin**: When you're exposed to a toxin, nothing happens for a three turns (five turns if you are Stamina-focused). After that time passes, you must make a static challenge using your Physical attribute + Survival with a difficulty between 5 and 30 (depending on the poison's virility). If you succeed, you resist the poison. Failure causes you to take 1 point of damage that cannot be reduced or negated and forces you to test again in five minutes. This process continues until you succeed or die. Undead characters (including vampires) are immune to the effects of most toxins. Toxins that specifically target the victim's blood are effective against vampires, but they destroy the vampire's Blood points rather than inflict damage. If a vampire runs out of Blood points before she resists the toxin, the effects of the toxin end. A character with the Medical skill and access to medical supplies can treat you by making a static challenge against a difficulty rating equal to the poison's virility rating -5. If successful, the toxin's effect ends.

Sample Virility Rating

- Rubbing alcohol: 5
- Arsenic: 10
- Snake Venom: 15
- A pint of drain cleaner: 30

Losing Consciousness

When a living character has no remaining health levels and takes 1 or more points of damage, she falls unconscious and may die.

It's possible to revive an unconscious character using the Medicine skill by succeeding in a static challenge using a test pool consisting of your Mental attribute + Medicine skill against a difficulty rating of 10, or 20 if proper medical equipment isn't available. A revived character who is still within the Incapacitated wound track will fall unconscious again if she does anything physically stressful, like engage in combat.

Vampires (and some other supernatural creatures) can never be knocked unconscious. Note that this immunity also applies to the Knock Out combat maneuver.

Torpor

When a vampire has no remaining health levels and takes 1 or more points of damage, she falls into *torpor*. Torpid vampires appear to be dead mortals. While in torpor, a character is effectively unconscious and cannot perceive her surroundings.

Any torpid vampire who is given at least 1 point of Blood from a vampire of three generations lower automatically wakes up from torpor. Note that this requirement is calculated by comparing numeric generation, not by comparing dots of the Generation background.

Damage-Induced Torpor

Every night at sunset, a vampire in damage-induced torpor will use 1 point of Blood and heal 1 point of damage (any type of damage). If the torpid vampire has enough Blood to heal all of her damage, she will transition to voluntary torpor and may choose to wake at dusk on the night after she healed her last point of damage. If the vampire doesn't have enough Blood, she continues to heal 1 point of damage per week until she's returned to full health. Once fully healed, a bloodless vampire can briefly wake from torpor if a source of fresh blood (a human or vial of mortal blood) comes within 10 steps. Such a vampire may spend 1 point of Willpower per round to remain active. If she manages to feed before running out of Willpower, she will escape torpor's grasp; otherwise she will fall back into torpor when she runs out of Willpower. Willpower expended in this way does not return normally, but will return automatically after one week.

Voluntary Torpor

A vampire may choose to fall into torpor by spending a point of Willpower and meditating for a few minutes. Voluntary torpor is similar to damage-induced torpor, but the sleeping vampire has a limited grasp of her surroundings. A vampire slumbering in a voluntary torpor will notice any source of mortal blood (a living human or a vial of mortal blood) that comes within 10 steps of her resting place and will recognize that she is in danger if something attempts to harm her. A vampire in voluntary torpor may choose to wake up at dusk (any day after the first spent in torpor) and may wake immediately by spending a point of Willpower, if she senses blood or danger.

Healing

Natural Healing

Humans die easily from normal injury and heal very slowly without medical attention. Mortal life is fragile compared to an immortal. The following system simulates the slow recovery process.

- Heal one level of health per day while Healthy.
- Heal one level of health per week while Injured.
- Heal one level of health per month while Incapacitated.

Treating a living character with the Medicine skill cuts the above healing times in half. To attempt medical treatment, make a static challenge using a test pool consisting of your Mental attribute + Medicine skill versus a difficulty rating of 5 + the number of wounds your target is suffering. If you have proper equipment to treat your patient's injuries, you receive a +1 to +5 wild card bonus to your challenge. Obviously, medical treatment does not work on vampires as they are undead.

Vampiric Healing

Normal Damage: Vampires do not heal naturally. Spending a point of Blood allows a vampire to instantly heal a point of normal damage. Healing doesn't require an action, and you may heal at any time (even when it's not your initiative).

Aggravated Damage: To heal aggravated damage, a vampire must spend 3 points of Blood just before she goes to sleep. When she wakes the next evening, she heals 1 point of aggravated damage. It is not normally possible to heal more than 1 point of aggravated damage per day.

Death

"Death has made his darkness beautiful with thee."

— Alfred, Lord Tennyson, In Memoriam

Living characters die if they have no remaining health levels and take 3 or more points of damage. Additionally, a living character who is knocked unconscious from damage will die in 5 turns unless treated by a character with the Medicine skill. Stamina-focused characters will survive for up to 10 turns without medical attention.

Vampires are more difficult to kill. To permanently destroy a vampire, you must damage all of the target's health levels, knock her into torpor, and remove her head or destroy her body.

To remove a vampire's head, you must have an appropriate tool or power and use a full round of actions (consuming both your simple and standard actions). Nearby characters may choose to defend the torpid vampire (using the assist defender tactic). If no one chooses to defend the torpid vampire, an opposed challenge is not needed.

To destroy a vampire's body without beheading her, you must expose her to a damaging situation or inflict significant blunt trauma over three full turns. The three turns needed to kill a vampire in this way don't need to happen consecutively, but they must happen within 10 minutes.

Examples

- If you use your simple and standard actions to behead a torpid vampire using a sword, feral claws, or supernatural strength, she will die.
- If you light a torpid vampire on fire and she burns for three turns, she will die.
- If you throw a torpid vampire off of something high enough that she falls for three full turns, she will die when she hits the ground.
- If you spend three turns destroying a torpid vampire's body by beating it with a sledge hammer, she will die.

Turning to Ash

When a vampire is killed, her body turns to ash over the next five turns. If a part of a vampire is removed, the missing piece will similarly turn to ash within the next five turns unless it is mystically preserved.

Willpower

The Willpower mechanic depicts the character's inner drive, competence, and spiritual strength. We measure Willpower both by its permanent rating and as temporary points. *Permanent Willpower* is the maximum number of points possessed by the character — her full pool. A player spends 1 of these points (a point of *temporary Willpower*) for such things as resisting Mental and Social powers. While this expenditure decreases the character's current Willpower rating, it does not permanently decrease the maximum number of points a character can possess.

When a player spends a point of a character's Willpower, she should note this expenditure on her character sheet. A character's temporary Willpower pool will likely fluctuate a great deal during the course of a session.

Spending Willpower

Willpower is one of the most active and important mechanics in Mind's Eye Theatre. Willpower is extremely versatile, and both players and Storytellers should familiarize themselves with its uses.

Common uses include:

- A Willpower can be spent to retest a static or opposed challenge. Any type of challenge (Physical, Social, or Mental) may be retested with Willpower.
- A Willpower can be spent to use a combat maneuver.

Regaining Willpower

At the start of each game, your character begins with her maximum Willpower as long as she had a complete day's rest before starting the game. During the course of the game, spent Willpower is regained by roleplaying.

There are two ways to regain spent Willpower through roleplay:

- **Players' Acknowledgement**: When another player impresses you with her roleplay via impressive acting in a dramatic scene or symbolic roleplaying with your Archetype, you may award her by refreshing all that character's spent Willpower. A character can only benefit from your refresh once per night. Refreshing Willpower should be communicated verbally after the scene, or via the **"I grant you Willpower"** hand symbol. To use the hand symbol, start with your palm facing your chest and four fingers touching your chin. Then extend your hand palm-up towards the character you wish to reward. (This is the *American Sign Language*

gesture for "thank you" and is a way to say thank you for good roleplaying.)

There is no limit to the number of characters whom you can reward for roleplaying, but no single character can regain Willpower from you more than once per night. To regain Willpower more than once per night in this fashion, a player must roleplay with multiple characters.

- **Storyteller Acknowledgement**: When the Storyteller notices a player roleplaying her character well, she may elect to refresh some or all of the character's spent Willpower.

  By default, the Storyteller refreshes all of the character's spent Willpower (just like a player would), but the Storyteller is allowed to award fewer Willpower if the situation warrants it. Storytellers may refresh Willpower as often as they like and may refresh the same character's Willpower more than once per night. Storytellers should not hesitate to use this ability when they witness a player roleplaying in a way that other players do not see or do not acknowledge. However, this refresh should be used carefully, lest players forget to use the system. Players should be allowed and encouraged to reward each other whenever possible.

Willpower cannot be refreshed while in combat. If a player or Storyteller attempts to reward a character for actions taken during combat, the Willpower is refreshed as soon as the combat scene ends.

Example #1: *Vincent, angry after a meeting with the Brujah Primogen, storms through the main hall headed for the exit. Recognizing that her Prince is upset, Lorelei leaps to her feet, holds the door open for her liege, and moves to guard his back. As he leaves the room, Vincent's player makes a silent hand symbol to Lorelei's player, thanking her for roleplaying. All of Lorelei's spent Willpower is replenished.*

Example #2: *After surviving a Sabbat assault, Vincent brings a torpored Neonate Nosferatu to Lorelei, asking her to watch over her clanmate until he wakes from torpor. After the scene, Vincent's player talks to Lorelei's player and explains that he supported Lorelei's "Den Mother" concept by bringing her torpored clanmate directly to her. With this in mind, he asks if Lorelei's player will help him regain all of the Willpower he spent fighting the Sabbat. Lorelei's player agrees, and Vincent's spent Willpower is refreshed.*

Example #3: *At the end of a particularly harrowing combat scene, The Storyteller announces that everyone involved will regain 1 spent Willpower. This allows the Storyteller to reward his players and make sure that no one leaves the fight with all of their Willpower expended (everyone will have at least 1 point), but leaves room for the players to reward each other through roleplay later in the evening. If the Storyteller feels that there won't be an opportunity to roleplay in the near future, she might decide to refresh more (or all) Willpower spent during the combat.*

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems

"Drama is based on making mistakes."
— W.H. Auden

A fledgling vampire must learn the limits of her existence in short order, because the **World of Darkness** is a cold, cruel place, filled with dangers. Games such as **Mind's Eye Theatre** help characters interact with the world by representing difficulties via a set of mechanics. These rules exist for the purpose of consensual immersion, allowing everyone who plays the game to have a mutual understanding of how their shared reality works. These dramatic systems help you interact with the world and with other players by quickly and directly resolving actions taken by the characters, so that players can focus on the story.

Roleplaying a Vampire

Imagine your first night as a vampire. You can see, hear, and smell things you never previously imagined. You are stronger, faster, and seemingly immortal. Vampiric blood rushes through your veins, enhancing your perception and your mental acuity. You are powerful and cunning. You stand on the edge of eternity, but immortality comes at a price — you must prey upon the living, drinking their blood in order to continue your own existence.

Vampires feature prominently in myths and popular culture. Films and books sometimes portray them as monstrous creatures, swooping out of the darkness to ravish innocent virgins and steal babies from their cradles. Other myths describe them as predators of incredible beauty and sensuality, enchanting men and women alike. A cunning vampire may seduce a viewer in return for a bit of blood and then vanish into the night.

The vampires of the **World of Darkness** are all these things and more. They are similar to the vampires of myth and cinema, but they've deliberately hidden much of the truth from the mortal world, in order to ensure would-be hunters will make fatal errors. Vampires still remember their original lives, but they have moved beyond many of the concerns of mortality.

Here are some popular myths and suppositions about the undead — as well as factual information inherent to the **World of Darkness**:

- **Vampires are immortal**. While it is possible to kill a vampire, she will not age or die of natural causes. She does not need water, food, or air. For all intents and purposes, a vampire is a corpse, albeit one revived through the magic inherent in the blood.
- **Vampires require the blood of the living to survive**. While vampires are corpses, they still require nourishment to sustain themselves, and as in the myths, they feast on blood. Not only does blood preserve their undead bodies, it allows vampires to perform amazing and supernatural feats of healing, strength, or speed. Most vampires seek human blood, although some force themselves to drink animal blood (which tastes foul and unsatisfying to a

vampire). Some elder vampires must hunt their younger brethren for feeding, as they are no longer able to gain sustenance from human blood. A vampire need not kill her prey; some take only a little blood and hide the evidence of their feeding. A vampire can repair surface wounds caused by her bite simply by licking them.

- **Anyone who dies from a vampire's bite will become a vampire.** If this statement were true, the world would be overrun with vampires! Instead, those bitten and drained by vampires in the course of feeding simply die. It takes a very special and purposeful process, known as the *Embrace*, to create a new vampire.

- **Vampires are burned by sunlight.** True. Vampires must avoid sunlight or risk death. Vampires are nocturnal creatures, and most find it difficult to stay awake during the day, even if they are well-hidden from the sunlight.

- **Vampires are repelled by garlic, they can't cross running water, and they cast no reflections.** These myths are partially true. Some vampires, notably those of a particular clan, cast no reflection. However, vampires are creatures of superstition, and some may avoid these things out of a psychological compulsion.

- **A cross or other holy symbol can repel a vampire.** Generally untrue. The symbol itself has little power. Instead, vampires fear the faith of the person wielding the symbol — and genuine faith is rare.

- **Vampires will die from a stake through the heart.** While they cannot die from such wounds, vampires *are* immobilized by wooden stakes, arrows, crossbow bolts, and similar items that pierce the heart. Once the item is removed, the vampire's mobility is restored.

A Mortal's Embrace

New vampires are created, or "sired," by a process called the *Embrace*. Vampires rarely never sire impulsively; after all, another predator means more competition for resources. Still, vampires do Embrace from time to time. Some vampires Embrace in an attempt to ensure eternal companionship. Others Embrace to have conspirators in their plans or dupes for schemes; still other vampires Embrace in order to claim a particularly promising, desirable mortal for their clan and lineage. Mortals who show promise may be watched for months, even years, without ever realizing that they are being evaluated for immortality.

To Embrace a new vampire, a *sire* – the vampire doing the Embracing – drains her chosen victim of blood. When the victim is on the verge of death – or actually dead, but still warm with life – the sire places a small amount of her own blood in the victim's mouth. A drop or two is sufficient, though most sires use more. This blood replenishes the victim's life-force, drawing her back through death and into unlife. During the Embrace, the body reworks itself, sloughing off the imperfections present in every mortal form and becoming more beautiful, albeit with the grace of a predatory animal. The new childe reawakens, but her heart does not beat, nor does her blood circulate.

After a person has been Embraced, she is now one of the living dead. She wakes suffering a ravenous hunger, a sign of the ferocious passion of the vampiric nature, or *Beast*, which the Embrace has given her. Over the next few weeks, the young vampire (usually under the tutelage of her sire) undergoes a series of transformations. She will discover powers granted by the blood, such as speed, strength, or the supernatural command of animals.

The fledgling vampire must also face the raging hunger of the Beast and learn how to control its feral impulses. As need begins to gnaw at her, she must also learn to hunt, preying on mortals for the blood she needs to survive. She also learns that the Embrace truly makes vampires into living dead. Subtle, higher emotions are the province of mortals, and she may find that she can no longer bring to mind true pleasure, joy, or love, except as a fading memory. This stark emotionlessness conquers many young vampires during their first weeks. Some find that they cannot endure it and choose to greet the morning sun rather than look ahead to an immortality of coldness and sorrow. But for those vampires who survive their first nights, a much larger world awaits.

New vampires are not created accidently. When a sire Embraces, she must spend 1 point of Willpower to imbue the blood with the potential to create a new vampire. Willpower spent to Embrace does not return normally, but will return after two games or one month, whichever is longer.

Note: Only a mortal (or ghoul) can be Embraced. Werewolves, mages, and other supernatural creatures cannot be made into vampires.

Mechanics of the Embrace

If a mortal (not a ghoul) is Embraced during play, you should convert your character to a vampire using the following steps:

1. If your sire is a member of an uncommon clan, rare clan, or a member of a bloodline, you must immediately purchase the merits associated with your clan and/or bloodline. If you don't have enough experience points (XP) to purchase these merits, you will go into XP debt. All experience you earn will go towards these merits until they are fully paid for with XP.

2. You must purchase the Generation background until you are one generation removed from your sire. For example, a character Embraced by a 9th generation vampire should purchase Ancilla Generation and purchase the Lesser Generation flaw, which causes her to be 10th generation. If the newly Embraced character doesn't have enough XP banked to purchase the appropriate Generation, the player will go into XP debt. All experience you earn will go towards repaying this debt, until your Generation is fully paid for with XP.

3. A newly Embraced vampire starts with 2 dots in one of her new clan's in-clan disciplines (her choice) and 1 dot in each of that clan's remaining two in-clan disciplines. New vampires gain these dots if they have no dots in their new clan's in-clan disciplines.

Vampire Physiology

Over the first three nights of a newly Embraced vampire's existence, her body undergoes a series of significant changes:

- Vampires don't sweat, don't leave fingerprints, and do not tire from physical exertion. Vampires have an extraordinary amount of control over the blood in their bodies. When a vampire is wounded, she does not bleed unless she specifically wishes it.

- A vampire's body does not generate its own heat unless she spends Blood to appear human. Without specific effort, a vampire's body will drift towards room temperature (making her difficult to detect with thermal technology).

- Vampires do not normally eat or drink. A vampire who wishes to hold down normal food or drink must spend 1 point of Blood per hour. When she stops spending Blood, she must expel the food she's crammed into her stomach.

- To stay active, vampires must drink the blood of the living. Each sunset, a vampire must spend 1 point of Blood to wake up. If she fails to spend this Blood, she falls into voluntary torpor.

- Vampires breathe reflexively, pulling air in and out of their lungs in order to smell and talk, but a vampire does not require oxygen to function. If she puts her mind to it, a vampire may hold her breath indefinitely, survive underwater, or operate normally in a room choked with carbon monoxide.

- A vampire's ability to feel emotion is stunted. The undead often replace higher emotional concepts, like love and marriage, with lower impulses, like lust and sex.

Daytime

Vampires sleep during the daytime. At dawn, a vampire must either fall into a deep sleep or spend a point of Willpower. If the vampire spends a point of Willpower, she may stay awake and active for one hour. Willpower spent to stay awake cannot be regained until after the sun sets.

A slumbering vampire who finds herself in a dangerous situation may make a static challenge using her Mental attribute + Investigation skill (difficulty rating 8); if successful, she may spend a point of Willpower to wake up and remain awake for one hour. A slumbering vampire who takes damage instantly wakes up and may remain awake for three turns. After three turns, the vampire must spend a Willpower or fall asleep.

Sunlight

A vampire exposed to sunlight takes between 1 and 5 points of aggravated damage per turn. Small exposure (like sticking your hand into a sunbeam) causes 1 point of aggravated damage. Standing in the sun on a bright day causes 5 points of damage per turn. Vampiric powers such as Fortitude do not reduce the amount of damage vampires take from exposure to sunlight. It is possible to reduce the amount of damage suffered from sunlight with thick clothing, but a vampire will always take at least 1 point of damage per turn from sunlight unless there is something solid and opaque between her and the sun (the roof of your haven is your best friend).

Blood

Blood is life. To sustain her immortality, a vampire must periodically consume blood, preferably that of humans. Some penitent vampires eke out a pale existence drinking only animal blood, and some ancient vampires have become so monstrous that they must hunt and kill others of their kind to nourish themselves, but these are rare, extreme examples. Generally, vampires consume the blood of humanity in order to survive.

In **Mind's Eye Theatre**, the amount of blood within a living creature is measured in units called *Blood points*. The full amount of blood in a creature's system is referred to as its *Blood pool*. A healthy mortal adult is presumed to have 10 points of Blood in her system. A vampire may contain more points of Blood, depending upon her Generation. A vampire has the special ability to purposefully expend Blood points in order to fuel a variety of functions. Weaker vampires, with thinner blood, can utilize their Blood less swiftly, while more powerful Generations can expend several points of Blood in a single action. For more on Generation, see **Chapter Three: Character Creation, page 100**.

A fledgling quickly learns to use her vampiric blood in the following ways:

- A vampire can feed a Blood point to a mortal in order to transform that mortal into a ghoul.
- One Blood point enables a vampire to appear lifelike for a scene. The vampire's skin grows warm and shows a normal mortal coloration, and the vampire's autonomic systems mimic human activity (such as blinking, sneezing, or natural breathing). Vampires who follow Paths of Enlightenment, rather than Humanity, cannot spend Blood for this purpose, and they are incapable of appearing mortal even for short periods of time. Supernatural disguises (like Obfuscate) can mask the physical marks of following a path, but no disguise can suppress the subtle terror that surrounds a vampire who's forsaken her Humanity in favor of a Path of Enlightenment.
- A vampire can spend Blood points to heal wounds, quickening the flesh to heal an injured area. (See **Chapter Six: Core Systems, Health and Damage, page 285**.)
- A vampire can spend a Blood point to activate or power some disciplines, such as Celerity.
- A vampire may spend Blood to boost her Physical attribute, raising her rating for the duration of one challenge. Each point of Blood spent in this way boosts a vampire's Physical attribute rating by 1. Blood spent to increase your Physical attribute does not require an action, and this expenditure can be done at any time. It may even be done before your initiative. Note that the amount of Blood a character can spend per round, and eventually her overall Blood pool, will limit how much a character can boost her attribute.

Storing Vampiric Blood

Vitae removed from a vampire's body retains its supernatural qualities for up to 10 minutes. After that time has elapsed, the blood becomes non-supernatural. Vampire blood stored in an airtight container keeps its supernatural qualities for up to one week. Preserving vitae for longer requires use of the Medicine skill or a supernatural power, such as Principal Focus of Vitae Infusion (see **Chapter Four: Disciplines, page 203**).

Biting

A vampire can extend her fangs and use her standard action to bite a grappled opponent, choosing either to draw blood or to attack and inflict aggravated damage. Grappling an opponent requires a combat maneuver, but once a vampire has successfully grappled an opponent, she can bite that opponent without spending additional Willpower. It is not possible to feed and bite for damage at the same time. For more information on combat maneuvers, see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 280**.

Biting for damage converts a character's normal brawling damage into aggravated damage.

Biting to feed does no damage to vampires, but drains 1 Blood point per standard action used to feed. Drawing Blood in this manner harms mortals, inflicting 2 points of normal damage per Blood drained from a living victim.

Feeding

"She did not seduce, she ravished."

— George Meredith, Diana of the Crossways

A vampire typically replenishes her Blood points by *feeding*. Your character can take Blood points from mortals, other vampires, or other creatures with blood, such as animals or werewolves. When a vampire bites someone to drain blood, she invokes the *Kiss*. The Kiss is an overwhelming sensation of rapturous helplessness in mortals, and it is pleasurable even to other creatures. Consumption of blood from some supernatural creatures may cause unusual problems. For more information on drinking the blood of supernaturals, please see the specific information about each creature type in **Chapter Twelve: Allies and Antagonists, page 489**.

After feeding, a vampire can close a wound made during feeding by licking the wound, thus repairing the surface injury (but not healing any damage). Note that a vampire cannot lick to heal aggravated damage inflicted by a bite meant to damage, and she cannot not heal damage to mortals caused by blood loss.

Feeding During Game Sessions

Directly managing feeding scenes for every player at a game session is impractical and can cause a number of pacing problems. To feed at a game, log your intent to feed with the Storyteller (or a Narrator), acquire approval, and then wait 15 minutes out of game to simulate the hunt. When you return to game, you refresh 2 points of Blood.

Environmental factors such as plot, influences, pacing, or other players may require that the Storyteller personally run the feeding session.

(If you have the Herd background, please see **Chapter Three: Character Creation, Herd, page 102**.)

Feeding from Lesser Blood

Vampires prefer to feed on the warm blood of a living human, taken directly from the vein. Feeding from an animal or from stored blood may provide a meager sustenance, but it does not satisfy the Beast. A vampire must consume 2 points of animal blood in order to equal 1 Blood point taken from a living human.

***Example**: Claudia the Toreador needs to feed and seduced Matt the mortal into following her to a private area of the bar. She establishes a firm grip and pulls him close, winning a Physical opposed challenge, spending a Willpower to Grapple, and biting him to feed. Claudia drains 1 point of Blood per standard action, and may stop any time she wishes. Matt, now experiencing the Kiss, does not resist once the bite has been established.*

Unfortunately for Claudia, Matt's lover, James, walks past and sees them. Although he doesn't understand what's going on, James is outraged and starts to yell at Matt. The sway of Claudia's Kiss might be broken by this awkward interruption, and therefore the Storyteller may require Claudia to make another challenge. If she loses that challenge, Matt will recover his senses and realize what's going on.

Feeding and Downtime Actions

Finding safe ways to drink the blood of mortals is often time-consuming; to reflect this, you must spend 1 downtime action between each session to feed. If you fail to spend an action feeding, you enter every game at half your normal Blood pool (round up). For example, a Neonate who did not spend 1 of her downtime actions feeding enters game with only 5 Blood in her pool. For more information on downtime actions see **page 307**.

Blood Bond

Vampire blood is an aphrodisiac, more addictive than any other substance known to man. It provides false emotions and affects both mortals and other vampires with heady, unwilling love for the person from whom they drink. This sensation – and the lingering effect – is dangerous, as vampires enslave one another by overcoming a victim's resistance through repeated tastes of blood.

Many undead exploit the heady emotions found in drinking vampire blood, or *vitae,* to stir passion in their dead hearts, but it is a dangerous rush. If a being, mortal or vampire alike, drinks from the same vampire on three separate nights, she falls under the sway of a mystical state known as the *blood bond*. The blood bond is an enslavement of the emotions, where the individual bound is affected by an obsessive, all-encompassing love for the individual from whom she drank. This enthrallment is stronger than any other drive in the individual's life: greater even than self-preservation. Supernatural powers, such as Dominate or Presence, cannot change the victim's blood-bound emotions. She will do anything, suffer anything, to please her beloved. Only true love has a chance of defeating such a bond.

A vampire who holds another in such bondage is said to be the victim's *regnant*, while the individual thus bound is called a *thrall*.

A blood bond must be maintained with further drinks, or it will fade with time. Further, it is in a regnant's best interest to maintain a good relationship with her thralls, as thralls who are constantly abused and humiliated by their regnants will find the bond fading. Thralls who are treated with affection and respect find the bond to be as strong as iron, and they find it far harder to resist their regnant's commands.

Blood bonds are commonly used to control and ensure the loyalty of mortals and ghouls, but it is possible for vampires to bind each other as well. The process has three steps, corresponding to the number of drinks a victim has taken from a vampire:

- **First drink:** The drinker begins to experience intermittent but strong feelings of infatuation about the vampire. She may dream of him, or find herself "coincidentally" frequenting places where he might show up. There is no mechanical effect at this stage, but it should be roleplayed. All childer have this level of bond toward their sires, for the Embrace itself requires one drink from the sire; the childe may love her parent, hate him, or both, but she is rarely indifferent.
- **Second drink:** The drinker's feelings grow strong enough to influence her behavior. Though she is by no means enslaved to the vampire, he is definitely an important figure in her life. She may act as she pleases, but must spend a point of Willpower per hour if she wishes to directly harm her regnant. Additionally, defensive Social test pools to resist her regnant's powers suffer a -1 penalty.
- **Third drink:** Full blood bond. At this level, the drinker is completely bound to the vampire. He is the most important person in her life; lovers, relatives, and even children become secondary to her all-consuming passion. A thrall must spend a point of Willpower anytime she wishes to do something that she believes her regnant would disapprove of, and she must spend 3 Willpower per hour to attempt to directly harm her regnant. Additionally, defensive Social and Mental test pools to resist her regnant's powers suffer a -3 penalty. A drinker can experience lesser (one- and two-drink) bonds toward several individuals, but upon the formation of a full blood bond, all lesser bonds are wiped away.

Breaking a Blood Bond

It is possible, though difficult, to break a blood bond. If a regnant is killed, the bond will slowly fade over the next month.

- A three-point blood bond must be reinforced regularly. If the thrall avoids drinking her regnant's blood for three months, her bond will fade and become a two-point bond.
- A two-point bond lasts until the thrall is able to spend six months without meeting or speaking to her regnant.
- A one-point bond lasts until the thrall has spent a full year without meeting or speaking to her regnant.

Playing a Ghoul

A ghoul is a mortal who has fed upon vampire blood, altering her body and giving her newfound power. This power comes at a cost of a certain amount of freedom. First, a ghoul is emotionally compromised, bound in a forced love to her vampiric master (known as her *domitor*) by the supernatural qualities of the blood she ingested. Secondly, a

Quick-Start Character Creation Guide

Creating a Ghoul Player-Character

The following information replaces the equivalent steps in the Vampire Quick Start creation guide, **Chapter Three: Character Creation**, page 84.

Step Three: Choose a Clan

- As a ghoul, you do not technically have a clan. Instead, you are a part of your vampire domitor's clan and bloodline. Ghouls must pay all costs of their domitor's affiliation within the setting, including the purchase of rarity and bloodline merits.

Step Six: Assign Initial Backgrounds

- A ghoul character cannot assign dots to the Generation background.

Step Seven: Assign Initial Disciplines

- Assign 5 dots of disciplines. All of your selections must be in-clan disciplines for your domitor, and your domitor must possess those specific powers. If you cannot spend these dots at creation, you may save them and assign them in this manner at a later date.

Step Eight: Choose Merits and Flaws

- A ghoul cannot purchase any clan-specific merits, save those necessary to play her domitor's clan and bloodline. A ghoul cannot purchase Morality merits, nor purchase merits or flaws that specifically pertain to the vampiric condition. Your Storyteller is the final arbiter of which merits and flaws are or are not appropriate for a ghoul.

Step Nine: Spending Initial XP

- As in step six, ghoul characters cannot purchase dots of the Generation background. Further, they cannot purchase any disciplines with XP.
- A player of a ghoul character may purchase items for her sheet with earned XP. The costs for items purchased in play are:

ITEM	COST
Attribute	3 XP each
Merit	XP equal to merit rating
Background or Skill	New level x1

ghoul must continue feeding on vampire blood, consuming a small amount every month. If she does not drink from a vampire within that time period, her body slowly loses all supernatural qualities, and she is no longer a ghoul.

The following qualities are attributes of a ghoul:

- A ghoul does not age nor suffer from natural illness or disease. If the ghoul does not drink from a vampire within a month, the effects of her natural age begin to catch up to her, at the rate of 10 years per day she goes without drinking blood. If she reaches the relative age of 100, the ghoul dies. This process is excruciatingly painful for the ghoul.
- A ghoul can never have more than 5 dots in disciplines. A ghoul cannot teach disciplines to others. Ghouls cannot learn elder powers or techniques.
- A ghoul has 10 points of Blood. Five points of this pool may be vampiric vitae. All remaining points of Blood in her system are human (non-supernatural).
- A ghoul can spend the vampiric Blood in her system at a rate of 1 point per turn. This vampiric Blood can be spent to heal, boost attributes, or fuel disciplines as per normal. A ghoul cannot spend the human blood in her pool in this manner. The vampiric vitae in a ghoul's Blood pool cannot be used for any other purpose.
- To refill the vampiric Blood in her pool, a ghoul must drink vampiric vitae. Otherwise, spent points of vampiric Blood regenerate as human Blood at the rate of 1 per day.
- A ghoul may drink up to 5 points of vampiric vitae, and thus convert a maximum of 5 traits in her Blood pool to vampiric Blood. She may do this whether or not her pool is currently full, so long as she never contains more than 5 points of vampiric vitae.
- Unlike vampires, ghouls are not undead. Ghouls are partially supernatural creatures, but still considered mortal, and therefore subject to powers that have additional effects on mortal targets.
- Ghouls suffer from a weakened, roleplay-only version of their domitor's clan weakness. Nosferatu ghouls are particularly ugly for a human, Toreador ghouls are easily distracted by works of art, and so forth.
- Ghouls do not gain Beast traits and cannot lose Humanity. They cannot be on a Path of Enlightenment, nor take any steps toward Golconda.
- In order to switch domitors, the ghoul must wait for the blood bond from her previous domitor to fade. This does not prevent the ghoul from drinking the blood of other vampires, but those vampires are not considered her domitor. When a ghoul transitions from one domitor to another, achieving a full blood bond to the new vampire, the ghoul's player may choose whether to maintain her current 5 dots of disciplines, or to remove those dots and reallocate them to her new domitor's in-clan disciplines. If she chooses to reallocate, all dots must be removed and reallocated; none can remain in disciplines that are not intrinsic to the new domitor's clan.

To create a player-character ghoul, follow the steps from the vampire creation guide on **page 84**, altering that method of creation in a few intrinsic areas. See the following guide for detailed instructions.

A Ghoul's Embrace

If a ghoul player-character is Embraced during play, the player must choose either to have the character die during the attempted Embrace or to convert from a ghoul to a vampire. If the ghoul's player chooses to allow her character to be successfully Embraced, convert the character in the following manner:

Step One: Clan and Rarity

If the new vampire's sire is a member of an uncommon or rare clan, or a member of a bloodline, you must immediately purchase the merits associated with your clan and/or bloodline.

If the sire was the ghoul's domitor, the newly embraced character already possesses the appropriate clan and rarity merits. If the sire was not the ghoul's domitor, any clan and rarity merits possessed by the ghoul (reflecting her domitor's blood) are stripped, and the XP spent on those merits is refunded. This is an exception to the rule that such merits cannot be lost in play. In this case, the newly Embraced vampire must immediately purchase any merits required to conform to her sire's clan and rarity in the setting. If the purchase of these new merits places the character above the merit limit of 7 points, the player must strip merits from the character's sheet until it again possesses 7 or fewer merit points. If the character cannot conform to the merit limit, then the character must be retired, and it is destroyed during the Embrace.

If you don't have enough XP to purchase the merits required by the sire's clan and rarity, the amount you cannot pay adds to the character's XP debt. If the character received XP from this step, retain that number until the end of the creation process. (See *Step Six*, below).

Step Two: Generation

The newly Embraced vampire must be one generation less powerful than her sire. If the sire is of the 9th generation, the newly Embraced character must be of the 10th generation, and so on.

The new vampire must purchase points in the Generation background until she is one numeric generation removed from the sire. This may require purchasing the same number of dots in Generation as the sire character, such as in the example of a 9th generation sire, where both sire and childe are Ancilla Generation. If this occurs, the newly Embraced vampire gains the appropriate Lesser Generation flaw (see **page 263**) to denote that the new vampire is of weaker vitae.

Alternately, the character's new generation may require purchasing one fewer dot in the Generation background than the sire possesses (such as in the case of a 7th generation Master Elder sire and an 8th generation Pretender Elder Embrace).

Dots of Generation purchased in this way are an exception to the rule that Generation cannot be purchased after a character enters play. Dots of the Generation background purchased during ghoul conversion are priced as per any other background; one times the purchased level if your character is Embraced as a Neonate, and two times the purchased level for each dot if your character is Embraced at any other Generation.

If you don't have enough XP to purchase your new Generation, the amount you cannot pay adds to the character's XP debt. (See *Step Six*, below.)

Step Three: Starting Disciplines

The discipline dots that the character assigned as a ghoul are lost in the Embrace. As a newly Embraced vampire, the player assigns 2 dots in one in-clan discipline of her choice, and 1 dot in each of her remaining two in-clan disciplines.

Later in this process, you may choose to purchase some or all of the character's lost "ghoul" discipline dots. (See *Step Six*, below.)

Step Four: Skills and Backgrounds

The various Generation backgrounds require different XP costs to purchase skills and backgrounds. The ghoul's initial character sheet received the same number of free dots in these areas as a vampire, so the player only needs to tally the XP spent on skills and backgrounds in play. Determine the difference between this total and the cost required to purchase those skills and backgrounds at the character's new Generation, as noted on the chart in **Chapter Three: Character Creation, page 101**.

If you don't have enough XP to purchase the skills and backgrounds you had as a ghoul, the amount you cannot pay adds to the character's XP debt (see *Step Six*, below).

Step Five: Revise Finishing Touches

Note the number of dots gained by the attribute bonus from your new Generation. You do not have to assign these dots now, but you should be aware that you have received this benefit of the Embrace. Also, write down your vampire's total Blood pool, Blood expenditure per round, and clan weakness, along with any other changes incurred through this process.

Step Six: Figuring XP Debt

The ghoul character has now completed the conversion process, and she is a vampire. At this point, the XP debt incurred by this process (if any) must be resolved. Total any XP debt owed by the character and also any XP refund. Also, note any unspent XP that the character retains from in-game play.

First, the character must expend her refunded or saved XP to pay off any debt she has incurred. If the character cannot do so, all XP earned from this point forward must go towards paying this debt. Only after the entire conversion debt is repaid can the character spend XP towards new items.

If you have unspent XP from any source at the end of this process, you can spend it to purchase up to 2 dots of disciplines lost due to the Embrace, at out-of-clan costs (if they are no longer in-clan). You do not need a teacher to purchase these dots. The Storyteller may allow you to incur further XP debt for this purpose, at her discretion.

The character is now a vampire of the clan (and, potentially bloodline) into which she was Embraced. All rules, XP costs, and other items for this character are those of a standard vampire. Note that enduring the rigors of the Embrace is excellent justification for significant physical and spiritual changes, and the player may feel it is appropriate at this time to alter her character's merits and flaws. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of which merits or flaws may be altered due to the Embrace.

Example:

Vivian, an Assamite Vizier's ghoul in the Camarilla setting, is Embraced by a Malkavian sire. Vivian's player thinks it will

be fun to continue the character's story as a Malkavian, and she decides that her ghoul survives the Embrace. She is going to convert the character into a vampire.

Vivian had purchased the Uncommon Clan rarity merit when she created her character as an Assamite Vizier's ghoul. Because this is the Camarilla setting, Assamite Viziers are the default, and she did not have to purchase the bloodline merit for that caste of Assamites. She removes the Uncommon Clan merit and is refunded 2 points of XP.

Next, she checks her sire's generation. The Malkavian was 10th generation, and thus, Vivian will be an 11th generation Neonate. She must purchase a single dot of the Generation background, which (as a Neonate) will cost her 1 point of XP.

Vivian's player had assigned 3 dots in Auspex and 2 in Quietus when she created Vivian as a ghoul. She now removes all 5 dots. As a newly Embraced Malkavian, Vivian assigns 2 dots into Auspex, 1 into Dementation, and 1 into Obfuscate.

As Vivian was Embraced as a Neonate, her costs for skills and backgrounds have not changed. The player skips step four of the conversion process and moves on. Vivian's player writes on her sheet the fact that, as a Neonate vampire, she has a Blood pool of 10, a Blood expenditure per round of 1, and a single attribute bonus (which she can assign later). She makes a note of the Malkavian clan flaw and chooses her character's primary Derangement in accordance with that flaw.

Now that Vivian is a vampire, her player believes that some of her merits are no longer appropriate. She speaks with her Storyteller and decides that the Code of Honor merit no longer suits her character, as Vivian is no longer trying to live within the ethics of Alamut. She removes the Code of Honor merit and gains 2 more refunded points of XP.

The conversion process has left Vivian with 3 points of refunded XP. She must spend 1 to purchase the Generation background as per step two.

Vivian's player wants to keep 2 dots of Quietus, to reflect the time that the character spent as an Assamite ghoul. Two dots of an out-of-clan discipline will cost her 12 XP. She speaks with her Storyteller and gains approval to go into XP debt. She spends her last 2 points of refunded XP reducing her debt from 12 to 10, and then denotes on her character sheet that she has a debt of 10 XP. For the next few games, all of the XP Vivian earns will go toward paying this debt, until she has paid off all 10 XP.

After paying off her debt, Vivian's player can purchase new merits, so long as she does not go above the 7-point merit cap. These may be general or Malkavian clan merits.

Humanity

"These dog-tags remind me of the man I was.
The man I still am. You think that makes me weak?
Take them from me, and find out."

— John McAdams,
Brujah Alastor of the Camarilla

Humanity measures a vampire's innate empathy. As she degenerates, the vampire loses the ability to form meaningful, emotional connections with others. Her control over the Beast diminishes as it encourages indulgence in twisted pleasures. Perversion, cold-blooded murder, mutilation, and wickedness for its own sake are all signs of a vampire whose control is slipping. A vampire with a low rating in Humanity begins to reflect her Beast in her outward appearance. Her next frenzy may well be her last before complete surrender to the Beast. Such a vampire may be physically mistaken for human, but only under certain conditions (such as dim lighting and plenty of distractions).

One of the most important themes of the Vampire roleplaying game is the undead's struggle to retain her soul and fight the degradation of the Beast. Thus, it is extremely important to use Morality in a consistent, dramatic manner. If the Storyteller allows the characters to (sometimes literally) get away with murder, the tragedy of vampiric existence vanishes and the story suffers. If the Storyteller is too strict with the Morality rules, all the characters will be ravening, blood-gorged maniacs by the end of the first session. The Storyteller must be very aware of how events in the story will emotionally impact the characters in her game, and she should play up instances of emotional importance and encourage players to show their character's responses.

Some players find it difficult to really cut loose and show their characters in a state of moral quandary. Does the character scream? Punch a wall? Cry? Fall to the ground, stricken with horror? Players can be very self-conscious about such responses, as civilized society doesn't usually appreciate emotional outbursts — especially when a person is experiencing fear, sorrow, or failure. However, in a roleplaying game like Vampire, emotional situations are critical, and playing out these emotions is part of the fun of portraying a realistic character. Help your players plan out responses to such situations, and give them every opportunity to feel as comfortable portraying the crushing weight of defeat as they are excited about playing their characters as victors. Remember, Vampire isn't about "winning the game." It's about creating realistic characters, with all their flaws and emotions. Those are the situations people remember and talk about with excitement, long after the game is over.

Characters begin with Humanity 5 (normal), but you may purchase Humanity up to 6 with XP. (See **Chapter Three: Character Creation, Earned XP, page 107** for character advancement.)

Humanity Rating

6 – Saintly*
5 – Normal
4 – Distant
3 – Unfeeling
2 – Bestial
1 – Horrifying

The Temptation of the Beast

The Beast is calling, scratching at the door. It is hungry, eager, tempting, twisting a vampire's perceptions. It whispers, "murder is justified, even necessary." "Here's one who deserves it." "That one's better off dead." A little here, a little there, the Beast chisels away at a vampire's ethics and reason until something snaps — and the vampire's Humanity degrades.

In the end, all vampires are supernatural beings, animated corpses that subsist by preying on others. They are a pestilence, and they exist only by harming others. Further, vampirism reduces an individual's capacity to feel positive emotions, slowly wearing away the individual's compassion, empathy, and ability to recognize good from evil. These things are all cast aside by the curse that brings a vampire back from death. With human drives and desires twisted by a raging Beast that demands survival at any cost, vampires must cling to their beliefs. If they lose this tenuous thread, the Beast will win, and the original personality of the vampire will be utterly destroyed. The vampire will enter a frenzied, incredibly violent state known as *wassail*, and she will never return to lucidity.

Fledglings thrust into undead society often cling to the trappings of their mortal lives. Their original belief systems become guides, reminding them which actions are right and which are wrong, even when the vampire can no longer instinctively tell the difference. This ethical code is known as one's Humanity: the semblance of living according to positive moral values and principles. By clinging to these innate guidelines, a vampire can fight against the Beast and retain her sanity.

However, a vampire cannot ignore the fact that she is a monster. Even a vampire with a high Humanity rating feels the Beast inside, scratching at her spirit and demanding blood. As a vampire's Humanity erodes, she becomes jaded and blasé. She may even actively pursue progressively depraved acts in order to feel anything at all. With little memory of her Humanity to guide her, a vampire's behavior becomes callous in the extreme, utterly degenerate and monstrously predatory. She becomes a beacon of evil, and those nearby – undead and mortal alike – actively feel disconcerted, as something alien and terrible moves among them.

Gaining Beast Traits

Every time your character commits a sin, you gain temporary Beast traits equal to the level of the sin. It is possible to mitigate the number of Beast traits your character gains when committing a sin by making a degeneration challenge (see below).

Note: Beast traits are cumulative. Over the course of an evening, you might gain 2 Beast traits for one sin and 1 Beast trait for a second sin. In this case, you have a total of 3 Beast traits.

Level of Sin	Description
1	**Harm Another**: You've significantly harmed another individual physically, mentally, or financially in a way that will take weeks for the victim to recover. For example, you may have broken a mortal's arm, inflicted a point of aggravated damage on a vampire, or severely damaged a mortal's livelihood.
2	**Permanent Injury**: You've harmed another individual in a way that will take the victim years to overcome (if ever). For example, you may have ripped a mortal's leg off, left a vampire staked and buried, or driven someone permanently insane.
3	**Killing:** You've killed another individual.
4	**Multiple Murders:** You've killed more than one individual.
5	**Heinous Acts:** You've committed inhuman acts that cannot be excused. For example, you may have brutally tortured your victim or committed diablerie.

* It's difficult for the undead to remain saintly. Characters with Humanity 6 gain 1 Beast trait when they break the law or when they harm another character. Even minor injuries, such as feeding, count as harm.

Awarding Beast Traits and Paths of Enlightenment

It is important when assigning Beast traits to characters on alternative Paths of Enlightenment that the Storyteller review the tenants of the path to verify that said Beast traits are assigned correctly.

Beast Traits and Combat

When a character commits a sin outside of combat, she gains Beast traits as described above. During a combat scene, the Storyteller should not slow down the action by running multiple degeneration challenges. Instead, the Storyteller should track the most severe sin committed by each character, assign Beast traits accordingly, and resolve degeneration challenges at the end of the combat scene.

Degeneration Challenge

"The evil that men do lives after them;
the good is oft interred with their bones."

— William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar

When a vampire commits a sin, she may attempt to feel remorse to mitigate the loss of Humanity. The test pool is Mental + Willpower with a standard difficulty rating (10) +1 per level of sin. For example, if Suzie broke her victim's finger for information (level 1 sin), her difficulty for the degeneration challenge is 11 (base 10 + 1 for the level of the sin).

If the Storyteller feels that the actions triggering the degeneration challenge were justified due to circumstances or the greater good, she may reduce the difficulty by up to 5 points. However, this should be rare, as struggling against the Beast and taking the high road is a major theme in Vampire.

If the degeneration challenge succeeds, reduce the number of Beast traits gained by 1 point.

Characters on Humanity cannot reduce the number of Beast traits gained when committing diablerie.

Beast Traits

As a vampire commits sins, she accumulates Beast traits. These Beast traits indicate her Beast's current control over her actions. When triggered with the proper stimuli or motivation, the Beast attempts to take over, trying to force the vampire to frenzy.

While under the effects of frenzy, a character may take any sort of action or challenge as per usual (Physical, Social, or Mental) but all of the character's actions must be bent towards the motivation of her frenzy. You may use Auspex to find new victims, Dread Gaze to force your enemy to flee, or Obfuscate to hide from a terrifying foe.

If a vampire spends an entire day sleeping, her Beast is lulled back into relative quiescence and all her Beast traits fade.

Frenzy

A vampire who currently has no Beast traits will automatically resist frenzy.

Types of Frenzy

- **Rage Frenzy**: You attack the thing that made you angry, and you will continue to fight until you damage it into torpor or unconsciousness. If your target escapes, you will spend three turns venting your rage on your surroundings before the rage fades. While under the effects of a rage frenzy, a vampire receives a +1 bonus to all Physical attack test pools, but suffers a -2 penalty to all Physical defense test pools. If you are reduced to the Incapacitated wound track, your rage frenzy will automatically transition into a fear frenzy.

Portraying Frenzy

If a character is frenzied, then both player and Storyteller must take that into consideration. The character they designed is no longer in control of herself; the Beast is running the show. The Beast wishes to commit heinous, violent acts. The Storyteller should work with the player to be sure the actions that the Beast takes while it is in control are as emotionally painful to the character as possible, attacking the character's values and the things she cares most about in an attempt to degrade the character's commitment to ethics.

- **Hunger Frenzy**: You attack the nearest source of mortal blood and drink until your Blood pool is full. This frenzy will only end after your Blood pool refreshes. While under the effects of a hunger frenzy, a vampire receives a +1 bonus to all Physical attack test pools but suffers a -2 penalty to all Physical defense test pools.
- **Fear Frenzy**: You run away from anyone and anything that has the potential to harm you or acts aggressively towards you. You can only attack if you are cornered, and even then you will abandon the fight and run as soon as you have an opportunity. Fear frenzy ends when you escape threats and find a quiet place to hide for 10 minutes.

The Beast is simple but not stupid. A frenzying character will not ignore her own preservation. For example, if you light a frenzying character on fire, she may choose to pause and extinguish the flames before continuing.

Resisting Frenzy

To resist frenzy, you must make a Mental + Willpower challenge. The difficulty rating is 10 + the number of Beast traits the character currently possesses. A vampire can spend a point of Willpower to avoid the effect of frenzy for a scene, or three turns if in combat.

Frenzy Triggers

Current Beast Traits	The character must attempt to resist frenzy if the following conditions are met:
0	Automatically resists all types of frenzy
1	Hit by a single blow that inflicts 4 or more points of damage (rage frenzy)
	Blood pool reaches 0 (hunger frenzy)
	Engulfed by a large fire (fear frenzy)
	Fully exposed to bright sunlight (fear frenzy)
2	Hit by a single blow that inflicts 3 or more points of damage (rage frenzy)
	Blood pool is reduced to a third of maximum (hunger frenzy)
	Damaged by fire or sunlight (fear frenzy)
3	Hit by a single blow that inflicts 2 or more points of damage (rage frenzy)
	Blood pool is reduced to half of maximum (hunger frenzy)
	Three feet or closer to sunlight or a source of fire larger than a torch (fear frenzy)
4	Takes any damage (rage frenzy)
	Blood pool is reduced below maximum (hunger frenzy)
	Sees or smells mortals or their blood (hunger frenzy)
	Sees sunlight or a source of fire larger than a cigarette lighter (fear frenzy)
5	Any of the above triggers

Losing Humanity

A vampire loses Humanity when her Beast becomes too strong to fight, and she loses some of her control. Once the vampire acquires 5 Beast traits, she suffers the loss of a dot of permanent Humanity. Each additional 5 Beast traits claims an additional permanent point of Humanity.

Regaining Humanity

"They only dimly recalled the things they had lost and refused to believe that there had been a time when they were pure and happy."

— Dostoyevsky, The Dream of the Ridiculous Man

The key to any story about regaining Humanity should be an examination of the Beast and repenting for the sins that the vampire has committed in her drive to sate her desires. The Storyteller should closely monitor a character who seeks to regain her Humanity and only approve it if the story feels appropriate.

Here is a sample of what a story to regain Humanity might look like:

Suzie the Brujah has frenzied one time too many and accidently killed an innocent. She realizes that she is

Effects of Low Humanity

If your character's Humanity drops below 5, she suffers the following penalties:

Humanity	Effects
4	Appears slightly inhumane; the cost to take on a semblance of humanity is doubled (2 Blood per scene)
3	All test pools are reduced by half during the daytime
2	Appears very inhumane The difficulty to resist all frenzies is increased by 5
1	Cannot wake during the daytime Does not automatically wake from sleep when damaged
0	Enters wassail, a permanent state of frenzy The Beast has taken over, and no vestige of the human personality or spirit remains. The character becomes an NPC and will be controlled by the Storyteller.

slipping to the Beast. She's very worried that she'll frenzy one time too many and then won't come back. Suzie begins to examine her past errors with the help of an ally.

She decides that she needs to make amends for her mistakes, even if it is metaphorically. This might involve helping out the family of her victim or completing his last great work.

Suzie tries to live life according to a higher set of expectations (living at the level of Humanity that she wants to achieve), and eventually she learns to be the person she wants to be.

Permanent Humanity can be repurchased for 10 XP per dot and should involve significant roleplay. Characters who wish to buy back their Humanity should spend time making amends for the sins that caused the Humanity loss.

Golconda

"As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light of meaning in the darkness of mere being."

— Carl Jung

Long ago, a myth was born in vampiric society: the fable of Golconda, a state of existence in which the Beast is cast out of a vampire's soul. Although myth and superstition are not usually taken seriously in modern nights, there are some vampires who search for enlightenment, desperate to reject their vampiric nature. Despite all evidence pointing to the impossibility of such a quest, there are those who refuse to give up hope. It is a candle in the darkness, a tale to be told when all other hopes have failed.

The search for Golconda is highly personal, and Storytellers are encouraged to be extremely demanding when players request a storyline about Golconda. Golconda is a near-impossible goal, requiring centuries of character research and struggle (and, likely, years of real game time) to reach a *Suspire*, the moment when a vampire reaches enlightenment and achieves Golconda.

Both players and characters should be informed that there is no certainty in this search; extremely few vampires have ever successfully solved the riddle of the Beast and entered this state. Golconda should not be a goal for every character, or even many characters. Players whose characters intend to seek this state should be willing, and even eager, to play out their eventual failure and downfall. Golconda may be nothing more than a myth, even – perhaps *especially* – if a character has poured her existence into finding it and sacrificed everything she loves. Vampire is a game of tragedy, and such an outcome would highlight the dark and poignant nature of the genre for all players.

It should be noted that many vampires hate the idea of Golconda and will struggle to ruin or destroy anyone seeking this state of enlightenment. The Ravnos clan believes that leaving behind one's vampiric nature goes against the intrinsic order of the universe. Other vampires, in particular the Lasombra, preach that God created vampires to do his work; therefore, working to escape your vampiric state is blasphemy, a rejection of God's will. The Setites, who delight in corruption, will take every opportunity to ruin a potential Golconda seeker through temptation, manipulation, or blackmail. Vampires of the Sabbat actively seek to destroy those questing after Golconda, claiming that such a creature is defying Caine. Elders of the Camarilla scorn the idea of Golconda as, at best, lies and foolishness — at worst, infernalism. Overall, a vampire actively seeking this state has chosen to travel a hard road, indeed.

Vampire: The Masquerade 20th Anniversary Edition

The Road to Suspire

Golconda is a personal struggle to overcome the Beast, but there are commonalities in the path to Suspire. It is critical that one's Beast be made as weak as possible. The Beast feeds on depravity, vicious actions, thoughtless deeds, strong emotions, murder, and mayhem — but it also gains sustenance from small sins and wicked thoughts. Even those subtleties must be purged from the vampire's soul.

- **Sacrifice:** This process demands that the vampire sacrifices everything meaningful — social and political status, personal goals, friends, family, and finally, her sense of self. A character must have no other goal, absolutely no other care or concern, other than Golconda. In some ancient vampiric tales, the final act before reaching this state involves a literal sacrifice of that which the vampire loves most, as in the biblical tale of Abraham and Isaac. Your Storyteller will determine what is appropriate.

- **Acceptance:** The vampire must fully accept her nature. She must research and study the vampiric condition, the myths of the various clans, and the history of undead society as fully as possible. She must also learn to clearly distinguish the drives of her soul versus the subtle pressures of her Beast. There must be no question where the line is drawn between the two.

- **Amends:** Humanity – including both mortals and vampires – is a race of flawed creatures. A person capable of reaching Suspire must have no wrongs and no burdens on her soul. She must amend for the wrongs she has done, in mortal life and in unlife, and be forgiven and absolved of those acts. If she fails to recognize a wrong she has committed or does not fully make amends, the character will certainly fail to reach Suspire.

- **Suffering:** Suspire is not an easy thing to achieve, and Golconda is not an easy state to maintain. A Storyteller should consider whether the character has been adequately impeded by her quest, and whether her struggles, failures, and sacrifices have created a powerful story for others within the chronicle. Although Golconda is a private quest, LARP is a social experience, and anything with this much import to the story should be looked at with the entire game's best interest in mind.

- **Humanity:** If a vampire's Humanity ever drops below 5, she has lost her way and must begin the path to Suspire all over again. The Beast is made stronger by each such failure, and the following attempts to reach Golconda will be even more difficult. After three of these, the vampire's Beast has won, and she can no longer seek Suspire. The Storyteller may rule that the Beast has grown so strong that the vampire automatically enters permanent frenzy, or wassail, and must be retired from the game.

The Benefits of Enlightenment

Many outcomes exist for a character who has reached Golconda. Because Golconda is a spiritual state and deeply personal to each adherent, the results may be slightly different for every vampire — even as the path to Suspire was personal to each seeker. These are some possible results, spoken of in vampire legends. Your Storyteller will determine which, if any, are appropriate for your character and, most importantly, for her game environment. These mythical outcomes, and more, are whispered about in vampire society, but no one knows the truth.

- The vampire breaks the curse and once again becomes entirely human, with no trace of her previous vampiric condition.

- The vampire ascends to an angelic state. She will be freed from the detriments of the curse of Caine, but will retain her vampiric abilities.

- The vampire physically incarnates and releases her Beast, which roams the world as an independent creature: the proverbial monster in the dark.

- The vampire loses her clan weakness, and she is gifted with the ability to learn all vampiric disciplines and powers without the need for a teacher. She may even be able to learn and utilize powers that could not previously be supported by her blood, such as elder powers or techniques.

- The vampire becomes completely emotionally balanced, working with her Beast instead of struggling against it. The Beast is tamed; she can enter or leave frenzy at will, without any of the penalties of that state.

- The Beast is cast out of the soul and becomes part of the vampire's flesh. The vampire takes on an unnatural, ancient beauty beyond any mortal capacity. The vampire's flesh is rendered invulnerable to everything except the weaponry of faith; she cannot be harmed by normal ordnance, sunlight, fire, and even Physical-based disciplines such as Potence or Wolf's Claws.

These are only a few of the possible results gained by reaching the enlightenment of Golconda. Because such creatures are

incredibly rare, and necessarily do not associate freely with other vampires, information is scarce. As with the path to Suspire, if a vampire in Golconda ever has her Humanity drop below 5, she loses her way. Such a vampire will immediately fall out of Golconda, likely succumbing to a powerful frenzy (or even permanent wassail) as her Beast, which had been contained, is suddenly set free.

Player-characters may strive to reach Golconda and may purchase the Golconda Seeker merit, but a character who has achieved Golconda loses her player-character status and becomes an NPC.

Alternate Paths of Enlightenment

Not all vampires cling to Humanity or remain dedicated to the ethics they embraced as mortals. On occasion, a vampire is able to rationalize a new set of beliefs and actions so strongly that they bind their Beast to a constructed set of ethics. This process is called "following a road," or in more modern times, "taking on a Path of Enlightenment."

Paths may be purchased as a merit either at character creation or after the character has entered play, but getting a character onto a path should be far more difficult than just spending XP. A character who changes her ethics to adopt those of a path has become something other-than-human, something alien and supernatural, and now rejects human attitudes, activities, or reasoning. The vampire's entire existence is absorbed by following the ethics of her path, lest the Beast break free of its newly forged chains and destroy her.

Taking on a Path of Enlightenment is a dangerous, torturous, and cruel process. It strips away the character's personality and flays the psyche, revealing every weakness and personal flaw. There is no torment that the human mind could invent worse than losing one's Humanity; it has taken centuries of jaded, cruel vampire culture to develop an appropriate process. Further, it cannot be done alone. The vampire who wishes to take on a Path of Enlightenment must have mentors, qualified individuals who have long mastered the path the vampire wishes to adopt.

Vampires who have successfully dedicated themselves to a path have let go of all human concepts and rationales. The very core of their ethical systems have changed. They revel in their monstrosity and refuse to act like humans or appear human in any way. Such vampires see Humanity as something as beneath them, as far away as worms from astronauts. These monsters are proud of their accomplishment, seeing the claiming of a path as a mark of true vampiric power; they have mastered the fires of immortality.

Those on paths often shock conventional moralities. The moral codes that constitute Paths of Enlightenment emphasize such deviant ethics that characters on Humanity should be horrified by their companions' ideals. Further, characters on paths are dangerous fanatics. They are only loyal to their sect, their clan, or their companions, so long as those things do not interfere in any way with the ethics of their path.

Although certain clans have unlocked the secrets of specific Paths of Enlightenment, they do not teach these paths to anyone who asks, or even to fellow members of their clan — unless that individual is truly exceptional. Being on a path turns an individual into an absolute fanatic, uncompromising and unable to bend her new ethical rules even a little. This makes her more stable than vampires on Humanity, but also more dangerous to be around and more difficult to work with. The decision to allow a member of a clan to take on a Path of Enlightenment means that individual will become a different person. She will be subsumed by the path almost utterly, placing its ethics before all other goals or priorities. The elders of the clan consider this carefully before they risk a promising member of their blood.

Paths are extremely rare. Few vampires are initiated into the secrets of enlightenment, and fewer still are capable of rejecting human nature at such a fundamental level. Less than 10% of vampires are on Paths of Enlightenment. Most of those who attempt to take on a path do not successfully achieve the conversion. Those who fail are destroyed — if not by the process, then certainly by their mentors, who consider such a failure unforgivable. Once a vampire achieves conversion to a path, it is incredibly difficult to return to the ethics of Humanity. To do so would require another process of torment and internal dismantling in order to attempt the conversion back to normal ethics — ethics that the vampire has already rejected once and is almost certain to reject again, thus causing the vampire's immediate wassail. While returning to Humanity is possible, very few vampires have succeeded to do so.

Storytellers should note:

- Paths are utterly inhuman. Players wishing their characters to adopt Paths of Enlightenment should expect extremely demanding roleplaying experiences. These are alien codes of immortal ethics; it should be obvious to players, as well as characters, when a vampire is on a path. Players whose characters are on a path *must* wear a sticker to denote this, utilize heavy makeup, or otherwise be obvious about their character's state of existence; others should be able to easily discern this fact about the character.

- Powers such as Obfuscate and Vicissitude cannot hide the fact that a character is on a path. Nothing, not mundane makeup, latex masks, nor even heavy, hooded clothing, can allow a character on a Path of Enlightenment to obscure her nature. Being on a path is more than simply having a mean streak or looking a little pale; it is a true physical and spiritual alteration. The character radiates inhumanity, and the predatory fight-or-flight instinct of anyone nearby (mortal or undead) will instinctively react to her presence. While certain levels of Obfuscate can hide such a monstrosity entirely (turning her invisible), powers of disguise cannot obscure the nature of the Beast.

- Those who achieve a Path of Enlightenment must be ever-vigilant against degradation of their path; even more so than those on Humanity. These individuals have undergone innumerable horrors and stripped away their past lives and instinctive ethics. Unlike Humanity, which is natural to the mortal soul (and taught from the moment a child could breathe), the Paths of Enlightenment are constructed, elaborate, and wholly manufactured. They are not instinctive, even to experienced practitioners, and it is all too easy to fail. Storytellers should keep a close eye on these players, and ensure that they are playing their Path of Enlightenment consistently, both when it benefits the character and when it is a detriment.

- The fact that a character has degenerated to a low Humanity does not mean the player should be allowed to buy a merit and put that character on a path. The fall of a vampire to her Beast is a fundamental tragedy in the Vampire setting, and a Storyteller should ensure that her players do not see paths as a way out of that tragic end.

A Path of Enlightenment allows your character to avoid gaining Beast traits when she commits sins, as long as those sins fall in line with the tenants of her path. If she fails to follow the ethics of her path, she'll find herself accruing Beast traits.

Converting to a Path

To follow a Path of Enlightenment, you must purchase one of the path merits in **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, Morality Merits, page 253**. If you purchase one of these merits during character creation, lower your Morality rating to 4 (instead of the standard 5).

To switch from Humanity to a Path of Enlightenment (or from one path to another) after your character enters play, you must spend 9 downtime actions studying your chosen path. These actions do not need to be spent all in the same month, but you must spend at least 1 downtime action per month studying your chosen path. If you skip a month, you must start over from the beginning. If you do not have a teacher for your new path, you must spend 18 downtime actions (instead of the standard 9). After spending the required time studying your path, your Morality rating drops by 1. If this drop reduces your character to 0 Morality, you must immediately spend XP to purchase a dot of Morality. If you cannot, your character enters wassail and becomes an NPC.

Characters who follow a path may spend XP to raise their Morality in the same way that a normal character would raise her Humanity, with one exception. Characters who follow a Path of Enlightenment cannot raise their Morality above 4.

Diablerie

One of the greatest sins that a vampire can commit is to perform the foul and heinous act known as *diablerie*, once known also as *Amaranth.* This practice requires one vampire to drink from another, exsanguinating all of the victim's blood and continuing past that point to feast upon a vampire's very soul. To do so imbues the diablerist with new potency, permanently concentrating her blood. This act terrifies elders, who fear that a time may come when young, thin-blooded vampires will rise up and attempt to steal the elders' power, consuming their souls in the process. Vampires known to have practiced such an act are typically hunted down and destroyed.

There are many spiritual beliefs concerning diablerie. Some clans believe it is a spiritual act, one that forever merges the soul of the diablerist with her victim. Others claim that it is a vampire's way of delivering God's greatest punishment, removing a particularly evil soul from the cycle forever. Many vampire faiths have doctrines explaining the nature of diablerie within their belief systems, and even outside of these religious beliefs, vampires are highly superstitious and fearful of the act.

Undead legend tells many dark tales of murderous childer betraying and cannibalizing their sires, and it is for this reason more than any other that elder vampires harbor a great distrust for weaker vampires. Further, diablerie is addictive, and those who commit this sin even once find that their Beasts rage forever with a powerful, almost unconquerable desire to do so again. Even centuries later, they can still remember the taste of the heart's blood, and they occasionally awaken from dreams wherein they were experiencing the blissful moment of gluttony over and over again.

Those who commit diablerie experience the spiritual merging of the consumed soul into their bodies. Memories, along with the power of that individual's blood, surge through the practitioner at the time of the act, and those memories

will linger for the rest of the vampire's eternal existence. In ancient days, clans such as the Salubri and the Assamites claimed to know secrets that allowed diablerists to access their victims' memories freely and live in peace with those they had consumed. Few modern vampires have this capacity or knowledge. A diablerist finds herself forever changed, her personality affected by the resonance of the person she diablerized. Unlike the Beast, the victim's spirit is not sentient within the diablerist, but rather exists as a subtle influence, like old habits or unquestioned beliefs. A diablerist will find herself remembering half-understood moments of her victim's life as if they were her own, and she will discover that her perspective on the world has forever been colored by the personality of the individual whose spirit she has consumed.

Committing Diablerie

To commit diablerie, you must torpor a vampire and drain all of her blood. Once she is torpored and out of blood, you must use five standard actions devouring her soul. These actions must be used in consecutive turns. If a turn goes by where you do not continue the process of diablerie, you fail, and the target turns to ash.

A successful diablerie of a character of better Generation thickens your blood and improves your generation by one step towards Caine. If this occurs, you should make the following changes to your character sheet:

1. The date of your diablerie should be clearly marked on your character sheet for record keeping. This will help your Storyteller track your XP expenditures in the future.

2. If your character gains a Generation that makes it impossible for you to learn techniques, you lose access to all previously purchased techniques and the XP spent on those powers is refunded.

3. You retain all of the skills and backgrounds that you purchased at a less-potent Generation at the previous cost. Future purchases are made at the cost of your current Generation. (For more information, see **Chapter Three: Character Creation, Generation, page 100**.)

The Effects of Diablerie

Once you have committed diablerie, you suffer from the following effects:

- You automatically lose 1 dot of Humanity. If your character is on an alternate Path of Enlightenment, you instead gain 4 Beast traits.
- The mark of diablerie can be detected by Aura Perception for up to one year after the diablerie occured.
- Shards of the consumed soul remain active in your soul for the next year. Should you elect to diablerize while these soul shards are still active, your spirit surrenders to the Beast, entering wassail. The character becomes an NPC wight. (See **Losing Humanity, page 302**.)

Downtime Actions

"After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world."

— Philip Pullman

Many aspects of a character's life are critical to her continued existence, yet they do not make for dramatic roleplaying during a game. It might be important for a character to maintain her holdings, learn disciplines, and see to other common tasks, but these are exceptionally dull to play out during a game. Instead, players use downtime actions to define their characters' night-to-night activities. These downtime actions describe what your character is doing between game sessions, such as hunting to maintain her blood supply, spying on another character, or learning a discipline through research or physical exertion.

Nights pass quickly, even for immortal beings. Time is cluttered with many activities, and a vampire has a limited amount of time to take care of business before dawn. Players log their downtime actions with the Storyteller, who collects all actions for the troupe and then disseminates results as appropriate. Sometimes a Storyteller uses a player's downtime actions to jumpstart plots or to provide interpersonal character roleplay away from the main session of the game.

All characters have 3 downtime actions for each period of time between sessions of the chronicle. These actions must be spent between sessions, and they do not roll over to the next period of time. There are ways to acquire additional downtime actions, such as purchasing dots of the Retainer background.

A player should be able to describe each of her downtime actions in a single sentence. After the Storyteller receives these actions, she will decide if challenges, details, or further roleplay are required to successfully fulfill the downtime actions. The Storyteller will then adjudicate the results accordingly.

Sample downtime actions include:

- **Crafting**: The player spends a downtime action and uses her character's Crafts skill to design, build, or repair an item in the character's possession. This may require a static challenge to succeed, per the discretion of the Storyteller.

- **Feeding:** Finding safe ways to drink the blood of mortals is often time-consuming; to reflect this you must spend 1 downtime action between each session feeding. If you fail to spend an action feeding, you enter every game at half your normal Blood pool (round up). For example, a Neonate who did not spend 1 of her downtime actions feeding enters game with only 5 Blood in her pool.

  In some situations your Storyteller may require you to spend more than 1 downtime action feeding. For example, if you are feeding in territory where humans don't normally wander around at night, if you're feeding extremely carefully to avoid the attention of the locals, or if the Masquerade has been strained and mortals are on high alert, it may require 2 downtime actions to come into game with your maximum Blood pool.

  Vampires with the Herd background can expend a level of that background instead of using 1 of their downtime actions to feed. Some vampires have specific disadvantages that require them to spend more than 1 downtime action feeding. For example, a Ventrue's clan disadvantage might increase the number of downtime actions needed for feeding, or a character might have a flaw that increases her difficulty to feed. If a player does not spend the appropriate number of actions to feed, that character will enter the next game with only half the number of traits in her Blood pool.

- **Investigation**: Stories often end on cliffhangers, and some plots take multiple sessions to come to fruition. A player may use 1 downtime action to investigate potential leads, enemies, or strange occurrences. She may use a downtime action to research knowledge or to uncover hidden information. The player must spend a downtime action and also utilize backgrounds and abilities as is appropriate, in order for her character to spend time on such investigation. Again, this may require a static or opposed challenge to succeed, per the discretion of the Storyteller.

- **Patrolling:** Spending downtime actions to patrol your territory, looking for interlopers, increases the difficulty of feeding for interlopers. Each action you spend patrolling increases the difficulty by 1 downtime action. For example, if you spend 2 downtime actions patrolling, the difficulty for uninvited vampires feeding in your territory increases from 1 downtime action to 3.

  Note that patrolling doesn't precisely make it more difficult to feed, it makes it more difficult to feed without getting caught. For example, if the difficulty to feed in Malkavian territory has been increased to 4 downtime actions, you could choose to spend 4 actions feeding discreetly or spend 1 action and risk getting ambushed by a pack of insane vampires.

- **Beyond your Means**: If you don't have any dots in the Resources background and want to acquire an expensive item (such as a sniper rifle), your Storyteller may require you to spend downtime actions to obtain that item. Your character must pay in advance, doing favors or earning money. Note that a downtime action should not be required to simply steal something; smashing in the window of a car and driving off for example, would not require a downtime action, but stealing expensive items often has consequences.

The Flow of Time: Converting Real Time into Dramatic Units

Playing **Mind's Eye Theatre** is like being in a movie. You and your friends are the characters, but there is no script. There may be a framework or setting that determines the parameters of the world around you, but you and the others are creating the story as you play.

The director of this movie is the Storyteller. She creates the stage and the minor characters that players interact with during the story. Scenes in **Mind's Eye Theatre** are played out in real-time — an hour in the make-believe world is 60 minutes long, and so is an hour for the player: both pass simultaneously.

Players should always remain in character during a game, if at all possible. Occasionally there will be rules discussion, but it's best to keep such things to a minimum in order to maintain the roleplay and atmosphere of a scene. If a player needs to take a break from roleplaying, she should inform the Storyteller. That player should leave the immediate area, if possible, and not interact with any of the other players while out of character.

Sometimes a Storyteller will call for a *time freeze* in order to adjudicate a rules dispute or to announce a change of setting during an interlude. All players in the area should stop whatever they are doing and fall silent until the Storyteller is finished with her announcement and declares, "Resume." These timeouts should be kept to a minimum, since they interrupt the flow of the game.

Dramatic Time Units

In **Mind's Eye Theatre**, time breaks down into six major allotments: chronicles, sessions, acts, interludes, scenes, and turns. Many of the mechanical systems of the game are measured in these units of dramatic time. They define how

certain powers operate, the effects of derangements, and a number of other systems.

On occasion, players will find themselves at different time periods during the evening. One player may be acting very quickly, while another chooses to travel for several minutes and leaps ahead. One of the Storyteller's jobs is to keep track of these periods over the course of an evening and apply dramatic units of time wherever possible in order to keep things moving and unified for all.

These units are defined as:

- **Chronicle**: A series of gaming sessions, usually over many nights, which are all connected thematically. An epic story spans the course of a chronicle and may take months or even years to complete.
- **Session**: A single game within the larger chronicle.
- **Act**: A natural division within a session. An act is usually defined as time spent in a single setting or one hour (whichever is shorter).
- **Interlude**: An interlude is not a division of a larger unit of time, but rather is defined as a period of time that elapses for characters, but not for players. Interludes may include a moment where characters travel from one setting to another (and have the new setting described to them by the Storyteller) or it may be a flexible unit of time during which characters may describe their actions (rather than portray them) in order to speed up a portion of the game.
- **Scene**: A smaller division within an act. Several scenes may occur within one act. Some examples of a scene might include a conversation between characters, a short combat, or a single dramatic encounter.
- **Turn**: Used during combat scenarios, a turn is roughly three seconds of time and includes a complete series of rounds.

Example

A Storyteller is running a session in a chronicle. The initial act is set at the Prince's court. A number of characters arrive, including a coterie of Anarchs. During this act, all of the characters at the setting are involved in a number of different scenes, as they talk to one other and move about the room. During this time, the Anarchs discover that there is a serial killer down at the docks. They decide to go find him and stop his rampage!

The Anarch players request an interlude with the Storyteller. They describe their preliminary actions – getting into a car and heading down to the docks – and request that a new act occur, so that they can hunt down the serial killer. The Storyteller requests that the characters exit the current act (which is still ongoing for those players who are not leaving) and wait patiently for a short period of time while the Storyteller prepares for the new act.

Waiting for the Storyteller is a continuance of the interlude. During this time, players may track expenditures on their character sheets or refresh powers that have expired. They may also elect to roleplay conversations (among those who are going), reflecting time's passage as the characters travel to the new act on the docks, so long as the Storyteller approves.

Once ready, the Storyteller invites these characters into a new act and begins narrating the initial scene of that act. Once the scene has started, the characters are attacked, and a combat with the serial killer begins! Now, the Storyteller slows the scene down further and begins using turns in order to track the actions of each character in the scene. The combat will play out in this manner, using the complex scenario rules described in **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 276**.

When the combat is over, the characters on the dock revert to a new scene: the same location, but after the combat. They may talk, roleplay, or perform actions as normal. If they choose to go back to the Prince's court and tell the tale of their adventure, they may do so (with an appropriate interlude to reflect travel time, as before). Players who remained at the Prince's court may be within the original act, or (if an hour has passed) that setting may be considered a new act for the purpose of dramatic time. Either way, it is considered a new act for the Anarch characters, who must refresh powers and make expenditures as appropriate for the beginning of an act.

Durations

Many powers and effects measure time by specifying a number of sessions or months. For example, when a sire Embraces a new childe, she must spend 1 point of Willpower, which does not return for two sessions or one month.

Whenever the rules list two possible durations, the Storyteller should enforce the longer duration. For example, if a new sire played in one game every two months, her spent Willpower would return after playing in two games. If she played in one game per week, her spent Willpower would return at the end of the month.

When counting games towards an effect's duration, the current game only counts if the effect happens within the first half hour of the game.

Status and Vampire Society

"Remember, young one.
Words are knives, and fangs hide behind every smile."
— Madame Guil

The Embrace is a murderous act. A mortal is transformed into a vampire with a new instinct, the Beast. Over time, the Beast slowly worms its way into the individual's personality, subtly changing her perceptions and encouraging the fledgling to surrender to dangerous, primitive impulses. The Beast constantly seeks to prove its supremacy. Unless a vampire unleashes her Beast from time to time, she will slowly succumb to madness as cruel urges gradually wear down her human nature. Vampire society evolved to allow subtle releases of the Beast by codifying intricate rules of protocol.

A vampire instinctively spends her time monitoring and measuring her place in society, comparing her station against others. Like a wolf, she knows her rank in the pack and is keenly aware of any social ascent or decline. *Status* is the game mechanic used by **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade** to express this alien behavior and translate it into out-of-game terms.

All status traits associated with a vampire (or an Alternate Identity, see **Chapter Three: Character Creation, page 98**) are innately known and understood by all *Accepted* members of that vampire's sect. For each dot of the Leadership skill a vampire possesses, she can learn the details of another vampire's specific status trait, once per night. The following information is learned via this method:

- Name of the patron who awarded the status trait
- Location where the status trait was earned
- The story of how and why the status trait was awarded

Becoming Accepted

When a vampire joins a sect, she becomes *Accepted* by that sect. She is welcomed and has the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of membership. A vampire must be *Accepted* in order to earn, carry, or spend the status of that sect, or to hold positions within a sect. Killing an *Accepted* character is usually a breach of that sect's law and custom, and is often harshly punished by others of that sect.

Accepted is not a status. It is a simple binary state indicating that a vampire is part of a specific sect. It does not count toward a vampire's total status, and it cannot be expended or removed. A character can be cast out of a sect, losing her acceptance within that sect. If this happens, the character loses all positions and cannot carry, earn, nor spend the status of that sect. Ghouls, revenants, Retainers and other non-vampire servants cannot become *Accepted* by a vampire sect, nor can they hold status or position.

A vampire can only be *Accepted* by one sect at a time. Willingly being *Accepted* by a second sect erases the vampire's current acceptance, automatically casting her out of the previous sect. The only exception to this rule is a character who possesses the Alternate Identity background. A character's Alternate Identity may be *Accepted* by another sect, and it may receive status and rank of that sect. However, if the Alternate Identity is discovered, the character automatically loses her acceptance, as well as all status, rank, and benefits of that sect. For more information on the Alternate Identity background, see **Chapter Three: Character Creation, page 98**.

The various sects also have different terms to identify vampires who are *Accepted*. The Camarilla uses the term *Acknowledged*. The Sabbat uses the term *Initiated,* and the Anarch Movement uses *Committed*. The sects also have different customs regarding the acceptance of new members. In order to be accepted into the Camarilla, a newcomer must speak with her Primogen and be formally introduced by the local Prince. In the Sabbat, the character must survive a ritual of passage known as the Creation Rites. To become an accepted member of the Anarch Movement, you must prove your loyalty in combat with others of your sect.

Each sect requires different social protocols from its members, and has different means of stripping a character's acceptance. Be sure to read your sect's settings guide, and check with your Storyteller for details on being *Accepted* in her chronicle.

Status

Once a vampire has been *Accepted* by a sect, she may hold positions and earn status traits in that sect. A *status trait* is a measure of a vampire's reputation. It represents a small amount of power and influence. When a character expends a status, she is using her political leverage in vampiric society. Vampires reward, punish, and reap benefits by expending status, and they often hold specific traits of status that are particularly applicable to their long-term goals. Status traits can be either *positive* or *negative*.

Positive Status

Positive status traits have two mechanics: a *passive mechanic* and a *spent mechanic*. When your character possesses a trait of positive status, the character continually gains

the effect of that status trait's passive mechanic. Passive effects of status traits can't be stacked. Even if you possess a status trait twice, when the passive effect is triggered, your character gains the benefit only a single time.

You can expend a status trait to invoke its spent mechanic. A character can expend more than one status at a time, utilizing their spent effects simultaneously. Unlike passive effects, a character can spend two status with the same trait name at the same time and gain both spent effects. If you spend a status trait, you lose the trait's passive bonus.

If a spent trait was *abiding* or *innate*, it will return at the beginning of the next game session. At that time, your character regains the passive benefit of the trait. Spending an abiding or innate status trait has no effect on the sect position or intrinsic quality that provided the status; your character still retains the position or the quality. If a *fleeting* trait is spent, it does not return. Fleeting status is like a bullet in a gun; once you use a fleeting trait, it is gone forever.

Negative Status

The fourth category of status is *negative* status. Negative status is given as a punishment for poor social behavior, and it has detrimental effects. A negative status trait cannot be spent and remains until removed or until its duration expires. Unlike the varied traits of positive status, there are only three distinct negative status traits that apply to all settings: *Warned*, *Disgraced*, and *Forsaken*. Other settings may have more negative status, to reflect a sect's distinct social punishments.

General Traits

The **Vampire: The Masquerade** status system presents general status traits to be used in every setting. Note that status traits may exist that are unique to a particular sect or setting, and are detailed in each setting guide. Be sure to speak with your Storyteller about any special status customizations in place for her chronicle.

For a list of general status traits and mechanics, see **page 313**.

When judging how dangerous a political rival might be, a character should consider that rival's status traits carefully — both those currently at the rival's disposal and those which have been spent, but are abiding and will return at the beginning of the next game session.

Earning and Expending Status

A character earns status traits by many different means: through deeds, through patronage from more influential vampires, or through holding leadership positions within the sect. Positive status traits fall into three categories: *abiding, innate,* or *fleeting.*

A status trait can be expended with a simple action. To do so, the vampire must make some sort of announcement or proclamation regarding the status she is expending and the outcome of the expenditure.

Abiding Status

Abiding status traits are usually earned by holding a position within a sect. So long as a vampire continues to hold that position, abiding status refreshes at the beginning of each game session.

If a character loses a sect position during a game, any unspent abiding status she was carrying from that position is immediately removed (she cannot expend it as she is losing the position). Even if the character has more than one sect position, she does not gain the second position's abiding status during this game. Also, when a character gains a new sect position, she does not gain that position's abiding status until the beginning of the next game.

Example: *In the Camarilla, Marisa is playing a character who is both Seneschal and Malkavian Primogen. She earns an abiding status trait from both positions, but must choose only one source to carry into the game. She chooses the position of Seneschal, and she marks the relevant abiding status trait from that position onto her sheet.*

Status and Sect

Status can often be utilized differently, depending upon the chronicle's setting. MET: Vampire The Masquerade has three default settings (**Chapter Nine: The Camarilla**, **Chapter Ten: The Sabbat**, and **Chapter Eleven: The Anarch Movement**). Be sure to read these settings for specific information on how status rules are applied to the specific vampire sects.

During that game, Marisa's character expends her abiding status to punish a wrongdoer. For the rest of the night, she does not possess that abiding status. Her character is still the Seneschal, but carries no current status from the position.

Later that night, praxis is seized, and the princedom changes hands. Marisa's character is not chosen to be Seneschal, but retains the post of Malkavian Primogen. Marisa cannot add the Primogen's status to her sheet until the beginning of the next game session.

Innate Status

Innate status is similar to abiding status, but rather than being granted by a position, it is a part of some intrinsic quality possessed by a vampire, usually a merit or a flaw. So long as your character has the intrinsic quality, this status refreshes at the beginning of each game session. Some innate status traits, such as those granted by flaws, are detrimental to the character.

Fleeting Status

Fleeting status traits reflect a character's notable deeds, achievements, or important patrons: deeds lauded by your sect or faction. You receive fleeting status in one of two ways:

- Patronage from another vampire, given when a patron expends her own status to grant fleeting status to another. The recipient of patronage status loses her trait if the patron dies or if her patron loses the position that allowed her to offer the patronage. Such status can only be received by a character of the same sect who has been under the patron's authority within the past 30 days. This could be someone who has visited the domain of a Prince or attended an elder Toreador's party. A character can refuse a patron's offer of a fleeting status trait, though to do so is considered insulting.
- Fleeting status can also be granted by the Storyteller when a character accomplishes great deeds. If a character does not accept a fleeting status at the time it is earned (through deed or patronage), it is lost.

These traits can be expended once, and they do not refresh after being used. Once a character receives a trait of fleeting status, she may hold the trait without spending it for as long as she wishes. The status remains on her character sheet until expended. Elders often closely hoard their status traits for decades or centuries until they find just the right moment to use them.

A character can possess a maximum of 5 fleeting status traits at any time. If a character with 5 fleeting status earns or is granted another fleeting status, the player must choose which status she will keep, up to a total of 5. She cannot immediately expend a status as that status is being replaced; the status removed is lost without expenditure.

Example: *Mal has 5 fleeting status, gained over a year's play in the Camarilla setting. At game, he does something heroic and is granted the fleeting status trait Triumphant. He must immediately choose to take that Triumphant trait and relinquish another fleeting status trait currently in his status pool, which vanishes without the opportunity to expend it, or he must refuse the Storyteller's offer of the Triumphant status trait. Mal chooses to refuse the fleeting status trait of Triumphant. At a later time, Mal expends a trait of his fleeting status during the course of a session. Even though he now has a free "slot," he cannot go back and pick up the previously granted Triumphant trait; he has already refused it, and it is no longer available.*

Negative Status

Negative status traits reflect stains on a character's reputation, as an obvious reminder of disfavor. Negative status is always well-known to other vampires in the character's sect. A character with negative status must wear a sticker, badge, or some other obvious sign of their sullied

Historical Examples of Abiding Status

Abiding status reflects the complex system of loyalties and prestige stemming from a myriad of titles and stations found in feudal societies. William Juxon (1582-1663) of England serves as a prime example of the application of abiding status. Juxon served as Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury simultaneously. In addition, he served his country as Lord High Treasurer and First Lord of the Admiralty. Depending upon the exact social situation, Juxon leveraged the title that best served his needs and demonstrated his intentions towards society; the title he chose depended entirely on how he wished to be perceived at any given time.

reputation. Any player can ask to learn the specific negative traits a character possesses.

A character can give another individual negative status by expending a specific abiding or fleeting status, as per a named trait's specific spent mechanic. This status cannot be refused.

Each negative status places a censure, or a restriction, on the character who possesses the trait. Characters caught breaking this censure by an officer of the sect must pay a boon to that officer or suffer the punishment attached to the negative status.

Unless removed, negative status lasts for a period of time specific to each status. The character (or Storyteller) who levied the negative status trait in the first place can remove it for free; other characters can also remove negative status by expending certain specific status traits.

Status Caps

A vampire's status cap is the maximum number of status traits that vampire can carry into game. A vampire can carry the following into game:

- All status from one abiding status source
- All innate status
- Up to 5 fleeting status
- All negative status currently affecting the character; with no maximum number

Status Bans

Vampire sects are judgmental institutions, with very strong ideals of right, wrong, and "appropriate." To maintain the status quo, each sect recognizes certain status bans: limits on the levels of prominence "unworthy" vampires can achieve.

Status bans represent peer deterrents and general denunciation. Those who adhere to society's ideals are honored as epitomes of the sect's ideals. Those who behave in opposition to those standards are hampered and limited in their ability to socially advance.

A status ban reduces the maximum number of fleeting status traits a character can possess. If a vampire is guilty of one of the "defects" listed under the sect's bans, then her maximum fleeting status traits are reduced. If such a reduction occurs during a session, any positive status traits the character holds above the number proscribed by that ban are immediately lost before they can be expended.

In extremely rare cases, a character limited by a status ban can be declared exempt from the ban. Such individuals can petition their sect leadership and beg for removal of the ban. Such petitions must be carried out and approved via the social mechanics of the specific sect. For more details on gaining individual exemptions from status bans, please see the specific setting chapter for your character's sect **(Chapter Nine: The Camarilla**, **Chapter Ten: The Sabbat**, and **Chapter Eleven: The Anarch Movement).**

Lesser Ban

A lesser ban is a petty prejudice, one that has limited or minor effects, causing individuals suffering under this ban to be at a mild disadvantage in their society. A character under a sect's minor status ban has her maximum possible number of fleeting status reduced to 3. Abiding status is unaffected.

Greater Ban

A greater ban significantly censures an individual's political ambitions. A character under a sect's major ban has her maximum possible number of fleeting status traits reduced to 1. Abiding status is unaffected.

General Status Traits

The following status traits are common across all settings. Note that most settings also have distinctive abiding, innate, fleeting, and negative status. Check your setting's guide and speak with your Storyteller about unique status traits in your chronicle.

Patrons

A vampire who awards status to another is lending her name and reputation as a patron to the vampire who receives such a gift. As long as the recipient holds this status, she carries a piece of the patron's reputation, and her actions reflect on that patron. This system of patrons and vassals ties vampire society together as strongly as the custom of boons. Those vampires living outside of this custom are often discounted as irrelevant — and unlikely to be missed if they should disappear.

Jurisdiction

Unless otherwise stated, all uses of status (passive bonuses or active expenditures) must target characters who have been within the jurisdiction of the individual expending the status within the last 30 days. A Prince, Archbishop, or Baron's jurisdiction is her physical territory or domain. A Toreador elder hosting a salon would consider the salon to be her jurisdiction, and a Black Hand member who has called for packs to help with a warehouse raid would consider that martial action to be her jurisdiction. Your Storyteller is the final authority regarding what constitutes a character's jurisdiction and whether another character is eligible to be targeted by your status expenditures.

Abiding Status Traits

Authority (abiding)

You enjoy complete control over your jurisdiction. You may issue praise and respect, or command punishment – corporal or capital – to all those within.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Authority*, you can award an individual the fleeting status *Courageous, Defender, Honorable*, or *Loyal* or without expending this status. An individual can only hold a single status from your use of *Authority* at a time, but can benefit from repeated uses of *Authority,* so long as they originate from separate sources.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Authority* to punish or pardon another character, giving or removing the negative status *Warned* or *Forsaken*.

Commander (abiding)

You are a sword of your sect, empowered by the highest leadership to enforce justice anywhere within the sect's dominion. You can administer punishments, both corporal and social, as you see fit.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Commander*, you may issue orders to any member of your sect who does not possess the status *Authority,* and you expect those orders to be obeyed. Those who defy you or disobey a direct order have all fleeting status traits they possess expended without effect. Fleeting traits lost in this manner are lost temporarily, and they return after one month or two games. The target cannot gain any further fleeting status while under this effect. Further, you may award up to three individuals the status *Enforcer* for a single night, deputizing them under your command.
- **Spent:** You may expend *Commander* to award fleeting status to up to three characters, awarding each individual either *Courageous* or *Loyal*.

Enforcer (abiding)

You are authority's right hand. You have the power to enforce society's laws and to ensure punishment for those who break the codes of your sect or defy the will of the local authority.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Enforcer*, you may carry weapons to any gathering, including restricted locations. Vampiric authorities must allow you to go armed. (Note that mortal authorities, and individuals not of your sect, are under no such agreement.) You may also deputize up to two other members of your sect, granting them the fleeting status *Defender* for a single night.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Enforcer* to issue the negative status *Warned* to an individual whom you legitimately believe has broken the law of your sect or local domain.

Established (abiding)

You are a voice of a faction within the sect, possibly the leader of a clan, pack, or gang. Your words are respected, and others seek your advice in difficult decisions.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Established*, an individual who openly insults, threatens, or attacks you automatically receives the negative status *Warned*. Offenses made entirely in private, or which are subtle enough to be obscured, do not trigger this passive effect. Characters that currently possess the *Authority*, *Commander*, or *Triumphant* status traits are immune to this passive effect.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Established* to award an individual the fleeting status *Favored*.

Prominent (abiding)

You are society's voice, and others listen to you on matters of propriety. You can determine which actions are proper social behavior and which actions are against the customs of your sect.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Prominent*, you may award any individual the fleeting status *Honorable* or *Courteous* without expending this status. An individual can only hold a single status from your *Prominent* at a time, but can benefit from repeated uses of *Prominent* so long as they originate from separate sources.
- **Spent:** If you expend *Prominent,* an individual you target must physically leave a scene (small area or single room) for the next 10 minutes, effectively exiling them from a social situation. If they do not do so, they gain the negative status *Disgraced*. *Prominent* cannot be expended in combat.

Fleeting Status Traits

Courteous (fleeting)

Your words and actions are always the height of Kindred courtesy. You are known to adhere the customs of your sect and provide a genteel role-model for others.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Courteous*, you cannot be targeted by another character's use of the Subterfuge skill to redirect blame for the use of a supernatural power. For more information on the Subterfuge system mechanic, see **Chapter Three: Character Creation, page 97**.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Courteous* to overcome any political gaffe or etiquette-related error you have made in the last five minutes. The error did occur, but those who would be offended by it must accept your apology and cannot hold the error against you.

Courageous (fleeting)

You have often thrown yourself into battle or controversy, and the tales of your exploits have spread through the sect. You are known for your courage and competitive prowess.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Courageous*, you can use a combat maneuver once per game without spending Willpower. You can only use this passive ability when following the directives of someone who possesses the *Authority* or *Commander* abiding status.
- **Spent:** So long as you are not in the process of violating the laws of your sect, you may expend *Courageous* to allow one character (yourself or another individual) to use a combat maneuver without spending Willpower.

Defender (fleeting)

You have been chosen to protect the citizens of your sect, in part or in whole, and as such, you are allowed to carry weapons into peaceful gatherings.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Defender*, you may carry weapons to any gathering, including restricted locations. Vampiric authorities must allow you to go armed. (Note that mortal authorities, and individuals not of your sect, are under no such agreement.)
- **Spent:** You may expend *Defender* when you perform an action that would cause you to gain Beast traits to reduce the number of Beast traits gained by 1. You cannot use more than one *Defender* status on a single sin.

Favored (fleeting)

You have been lauded by a patron within your clan or sect. This patron supports your advancement and shields you from harm.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Favored*, you are known to have the active support of a patron. An individual who openly attacks you automatically receives the negative status *Warned*. Characters who currently possess the *Authority*, *Commander*, or *Triumphant* status traits are immune to this passive effect.
- **Spent:** If you expend *Favored* when someone awards you negative status, that negative status is negated before it is applied. The same character cannot attempt to award you negative status for the rest of the evening.

Honorable (fleeting)

In a world of lies, deception, and subterfuge, you are known for your sterling reputation. Your word is solid enough that it can even protect others; all you need do is give your oath on their behalf.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Honorable*, individuals who wish to openly accuse you of lying must expend one positive status (of any kind) in order to make the accusation. Even if you possess more than one *Honorable* trait, only one status must be expended to overcome this passive effect.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Honorable* during a scene in which you would otherwise be politically forced to leave. You are allowed to join the scene or remain present. When you expend *Honorable* in this manner, you are immune to the spend bonus of the abiding status *Prominent* for the rest of the scene.

Loyal (fleeting)

You have proven your loyalty to your sect. Other individuals do not question your allegiance to sect law and custom.

- **Passive:** If you receive the *Warned* status while you possess *Loyal,* the status of *Loyal* is stripped without expenditure rather than applying the status *Warned.*
- **Spent:** You may expend *Loyal* to acquire any one piece of equipment or general information (such as the known location of another character) on short notice. This assistance comes from NPC minions of your sect within five minutes of this expenditure. You cannot use *Loyal* to gain secret or protected information, or unique equipment, but you can use it to acquire anything that a group of ghouls or low-level vampires can acquire with relative ease.

Praised (fleeting)

You have rightfully obeyed the custom of status, enforcing peer pressure on an individual who has been socially incompetent, or otherwise upholding the social norm. Your presence is welcomed in the territories of your patron.

- **Passive:** The *Praised* status has no passive benefit.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Praised* to claim a small favor (the level of assistance required from a trivial boon) from any other *Accepted* member of your sect. You cannot use this to gain a boon from a character who is already in your debt.

Triumphant (fleeting)

You have publically defeated an impressive enemy of the sect without aid or otherwise performed a critical and life-risking service to your sect. When this event occurs, you gain the status trait of Triumphant.

The status trait *Triumphant* can only be given by NPCs. For more information on gaining this status, check the setting guide for your chronicle or speak with your Storyteller.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Triumphant*, you are granted special privileges at important gatherings of your sect: the best seating, advance notice of important attendees, and other advantages. You are granted the right to feed in any domain controlled by your sect. The number of downtime actions required for you to feed is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 0.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Triumphant* to ignore the censure of all negative status possessed by you or another character for one hour. You gain this benefit even if you have negative status that would otherwise prevent you from using status traits.

Victorious (fleeting)

You have participated in a symbel, whether a duel or an ordeal, and emerged victorious. The sect lauds your prowess.

- **Passive:** On the night you gain the *Victorious* status trait, other characters capable of giving positive status can give you such status without expenditure.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Victorious* when you expend any other status to immediately regain the spent trait. Alternately, you can expend the *Victorious* status to remove *Warned* from yourself or another character within the same jurisdiction where you gained the *Victorious* trait.

Negative Status Traits

Each negative status trait has a *censure*, a prohibition placed upon the holder's activities. These prohibitions are not magical or supernaturally enforced; they are social restrictions that the character is expected to obey for the period she holds this negative status. If a sect officer discovers that a character is in violation of a censure, the censured character suffers the penalties assigned by the trait's mechanical systems.

Warned (negative)

You have been warned to cease your poor behavior. Should you continue acting in this manner, you will be severely punished for your continued malfeasance.

- **Censure:** While you carry the *Warned* status, you may not speak to any officer of your sect in public unless that officer first speaks to you; further, you may not contradict an officer of your sect. If you speak inappropriately, or contradict an officer, you can avoid breaking this censure by apologizing and offering the officer a minor boon.

  Creative officers may impose alternate restrictions. These might include cutting off the offender's finger and ordering the *Warned* character not to regrow it until this status is removed or forcing the offender to bear a visible mark of failure for the duration of the status *Warned*. These alternate restrictions cannot be used to significantly handicap a character or to force a character into a dangerous situation. If the Storyteller believes this status is being abused, she may overrule the alternate restriction and impose the default censure instead.

  The *Warned* negative status lasts for two games or one month, whichever is longer. If a character receives another *Warned* status while she already possesses *Warned*, the total duration is increased by two games or one month, whichever is longer. This continues with every further application of *Warned*.
- **Punishment**: If a character with the *Warned* status is found to break the censure of this status, she gains the additional status trait *Disgraced*. A character does not lose the negative status *Warned* when she receives *Disgraced*.

Disgraced (negative)

Your activities have placed a stain on your reputation; you are distinctly out-of-favor among your sectmates.

- **Censure**: While you carry the *Disgraced* status, the sect prohibits you from carrying weapons or actively using powers in the presence of an officer of your sect, unless you

receive the officer's express permission. Further, you may not feed within your sect's territories, but must seek scraps elsewhere. A character cannot spend or gain status while she possesses the *Disgraced* status trait. Other characters are not required to repay boons owed to a character possessing this status. If you are found in violation of this censure by a sect officer, you can avoid punishment by apologizing and offering the officer a major boon.

Anyone who publicly insults a *Disgraced* character gains the fleeting status trait *Praised*. Multiple characters can gain status for insulting a *Disgraced* individual, but no character can benefit from a single individual's *Disgraced* censure more than once per game.

The *Disgraced* status lasts as long as you hold one or more *Warned* negative status traits. If you do not possess a *Warned* negative status when you are awarded *Disgraced*, then the negative status lasts for two games or one month, whichever is longer.

- **Punishment**: If a character with the *Disgraced* status is found to break the censure of this status, she gains the additional status trait *Forsaken*. A character does not lose the negative status *Warned* or *Disgraced* when she receives *Forsaken*.

Forsaken (negative)

You have broken society's boundaries so often that the sect has ceased to grant you its protection. Although you may or may not be actively hunted, your death would not count as a breach of sect law.

- **Censure**: While you hold the *Forsaken* negative status, you are no longer considered *Accepted* by your sect. You hold no status or position, and you may be destroyed without repercussion from your sect. Society's laws prohibiting your Final Death no longer apply to you.

  A character who possesses the *Authority* status trait may allow you to visit or reside within her domain, but cannot remove the *Forsaken* negative status without an expenditure of the *Authority* status. A Forsaken character retains this status until she is formally forgiven by a character expending the *Authority* status on her behalf.

  Normally a character cannot become *Forsaken* unless she was first *Warned* and then *Disgraced*. However, it is possible for some sect officers to declare an individual *Forsaken* by their sect as part of a formal hunt for that character's Final Death. If another sect member kills a vampire who possesses the status trait *Forsaken*, that individual gains the status trait *Triumphant*. Only one character may gain status from the death of a *Forsaken* vampire.

The Symbel

A vampire's Beast always seeks to exert dominance over others. It will encourage and entice a vampire to demonstrate her superiority through confrontation of any kind, whether physical or political. The *symbel*, or political contest, began in ancient times as a method of establishing social dominancy and venting this aggression without risking violence and the Final Death.

The specifics of such games can vary depending on the sect and clan of the characters playing. Typically, there are two versions of the symbel: the *duel* and the *ordeal*.

For a symbel to be legitimate, the outcome of the game must be genuinely in doubt. If a Storyteller believes a player is deliberately making an easy game or providing too much advantage to one side, the game will fail, and both sides will lose their risked status with no benefit. Symbel games must be public, although not all participants need to know that such a game is being played. In order for a symbel's status changes to take effect, a group of peers/people must see you play the game and win.

The Symbel Duel

In a *symbel duel,* two vampires each choose one trait of status, offer to risk it, and agree upon terms for the game. This status may not be expended while it is risked, but it does provide its passive bonus during this time. The loser of the game loses her risked status as though it had been expended.

Only one individual can be declared the winner of a symbel duel. This is the individual who accomplishes the goal of the duel first, or most successfully, depending on the terms of the symbel. That vampire gains the fleeting status *Victorious*, and the vampire who started the symbel duel loses her risked status. If no one is successful in the duel, the benefactor of the game keeps her status, and *Victorious* is not awarded.

If the results of this type of symbel are subjective, the characters creating the game can either agree on a victor or choose a third party to judge the results of the game. A character who has no status to expend cannot play in this type of symbel game, as she cannot fulfill the requirement of risk.

Examples:

- Two elder Ventrue wish to decide whose childe is the most competent. Each risks a status, and then both spend the next hour giving the two childer tasks, obstacles, and difficulties — all without telling the childer that they are being tested. In the end, the elders decide that one childe has proven her greater

worth. The loser forfeits her risked status, while the winner keeps her risked status and also gains the status *Victorious*. The childer get nothing at all.

- Two Lasombra might choose to perform a symbel, risking status over a game of chess.
- Two members of the Sabbat might challenge one another's prowess as tacticians, forcing their ghouls to fight to the death. Alternately, they might simply challenge one another directly and fight until one draws first blood or until one falls into torpor.

The Symbel Ordeal

The second version of this game is known as a *symbel ordeal*. In this version of the political competition, a single individual risks a status and publically announces a goal. All those who qualify for the competition are welcome to contend, so long as they are willing to obey the rules of the contest. The benefactor of the competition cannot win her own symbel ordeal, though she may compete to increase the difficulty.

The individual who accomplishes the goal of the ordeal (first, or most successfully, depending on the terms of the symbel) gains the fleeting status *Victorious*. If there are no successful individuals, the benefactor of the game keeps her status and *Victorious* is not awarded.

If the results of a symbel ordeal are subjective, the benefactor is the final arbiter, determining the victor of the game. A character who has no status to expend is welcome to compete in a symbel ordeal, as it requires no risk of status on the part of the participant. A symbel ordeal must have enough competitors to make it worthwhile, at least enough to challenge the participants to do their best.

Examples:

- A Toreador elder challenges the Neonates at the gathering to bring her the prettiest piece of art in the city before midnight. She will be the subjective judge to choose the "prettiest" art, though if that elder's choice of victor is clearly slanted, she may receive negative status from the local authority, commenting on her "poor taste."
- A Sabbat Archbishop challenges the soldiers of her diocese to track down and bring her mortal servants of the Camarilla. The person who brings the most within three hours shall be the winner of the symbel ordeal.

Gestures and Hand Signals

In a traditional tabletop roleplaying game, players continually describe the actions of their characters, allowing all of the participants to clearly visualize what their characters can see and communicate their characters' responses. However, in live-action roleplaying (LARP), pausing the action in order to offer explanations of how your character appears can be disruptive and interrupt the flow of the game. In order to minimize these interruptions, **Vampire: The Masquerade** uses several gestures in order to communicate certain commonly occurring character states.

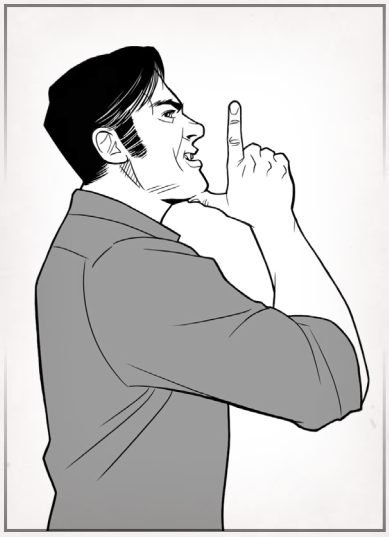
Common gestures include:

"I'm not roleplaying" – Sometimes, players located in active play spaces must pause their roleplay in order to ask out-of-character questions; at other times, players may be observing the game without actually participating themselves. Such a player should hold up one hand with the first and middle fingers crossed, to indicate that her fellow players should not react to her in-character for a short time.

"I grant you Willpower" – Players may reward other players in recognition for excellent roleplaying (see **Willpower, Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems** for more information). To indicate that you are granting another player this reward, make a gesture, starting with your palm facing your chest and four fingers touching your chin, thumb extended perpendicular to the hand. Then extend your hand palm-up towards the character you wish to reward. (This is the *American Sign Language* gesture for "thank you" and is basically a way to say thank you for good roleplaying.)

"You can't see me" – Many supernatural creatures possess abilities and powers that allow them to spy on others while remaining hidden. This gesture may mean that a character is obscured from view by mundane means, such as hiding in a nearby air duct, or that a character is using a supernatural discipline to hide, such as Obfuscate, Psychic Projection, or Clairvoyance. In these cases, the hiding player should indicate that her character is unseen by placing her hand on her opposite shoulder, across her chest.

"I look like someone else" – Whether your character is a master of disguise or possesses a supernatural power that allows her to take on the appearance of another, players may need to indicate that they do not look like their typical selves. To indicate that she is somehow disguised, a player should extend her middle and index fingers upward together and touch them to her chin.



"I'm not speaking normally" – Although the players conduct the business of the game in their common language, it's very likely that their characters may have studied and can fluently speak other languages. If a character is speaking in a language other than the language common to the general game, that player should indicate their use of a foreign tongue. She does so by holding one hand in front of her face while extending the thumb and index finger, with the thumb touching the bottom of the player's chin in the shape of an L. This gesture can also be used to indicate that your character is using a method other than speech to communicate, such as Telepathy.

"I'm exceptionally imposing" – Some supernatural abilities, such as the Presence power Majesty, amplify a character's force of personality, causing her to become fearsomely intimidating, imposing, or regal. To indicate that your character is supernaturally imposing, hold one arm out horizontally, elbow bent and pointed down, with the palm of your hand turned upward.

"I'm obviously monstrous" – Certain supernatural powers allow their users to take on monstrous, horrific shapes in order to engage their enemies in battle. These powers are never subtle, often bestowing increased size, fearsome claws, extra appendages, and terrifying visages upon their user's form; Horrid Form, Black Metamorphosis and a werewolf's Crinos form are just a few examples of abilities that bestow a monstrous appearance. To communicate a monstrous appearance, raise both arms above your head, with your fingers curled into claw-like shapes.

"I appear to be an animal" – Some supernatural creatures are not limited to human form. Some vampires, for example, take on the shapes of beasts, as told in legends and myth. To indicate that she is in some sort of four-legged form, such as a wolf, the player should hold her hands up to chest height, and allow her wrists to fall loosely, similar to how a child might mimic a begging dog. To indicate that she is in the shape of a creature that can fly, such as a bat, she should hold her hands up together in front of her chest, interlocking her thumbs and extending her fingers, as she might if she were to make a shadow-puppet of a bird.

There will be times, of course, when the common gestures are not sufficient to describe one's current state. If these situations are brief – typically situations lasting a scene or less – players are encouraged to use verbal descriptions. For ongoing situations, such as the continual undead appearance of followers of Paths of Enlightenment, players may find that using a small tag attached to their costumes communicates their characters' states without interrupting scenes.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Eight: Storytelling

"Storytellers have as profound a purpose as any who are charged to guide and transform human lives. I knew it as an ancient discipline and vocation to which everyone is called."

— Nancy Mellon, The Art of Storytelling

This chapter serves two purposes. For novice Storytellers, it provides the tools needed to begin mastering the craft of running **MET: Vampire The Masquerade** chronicles. For experienced Storytellers, it offers guidance to ensure that the chronicle's foundation is strong, and it offers advice on how to make the most out of the **MET** rules and settings.

"You'll never guess what happened to me on the way home!"

"Did you see the big game on TV last night? It was incredible. The home team was losing badly until…."

"I had no idea how crazy my day was going to be! Let me tell you about it…"

We all tell stories, every day of our lives. People communicate with one another through stories. How is being a Storyteller for MET different than communicating with people in a more mundane fashion?

Imagine that you are the owner and ringmaster of a traveling circus in the days before the Internet and a thousand channels on television. You manage the talent, introduce the various acts, and direct the attention of the audience to the dazzling performances. Equal parts promoter and administrator, you control the tempo of the experience. Your audience will be demanding. Some will appreciate the high-wire act, others prefer to ignore the show itself while socializing, and still others only wish to see the clowns and the monkeys. They're also not always quick to forgive mistakes; how well they receive the efforts of your performers will depend in part on the rapport you build with them.

Your work doesn't stop at the end of a show, when the lights dim and the big top stands silent and empty once more. You must then tally the day's receipts, scout for new locations, market to new audiences, ensure that your troupe has the proper equipment to perform, and take care of a hundred trivial details that, combined, are essential to success.

The ringmaster of a healthy LARP is the Storyteller, and the players are both performers and audience. This chapter details the essential skills and information required to build a chronicle from scratch, survive running your first game, and manage an ongoing chronicle. You'll learn the basics of establishing mood, creating believable settings, and laying down the law with troublesome players. This chapter also discusses techniques for integrating new players into an existing game, breathing new life into a faltering story, and managing the relationship between the game and the real world.

Storytelling is the most rewarding challenge that Mind's Eye Theatre has to offer, and this chapter will help guide you along the path to establishing your own style. Traveling circuses hold to an old tradition; the ringmaster always opens the show with the same line, guaranteed to bring smiles and laughter. It seems appropriate to echo it here:

"Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, children of all ages, welcome to the greatest show on Earth!"

Create a Universe from Your Imagination and Dreams

What does every Storyteller hope and dream? Let's consider the famous prologue to Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention,
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!

The chorus implores us, the play's audience, to forgive the playwright for being obliged to enact the massive, sweeping, epic battles and colossal moments of the play with just a bit of painted canvas for scenery. We must imagine that the confined stage is actually the fields of France and that the handful of actors are actually the huge armies fighting to the death in those bloody fields. The chorus also reminds us that enjoying the play requires us to exert our imaginations to the utmost, so that we can see in our minds' eyes the splendor and vibrant action of the story.

Think when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,
Admit me Chorus to this history;
Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

Later, the chorus reminds us to be tolerant of the actors who attempt to portray personages of such high estate when they themselves may be just ordinary people wearing a false wooden crown or fake jewels. And finally, the audience must be prepared to move mentally from place to place in the short span of a couple of hours.

All Storytellers, everywhere, might well ask very similar things of their players: be tolerant, be imaginative, and be ready to share in the labor of creating the fun.

How to Organize a Chronicle

Like many things worth doing, Storytelling is both difficult and satisfying. You'll spend more time with the chronicle than any other single player. You'll devote considerable creative energy and time into building scenarios designed to shape the collective narrative of the chronicle and, if successful, these narrative seeds will grow into stories that touch the hearts of your players. And if you are lucky, these same stories may eventually become local legends repeated with awe by your friends for years or even decades. Players trust the Storyteller with their fun, and it's both a compliment and an honor that they do so; Storytellers should, in turn, strive to honor that trust by bringing their best effort to the role.

Organizing and running a new chronicle isn't easy, especially for a new Storyteller. A first-time Storyteller might naturally feel nervous. It can seem like a daunting task, and doubts may plague you. Will your players be bored? Will your plot fall flat? What happens if you can't secure a game site? How will you handle disputes between players?

In the immortal words of Douglas Adams: *Don't panic!* This section breaks down the seemingly unending tasks required to organize a new chronicle into digestible steps. And even if you're a veteran Storyteller, some ideas may also help you.

Step Zero: Remember What This Game Is All About

It's about vampires. Remember this, above all else: this game is about playing vampires and what it means to be these creatures, suffering from a Biblical curse and cast into an unforgiving, eternal, nocturnal existence. Vampires must feed on blood; they cannot endure the sun; they are driven by the Beast to do things that would appall mortals. You'll develop your own personal style as a Storyteller; you'll weave the kind of stories that your players prefer, but you'll always come back to this primary theme.

Step One: Select Theme and Mood

As the Storyteller, you must pay careful attention to everything you add to the game to ensure that that the troupe is entertained and challenged. Selecting a theme and mood helps you develop the taste of your chronicle and the types of stories you and your players will create together. Remember that word: "together." The players outnumber you, their Storyteller, by many to one, but you need them and they need you. Storytelling is a service industry, but great stories and memorable chronicles are created jointly by you and your players working cooperatively.

Theme

Story happens when a character faces a conflict and then attempts to resolve it. The nature of that conflict can be defined with a question. Answering said question and relating the answer to your entire audience forms a theme. Theme is the organizing principle of your story: the unifying idea, the one- or two-word description of what your story is about on its most basic level.

Themes should pervade all aspects of your story – setting, mood, and plot – but they shouldn't be so obvious that their appearance interferes with the pacing and flow of the game; players shouldn't be pausing in the midst of roleplay to remark, "Hey, there's another mention of hatred, that must be theme of this story." If that's happening, you've dialed up the theme too high and should reduce it a bit. Themes are more effective as subtle suggestions rather than blatant statements. Hide the theme, cache it away within the tale to be discovered as the characters interact with the story itself. Don't worry about making the theme too subtle. It will make its presence felt soon enough through the story elements you introduce to the characters.

Here are some good themes for **Vampire: The Masquerade** stories, as well as some thematic questions that can rise during play:

- **Love**: Can vampires truly love? How is their love different from mortal love? How does love affect our actions, thoughts and moods? What would we sacrifice for love? Can love be retrieved after it is lost? Does love endure?
- **Hate**: How does the seed of hate take root, and to what acts does it drive us? Can we free ourselves from the effects of hate?
- **Betrayal**: Why do we betray the people and things we love or that we are sworn to protect? What price does betrayal exact on our consciences and on our souls? How does it feel to betray and to be betrayed?
- **Revenge**: Is revenge better hot or cold? How does revenge distort our perceptions and provoke our emotions? Is exacting vengeance really as satisfying as we believed it would be?
- **Rebellion**: Why do we rebel? Where is the breaking point between accepting and rejecting authority? Is rebellion always necessary to effect change? Can rebellion occur without violence and bloodshed?
- **Morality**: How does being a vampire change morality? Who are the keepers of morals and ethics? Are these things even necessary? Are there morals that transcend individuals, cities, nations, worlds?
- **Chaos**: Why do things tend to fall apart? Does anything last? Is chaos sometimes necessary? How do we handle chaos?

Mood

Mood is the general tone and the underlying emotions you want your players to experience as they interact with the chronicle's stories. This is one of the most difficult story elements to convey effectively in a chronicle, though it's somewhat easier to accomplish at an individual game level, and it is all the more rewarding for its elusive nature. As with themes, don't beat your players over the head with the mood: let them figure it out naturally, but let them feel it in every aspect of your tale.

Think of the mood as your story's state of mind, and then ask yourself some questions about the emotions you want your story to reflect. Is the story pessimistic or hopeful? Apprehensive or confident? Angry or calm? Consider your theme and choose moods that compliment it. You can select from the entire range of emotion, and you need not restrict yourself to only one mood for the duration of your story. Variability of mood is especially important to remember when crafting and running longer stories, because mood can be as fluid as the plot and pacing requires: a game session may begin on a celebratory note as the characters gather to enjoy a party, but turn covetous when it's revealed that the event provides something of value to just one vampire.

Here are a few good sample moods for Vampire stories:

- **Covetous**: Everyone wants something, and often the object of their desire is either unique or in limited supply. Intrigue and politics are the order of the night as vampires wheel and deal, scheme and plot to obtain the things they want.
- **Desperate**: Characters are reckless in their excitement, fear, or despair, willing to take greater risks in order to achieve some goal or put things to rights. No one should feel they can afford to sit back and relax as events demand drastic and extreme reactions. This mood is very appropriate for a city under siege from an enemy force, or when a dire threat proves more powerful than the characters expected.

- **Brooding**: Everything is dark and ominous, perhaps even somber. An unexpressed dread hangs cloyingly in the air, filling everyone with the expectation that some unknown, important thing is about to happen. This mood is tough to sustain for long, but it can be very dramatic.
- **Mysterious**: No one is what she seems, and nothing is as it appears to be. Enigmas and puzzles abound, each merely scratching the surface of the next. Characters become paranoid as they delve into layer after layer of strange revelation.
- **Festive**: Celebration is in the air as the characters relax and let their hair down. The positive atmosphere lessens everyone's inhibitions, and they feel more inclined to enjoy themselves and take new chances. This mood is a good one to invoke at the beginning of a new story, particularly when you plan to yank the rug out from under the characters' feet soon after.
- **Decadent**: The world is decaying and falling to ruin, giving simultaneous rise to new ideas and appalling debauchery. Characters must decide what path to pursue as their familiar surroundings deteriorate around them. Will they sink into the easy enjoyment of once-forbidden fruits, or reject them and call for a restoration of morality?
- **Exciting**: The action never stops as the characters contend with a never-ending cavalcade of threats, enemies, and challenges. Never allow anyone to relax long enough to catch her breath. This mood is difficult to sustain, but it can give your players the roleplaying equivalent of a roller-coaster ride they will never forget.
- **Bitter**: Everyone is angry about something and has an ax to grind. Characters are tense and irritable, and they lash out at everyone and everything around them frequently. Individuals can progress from close friends to avowed enemies swiftly, and events that seem innocuous at first often take on savage, angry tones.

Step Two: Scaling Your Chronicle

Scale is simply the size – the number of players – of your chronicle. Storytelling itself does not scale; one Storyteller cannot accommodate an ever-greater number of players without assistance, because one person simply cannot be everywhere at once. Chronicles can be as small as two players or as large as a thousand at massive convention events, but you'll want to adjust your plots and game management techniques to support the size of your game — that's what "scaling your chronicle" means.

The number of players interacting together within your chronicle directly impacts the types of scenarios and conflicts you can leverage, requiring you to scale your plans up or down to accommodate. Sometimes the size of your chronicle will remain constant, with the same number of participants showing up at most games from beginning to end; sometimes it will vary, growing or shrinking over time. Players may bring their friends, spouses, and significant others into the game, and your recruiting efforts might swell the player ranks. Conversely, some players will drop out temporarily or permanently for various reasons. The good news is that knowing the limitations of your group size will allow you to scale your plots and scenarios to match

Determining the Needs of Your Players and the Chronicle

A few players will naturally entertain themselves with intrigue, social maneuvering, and drama. They will create their own fun and drive social plots for the chronicle. A "hands-off" style often works best for these types of players, allowing them to build their own tapestry of fun and allowing the world to react to their actions in a logical manner.

At the other end of the spectrum are the players that expect a good deal of personal interaction with Storytellers via plots, private scenes, and downtime scenes. These players depend on the Storyteller to feel connected to the chronicle and may need some help getting involved in the social dynamics of the game. The majority of players will fall between these two poles and you'll have to figure out what works best for you and your chronicle.

Large games require several Storytellers, each in charge of a different aspect of the game (main plot, subplots, influences, antagonists, etc.). Remember that the larger your chronicle is, the more you need to examine what types of plots work well with the group dynamics. Don't hesitate to ask your players for feedback on what's working and what isn't.

the needs of your chronicle. Some Storytellers establish a player cap, which is the maximum number of players they will allow to participate in any given story.

Primary scale considerations include the number of players you can comfortably handle, and the planned duration of your chronicle. If you have an incorrect expectation of the scale of your game, it can quickly devolve into chaos until you can adjust the plots and scenarios you've planned for the game sessions. If the chronicle grows beyond your current expectations, don't be afraid to get help. Ask for some volunteers from your player base and make them Assistant Storytellers (sometimes called "Narrators"). A ratio of one Narrator to every 10 players is often most appropriate, but the right ratio can depend on your group dynamic.

Small Games (2 to 10 players)

A game with 10 or fewer players offers a uniquely intimate experience. These chronicles provide many opportunities for you to give each player personal attention, designing stories around just one or two characters at a time. You'll have the luxury of running plots that resemble traditional narrative structures, such as the Jungian Hero's Journey, or the gritty Dungeon Crawl (both are described under **Developing and Running Plots, page 339**). You and your players will enjoy a great deal of freedom to explore anything that you can imagine together.

Conversely, the constraints of a smaller game can make it difficult to run social and political plots effectively; the scale of the game is so small that every plot, subplot, and scene goes straight under a magnifying glass. If you are running a small game, it becomes more difficult for a player to reasonably plot against another player, leaving little room for the kind of social and political maneuvering that work best in Vampire. You and the players might wish to discuss forming a social coterie that works actively against other NPC coteries to simulate that aspect of the game.

If your group is interested in a cooperative experience, you may ask various players to take over running aspects of the chronicle in narrative style. The player of the straight-laced, everything-by-the-book Ventrue could manage some of the street thug NPCs for a confrontation scene with rabble Brujah. This allows you to simulate a populated world, and you won't find yourself sitting behind a desk shuffling character sheets at these game sessions.

This game size can be a fun challenge, as you'll be portraying all manner of NPCs, adjudicating rules, and crafting vivid scenes to help players fill in blanks that would normally be created by other player-characters and more varied interactions.

Medium Games (10 to 50 players)

As chronicles grow in size, the Storyteller can step back a pace or two and allow for social and political plots to form organically, to the point where they can take over the heavy lifting and offer players many choices for activity over the course of a game session. Games at this size can

The Rise and Fall of a Chronicle

All chronicles see periods of expansion and contraction. Despite your best efforts, you might see your player population shrink due to a myriad of problems. Some problems are out of your control, and different times of the year are simply too hectic for players to commit to attending game.

Discuss the situation with your players and then see which, if any, of the following solutions might work best for your chronicle:

- Introduce new plotline that radically changes the political and social status-quo.
- Try different styles of plots (see Developing and Running Plots, page 339.)
- Add new Narrators to your staff to give a fresh perspective. If you are burned out, step down and hand the chronicle over to someone else.
- Discuss recruitment drives and ways to encourage new players.
- All stories end. End the chronicle and start a new one, but make sure that you end with a bang. The best stories are always the ones that return to the beginning somehow and touch upon that which made the chronicle great.

usually support all the key character roles for your chosen setting, whether it's an elegant Camarilla court or a raucous Sabbat pack. With the assistance of a couple of Narrators, you can manage the flow of the night's events, run some personal side plots as needed, and maintain story continuity. With a medium-sized player base, you can often draft a few players to help you portray key NPCs as needed, without completely halting plots by leaving a gaping hole in the cast roster.

Running traditional narratives like the Hero's Journey or Cold Revenge becomes more difficult. These types of stories don't scale up easily, and they can often careen off in very unexpected directions, keeping you on your toes whenever characters unexpectedly involve themselves in a story you intended to limit to just two or three specific characters. You won't have as many opportunities to give players a lot of personal attention when games reach this size, and you'll find that you'll need to rely on your time management skills more often, both during game sessions and between them: more players means more activity.

As more players participate in the chronicle, you will need to develop a system to track characters, track experience point (XP) awards and spending, identify the status of your plots, and manage integrating new characters into the story.

Large Games (50 to 100 players)

Some chronicles grow into colossal giants that quickly become logistical nightmares, requiring a great deal of organization to function. You become less of a literal teller of stories and more of a chief story manager over a team of narrators. Some narrators will specialize in game elements, such as props and setting, new player assistance, antagonist management, or XP tracking. At this scale of game, your players will group themselves naturally into factions and sub-factions, and the conflict between these individuals and groups will drive much of the action. Political and social plots will be the foundational elements of the game, and so you'll need to pay attention to how other stories – external threats, espionage, etc. – affect the ebb and flow of the game's socio-political landscape. Game events will often move quickly, with significant changes occurring over the course of a single evening.

This arrangement can lead to increased competition amongst the players and additional stress on the Storyteller — you can't possibly meet the needs of so many players single-handedly. You need a staff! A good rule of thumb is to have a minimum of one Narrator per 10 players at this scale.

In addition, consider creating a Player Advocate position, which can serve as an intermediary between the players and your storytelling staff. Veteran players can fill this role, and they can also mentor new players through the steep LARP learning curve.

With so many players to monitor, it's absolutely necessary to create some kind of organizational structure for managing logistics. Storytellers can't cope with a game this size using only a notebook and pen. You'll still likely play NPCs in large games, but only occasionally, and during the bulk of many game sessions you'll find it very useful to remain in a central location where your staff and the players can find you, making it easier to efficiently answer critical questions.

Convention Games

Convention games, often one- to three-night games, are designed to recruit new players and serve as a regional or national event for a series of networked games. Arrange your plots so they can be resolved and completed in a single session. This structure works best at a convention, allowing the players to feel a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. These games can range in size from a few dozen to several hundred players; the largest convention games can reach almost a thousand players. The same considerations for running large-scale games apply here, but you'll probably be unable to staff Narrators at a ratio of 1:10, and will likely need to cope with 1:20 or even fewer. Fortunately, while convention games can be very labor-intensive, they're short, and the factional politics and social rivalries will drive much of the action.

Networked Chronicles

Some chronicles share the same story continuity under a single umbrella organization, despite being located in different areas. These organizations choose to sacrifice certain aspects of local chronicle control in exchange for the ability to share a game world with common rules. Networks allow players to explore a story with a very large scope, often on the national or even global scale. Players from different neighborhoods, cities, nations, and even continents can all participate in a networked game.

Networked chronicles are truly the largest expressions of the collaborative, shared story that is at the heart of every chronicle. It is recommended that Networked chronicles regulate local games based on a monthly calendar to allow for different schedules and travel between games. A networked chronicle should create an overarching Setting Style Document (see **page 333**) to help individual games maintain the flavor and consistency of the large chronicle.

The following topics should be detailed in this document and be presented to players to keep everyone on the same page:

- Determine a system for regulating XP between the different chronicles (and use of the **Graduated Experience Cap for Long-term Chronicles, page 349**).
- Determine the number of downtime actions allowed per month, as different chronicles will undoubtedly have different numbers of games within a given month.
- Regulate clan rarities and any chronicle setting-specific mechanics, such as initial XP.
- Create a system to determine how important NPCs and metaplot are handled by Storytellers.

Step Three: Defining the Scope of the Chronicle

How big is your story? That's its scope. But before you can determine the scope, first consider agency, because one affects the other.

Agency is a literary term for a character's ability to affect the world around her. A protagonist in a novel or a movie has unlimited agency to follow her story as the plot requires. She might attend a secret magic school or travel the world seeking artifacts of power lost in antiquity. The motivations and desires of other characters become secondary because the narrative focuses on the protagonist's conflicts and the scenarios that resolve those conflicts.

The structure of a LARP requires a different sort of narrative to satisfy everyone involved, from the player to the Storyteller. Every player has a character that is the protagonist in her own unique story, which must be served by the structure of the chronicle. How do you run a chronicle where every character is a protagonist and desires an equal amount of agency, which includes the ability to chase after her own agendas and personal plots? The answer is to define the scope of your chronicle.

Scope limits character agency within the story of the chronicle. Some chronicles have a vast scope — characters can do nearly anything the players can imagine, anywhere they want. Sometimes you'll want to impose a much smaller scope on the game, limiting how much a given character can do within the context of the story. Scale can modify your story's scope to a degree; it's easier to tell the story of an entire city of vampires if one has enough players to represent all those undead personas.

Shorter stories often work better with correspondingly narrower scopes, but extended chronicles can handle wide variations in scope, even if they have a small player base. The key to success for these long-range stories is balance — change the scope of your games from story to story to give your players variety and a sense that their characters exist in an active setting. Saving the world every game grows tiresome, as does fighting continuously over who will be the next Prince of the city, so change the value of story consequences and rewards periodically to keep things from stagnating.

It's especially important to vary your scope if any of your players pursue very long-term plots, such as breaking a blood bond, seeking Golconda, or finding a long-lost sire. The scope of the story is already established at a more personal level for these characters, and their stake in the overarching plot will increase or diminish as it affects their agenda. Put another way, the quest for Golconda cannot dominate every moment of every game in the chronicle — you'll want to change it up and narrow the scope of the story from time to time, so that your players don't grow bored or, worse, frustrated because they're spending every game session trying to advance their one and only plot.

Outlining the limits of your chronicle guides the players as they create characters, allowing them to build characters properly suited for playing within it. If you plan a chronicle focused on a poor neighborhood outside of Detroit, a globe-trotting jewel thief visiting a different exotic locale every week might not be the best concept for a long-term player-character.

Scope can be divided into three aspects: locale, power, and agency.

Locale

Locale defines the physical boundaries of your story, whether it's a single town, a country, or the entire world. You may decide to restrict your chronicle to a specific city or county that you think has the right atmosphere to provide an interesting backdrop. Narrowing the boundaries of the locale allows you and your players to personally invest in the background with your time and creative energies. This might seem overly restrictive to your players at first glance, but they will take advantage of the constraints to exercise their creativity in ways you've never considered.

Later in this chapter, we'll discuss building the background of your locale as though it were a living NPC taking an active part in your chronicle. (See **Treat Your Locale Like an NPC, page 336.**)

A defined locale does not artificially trap the characters within this specific area, but instead limits the focus of the story. A chronicle set in Detroit might include that previously-mentioned jewel thief, who has a notion to visit London and attempt to steal the crown jewels. This storyline would be well outside the scope of the chronicle, however, because its key destination lies beyond Detroit. Resolving this scenario would require the character to spend an inordinate amount of time away from all the other characters during the course of some game sessions. You have a number of different options allowing you resolve the scene without disrupting the flow of your game session, such as allowing the player to visit London during a downtime action, writing a short narrative about her adventure, or simply Fading to Black (see **Fade to Black, page 345**).

If your game is part of a networked chronicle, the rules and policies of the governing organization often limit the scope of your locale in order to maintain a shared and stable continuity between all of the chronicles.

Power

The type of story you want your chronicle to tell will determine the appropriate power level for its characters. If you are planning a gritty street-level chronicle focusing on a few vampires struggling for their very survival night after night within the confines of a tough Detroit neighborhood, it might be appropriate for you to limit the Generation background to Neonates and Ancillae and keep a low starting XP base, such as an Anarch setting (see **Chapter Eleven: The Anarch Movement, page 459**.) These measures limit the power level of the characters to a point that is appropriate for the conflicts and challenges that you expect them to encounter during the course of the chronicle.

Conversely, let's say that you've planned a story so potentially world-shaking and deadly that it could threaten the very existence of an entire city, clan, or sect. In this case you might require that all of the characters be Luminary Elders at the center of a massive web of intrigue in the Jyhad, with a generous starting XP package, such as in a setting based on Vampire: The Eternal Struggle (see **Creating a New Setting, page 336**).

Agency

How much agency will you allow for the characters in your chronicle? Answering this question will take more thought than you might first consider. It is a deceptively simple question.

Small games tend to be loose with such restrictions simply because the chronicle focuses on a select set of characters. If all five characters in a small chronicle decide to leave Detroit and move suddenly to Fresno, the abrupt change in locale doesn't damage the game, as they are the only players affected.

As a chronicle grows in scale, complete agency simply isn't practical due to the basic constraints of the LARP environment. Let's reconsider the example of those same five characters who moved from Motor City to the center of the San Joaquin Valley in a large-scale game. The other 25 players can't simply follow the quintet to Fresno without completely breaking the narrative and immersion of the story, so as the Storyteller, you'll need to find a means of limiting the agency of those five players.

The best option is to have a frank discussion with the players about the Storyteller's time and the limitations of the chronicle, and explain if they decide to relocate their characters to a place so distant, those characters will be considered to have left the chronicle. Then, you can work with them to create situations or circumstances that make their characters' plan undesirable. Maybe it's just too dangerous to attempt to move that far because werewolves are active and numerous in the vicinity, and the chances of reaching Fresno safely are all but nil. Or perhaps the characters owe boons to vampires who would retaliate if their debtors suddenly lit out for another state, depriving these NPCs of the chance to collect on those debts. In a large-scale game, personal agency can only be allowed to extend so far before it threatens the enjoyment of everyone else.

Networked games add an additional level of complexity. The plots and scenarios in one game will almost certainly echo in neighboring games, and they may affect characters in both games if players travel between them. Once there is a connection, you can't have a character from your game drive over to the next city and kill the mayor NPC without expecting consequences that could affect both games. The Storyteller in the other game may elect to not allow the action at all. Cooperation requires a reasonable limitation on agency to allow for the greater enjoyment of everyone in the network.

Step Four: Selecting and Defining a Setting

Setting defines the background for your chronicle within the **World of Darkness**. A good background captures a certain moment in time for the geographic locale in which a story takes place. Elements of a defined setting include differences in culture, important historical events, key NPCs, sect politics, and specific rules used to highlight themes and mood that are unique to the setting.

The **World of Darkness** includes a wealth of information and lore about vampires, such as their myths, histories, and political dynamics. **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The**

Masquerade features three default settings designed to operate independently, but can be used together as desired, depending on the needs of your chronicle. **Chapter Nine: The Camarilla**, **Chapter Ten: The Sabbat**, and **Chapter Eleven: The Anarchs** provide these settings. Each has a unique flavor that is better suited for specific themes and moods, so choose wisely.

If you are stepping into the Storyteller role for an ongoing chronicle, the setting was probably chosen before you accepted the position. However, if you're starting a new chronicle, it is critical that you consult your players and find out which setting they prefer. You might be eager to weave a tale of bitter theological feuding among vampiric monsters for whom Humanity is mostly a distant memory, a story best suited to the Sabbat setting — but your players might be more interested in a story about brash, energetic young vampires engaged in a desperate struggle to overthrow a despotic tyrant, and that's perfect for an Anarch setting.

Once you select a setting, you may wish to modify it for your chronicle's needs and your players' expectations. Mind's Eye Theatre rules allow you to explore different eras, such as the Dark Ages, the Victorian Age, or even ancient Rome. You can even create your own original setting if your players are interested in something utterly new.

For more information on creating or altering an existing chronicle, please see **Creating a New Setting, page 336**.

Step Five: How to Organize Players

All games, regardless of scale, scope, agency, or setting, require some level of organization, but managing it can feel like you are attempting to herd a gang of unruly cats, only less pleasant. Real-life concerns will almost certainly lead to delays, absent players, and greater challenges.

Here are some suggestions for how you might organize a large-scale game:

1. **Write a Setting Style Document** (see **Writing a Setting Style Document, page 333**) and post it someplace where all your players can review it. Encourage them to ask questions about your intentions for the chronicle.
2. **Recruit a team of Narrators** from among your player base, and assign them defined duties. A few specific Narrator roles you might want to fill include:
    - A combat Narrator who manages and resolves fights between characters
    - A plot Narrator who creates and runs plots and scenarios
    - A paperwork Narrator who monitors, audits, and approves character sheets and earned XP
    - An NPC Narrator who designs, runs, and manages key NPCs
    - A logistics Narrator who locates, procures, and manages game sites
3. **Secure a game site.** You may need to pay for the privilege of hosting a game at a specific location, so you may need to charge a site fee (see **Tips for Securing and Paying for a Game Site, page 350**).
4. **Organize a character creation session** to encourage your players to make characters that suit the chronicle and to form background ties with other characters.
5. **Set aside space within the game area for a dedicated Storyteller table** where you can keep copies of the rules, the Setting Style Document, and other supplies like index cards, pens, notepads, and sticky notes. This provides a central location for players to resolve paperwork issues and make requests to Storytellers in an orderly fashion. If you have a good paperwork Narrator, she can help your players get into character as quickly as possible without drowning your players in unneeded paperwork.

Here are some tips for leveraging the Storyteller table to your advantage:

- Leave a section of the table designated for players to review material you want them to know such as the Setting Style Document, city history, or new items relevant to the game world as teasers for plots.
- Create a Storyteller attention request form. Undoubtedly, your players will have questions, scene requests, or downtime actions they wish to resolve, but you can't be everywhere at once. Waiting in line before a game begins is boring and can diminish the immersive experience. Instead, players can simply sign up for a scene, a rules query, or other request, which resolve in order as a Storyteller or Narrator becomes available. Lead Storytellers can use this sheet to monitor the progress of the game and assign assistants to keep the flow of the session running smoothly. (When your attention request form starts to resemble a heat graph, your game session is probably getting really exciting.)

Step Six: Accounting (Tracking Characters and Experience Points)

The larger a chronicle is, the greater the need for accounting procedures to keep the game fair for all of the players. Here are some tips for a streamlined tracking system that should help you avoid most problems:

- **Track player attendance at individual game sessions via a game sign-in sheet**. This will prevent later arguments about who attended which game as memories fade, and it will also help you audit character sheets fairly. Save these sheets in a folder, or transcribe the data to a place where your players can later examine it, such as a website or a wiki. Players will forget which games they attended and will appreciate your organization.
- **Define the amount of XP you will award per month, and state it clearly.** Networked games may have a default policy for all XP accrual. Long-term chronicles should consider using the optional **Graduated Experience Cap for Long-term Chronicles** system on **page 349**.
- **Create a system for handling character sheets.** It can be as simple as a portable file folder for updated character sheets, which can be filed away later, or as sophisticated as an online database. You will want to look at these sheets when writing specific plotlines or examining the health of the chronicle. In addition, if there are any accusations of cheating, it is a simple matter to pull out a character sheet and audit it to clear the air.

Setting Style Document Example: Camarilla Setting

Detroit by Night: A City Under Siege

Theme: Chaos

Mood: Brooding

Scope: Detroit

Setting: Camarilla

Chronicle Teaser:

Detroit is a city ruined by decades of economic recession, gang warfare, and — unknown to its mortal inhabitants — a violent shadow war between the Camarilla and the Sabbat. Recently, hunters wiped out the Sabbat, providing Prince Morgan Vergas with the opportunity to seize complete control of the city with the help of a gang of Anarchs. The war for Motor City was long and bloody. The Masquerade has been stretched to the breaking point, and the denizens simply want to forget the horrors of the last decade.

The Anarchs refused the fair reward offered by the noble Prince Morgan Vargas and rebelled against his praxis. Peace was possible — until a minor disagreement between a Lasombra *antitribu*, Romero de la Salle, and a vocal Anarch Advocate, Alighieri, erupted, creating new tensions and divisions. The domain of Detroit stands weary, but proud, and it will not bend to miscreants.

Graduated XP Cap: Yes

Clan Rarity Adjustments

Common Clans:	Settings Default
Uncommon Clans:	Lasombra *antitribu* have been lowered from Rare to a Uncommon clan due to story
Rare Clans:	Settings Default

Setting-Specific Mechanics:

- Initial XP is 100 XP, representative of a major city in the **World of Darkness** with powerful elders

Storyteller Notes:

- This chronicle focuses on the Camarilla fighting against the new Anarch rebellion via a local shadow war. Characters should be Camarilla Loyalists in name, if not deed.

Writing a Setting Style Document

A Setting Style Document is a short informational teaser offering your players a mental snapshot of your plans, allowing them to create an appropriate character and prepare for the style of the chronicle.

If you plan to alter one of the default settings or encourage certain concepts, the Setting Style Document can help you guide your players and inspire them to create characters that are appropriate to your chronicle.

A Setting Style Document details common character knowledge, social hierarchy, powerful non-player characters, and any local dangers or important historical events you'd like the characters to be aware of at the outset of the story. It also explains any changes you're making to the rules or optional rules you plan to employ.

The following two examples demonstrate how you might tell the same story from two different settings. (These examples were created using the information from **How to Organize a Chronicle, page 324**.)

Crossover Rules for Settings

Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade comes with three default settings designed to be used together. Simple crossover rules facilitate interactions between settings.

Setting Style Document Example: Anarch Setting

Detroit by Night: Rebellion in 8 Mile

Theme: Revenge/Rebellion

Mood: Desperate/Bitter

Scope: Detroit

Setting: Anarch

Chronicle Teaser:

Detroit is a city ruined by decades of economic recession, gang warfare, and — unknown to its mortal inhabitants — a violent shadow war between the Camarilla and the Sabbat. Recently, hunters wiped out the Sabbat, providing Prince Morgan Vergas with the opportunity to seize complete control of the city with the help of a gang of Anarchs. The war for Motor City was long and bloody. The Masquerade has been stretched to the breaking point, and the denizens simply want to forget the horrors of the last decade.

Prince Morgan Vargas promised the Anarchs equitable domain, feeding territory, and respect. Peace was possible — until a minor disagreement between a Lasombra *antitribu*, Romero de la Salle, and a vocal Anarch Advocate, Alighieri, erupted, creating new tensions and divisions.

The lost, broken, and angry, led by Alighieri, have gathered in 8 Mile to form a new resistance.

Graduated XP Cap: Yes

Clan Rarity Adjustments

Common Clans:	Ventrue have been lowered from Uncommon to a Common clan due to story.
Uncommon Clans:	Settings Default
Rare Clans:	Settings Default

Setting-Specific Mechanics:

- Resources are limited to 2 at character creation.
- Generation is capped at 2.
- Initial XP is limited to 15 at creation, to represent low-level characters.

Storyteller Notes

- This chronicle focuses on the new Anarch rebellion and the local shadow war. Therefore, characters must be no older than 10 year past the Embrace.

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Setting Style Document Example: Crossover Camarilla/Anarch Setting

Detroit by Night: The Shadow War

Theme: Chaos

Mood: Brooding

Scope: Detroit

Setting: Camarilla, Factions: Anarch

Chronicle Teaser:

Detroit is a city ruined by decades of economic recession, gang warfare, and – unknown to its mortal inhabitants – a violent shadow war between the Camarilla and the Sabbat. Recently, hunters wiped out the Sabbat, providing Prince Morgan Vergas with the opportunity to seize complete control of the city with the help of a gang of Anarchs. The war for Motor City was long and bloody. The Masquerade has been stretched to the breaking point, and the denizens simply want to forget the horrors of the last decade.

A misunderstanding between the Camarilla and the Sabbat sparked a new conflict. The Anarchs demand a fair deal and the Camarilla require respect and fealty. Peace was possible — until a minor disagreement between a Lasombra *antitribu*, Romero de la Salle, and a vocal Anarch Advocate, Alighieri, erupted, creating new tensions and divisions.

The domain of Detroit stands weary, but proud. If neither will bend, how can that the city survive the return of the hunters?

Graduated XP Cap: Yes

Clan Rarity Adjustments

Common Clans:	Settings Default
Uncommon Clans:	Ventrue have been lowered from Uncommon to a Common clan due to story
Rare Clans:	Settings Default

Setting-Specific Mechanics:

- Generation is capped at 3
- Initial XP is 50 XP, representative of a major city in the **World of Darkness**

Storyteller Notes:

- This chronicle focuses on the war between the Camarilla and the Anarchs. This chronicle is likely going to lead to bloodshed if the characters can't figure out a good compromise.

Use the following simple steps:

1. Define the default setting for the chronicle. The chronicle's default setting provides the baseline rules – all settings rules modifications use the default setting as their starting point.
2. Select allowable factions in the chronicle. Some settings work well together thematically, such as the Camarilla and the Anarch settings. The Storyteller can opt to use the following faction rules:
    - Players may create characters from an approved faction, from a different setting, under the normal settings rules for that character. For example, a member of the Sabbat faction could be created, under the Sabbat setting's costs and clan rarities.
    - Faction characters from other settings are required to play under the host chronicles setting specific mechanics rules. For example, a Sabbat faction character would have to follow the Camarilla setting modifications for diablerie rather than the more lenient Sabbat rules.
3. Note specific changes in the default settings to the chronicle as per normal.

Las Vegas by Night: Sizzling Sin City

Theme: Chaos

Mood: Covetous/Festive

Scope: Las Vegas

Setting: New, with Camarilla and Anarch characters allowed on a limited basis

Chronicle Teaser:

They say that Las Vegas is a city without rules — a city of vice, sin, and secrets tucked away in the shadows left by millions of dazzling lights. Certainly the Ventrue of the Camarilla gambled on Vegas and lost. The economic collapse that started in 2008 hit Las Vegas particularly hard, and the profits and security enjoyed by the Ventrue evaporated almost overnight. The Giovanni – long entrenched in the city as rivals to the Ventrue – didn't miss their chance. They partnered with their new allies – the Followers of Set – and the two clans were able to steal or remove Camarilla influence from Las Vegas entirely.

Although both clans still maintain strong holdings in Venice and Egypt, Las Vegas has become the headquarters for their formal alliance. The two clans exploited their budding association and have pooled their influence in Sin City's considerable underworld. Seizing control of criminal networks, mafia families, drug cartels, and the sex trade, they utilized these resources to establish locations that police and government agencies could not infiltrate. The alliance, still newly in control of the city, seeks to strengthen its holdings and defend it against the numerous enemies who may attempt to take over Las Vegas before the alliance has the time to grow in strength. Other clans are welcome to come and do business in Las Vegas, but the Giovanni and the Setites make it clear that no one bets against the house and wins.

Graduated XP Cap: Yes

Clan Rarity Adjustments:

Common Clans:	Caitiff, Followers of Set, Gangrel, Giovanni, Malkavian, Nosferatu, and Toreador
Uncommon Clans:	Brujah, Lasombra *antitribu*, Tremere, Ventrue
Rare Clans:	Assamites, Cappadocians, Daughters of Cacophony, Gargoyles, and Salubri

Cost Modifications:

- The following Paths of Enlightenment are considered 1-point merits: The Path of Death & the Soul (known as the Path of Bones to the Giovanni), Path of Ecstasy, and Path of Typhon.

Altered Setting-Specific Mechanics:

- Camarilla and Anarch faction characters are allowed
- Initial XP is 150 XP, representative of a major city in the **World of Darkness**

Storyteller Notes:

- Las Vegas is a place of decadence and the art of the deal. This chronicle stresses non-traditional Paths of Enlightenment and the struggle faced by independent clans in the **World of Darkness**. Cappadocian characters are either spies or assassins awaiting a chance to destroy this alliance. Warning: This is a game with adult themes.

Creating a New Setting

Vampire: The Masquerade has a vast wealth of canon material that can be used to create unique settings. The three default settings are only a few examples of the numerous possibilities. A Storyteller can create a new setting that mimics a variety of different time periods such as the Dark Ages, Victorian London, Ancient Rome, the Giovanni Chronicles, or a new setting born from your imagination.

The following simple rules will help you create a new setting:

1. Define the premise of your setting. Then detail it using the steps in **How to Organize a Chronicle, page 324**.
2. Select the common clans in your new setting.
3. Select the uncommon clans in your new setting.
4. Select the rare clans in your new setting.
5. Define merit cost modifications, if any.
6. Define any alterations to the core rules, if any, in your setting-specific mechanics section.

Creating the Story Bible for Your Chronicle

"That which deceives, also enchants."

— Plato

Even if you're gifted with a phenomenally good memory, it is impossible to keep every detail of every plot or NPC in your head at all times. For this reason, many Storytellers utilize a story bible as a management tool. A story bible is a written depository for all of the information a Storyteller needs to know in order to write or run plots for your chronicle. It might seem like an excessive demand on your time to keep a written record of all your plots and scenarios when all you want to do is run excellent stories and entertain your players. However, when you are caught in the middle of a stressful scene, surrounded by clever players with many unexpected questions – any of which could take the story into uncharted territory – you will be glad to have a reference, especially if it gives you a moment or two to think before deciding on the best course of action.

Your story bible retains facts and important information to ensure consistency in your game. Everything you create for the chronicle should go into the story bible: information about the setting, NPC descriptions and motivations, ideas for future plot arcs, and developing political scenarios. Think of it as a combination diary and blueprint; it holds all the tiny pieces of information and inspiration you need to remember late at night during a tense scene when the players are demanding immediate answers to questions that are vital to the core of your mystery plot. It's also the most valuable tool you can provide to the Storytellers who come after you. Transitioning between Storytellers becomes immeasurably less disruptive if all the chronicle's important story facts are recorded.

You can create a story bible in whatever form best suits your personality and needs. Some Storytellers prefer an electronic file on their computers or mobile devices. Others crave the security and feel of a classic three-ring binder with pocket page dividers for each section. A few brave souls merely jot down notes in a trusty journal.

If you have a team of Narrators, a story bible is absolutely vital — without it, you can't be sure that your team's plots and scenarios are cohesive and support the continuity of the chronicle. And you'll want it handy for easy reference at story brainstorming sessions.

Include the following items in a story bible:

- **A chronology of your setting:** This doesn't have to be incredibly detailed, but you will want a timeline of important historical events, especially those that had any direct effect on the story you're telling.
- **Important NPCs:** Remember to include details such as physical descriptions, political leanings, and general personality traits.
- **Recurring locales:** You'll want to know how many exits the Elysium art museum has if the characters visit it frequently, or whether or not the unused shipping warehouse is owned by the Ductus if the pack is holding ritae there. Add quirky details to these places to make them seem more lifelike, and if inspiration strikes, detail a few that might come in handy later. You might never use them, but your players will eventually surprise you, and you'll need to pull the proverbial rabbit out of a hat.

Treat Your Locale Like an NPC

Your story's locale is as much a character in the tale as the fictitious individuals who populate it. Information about your locale gives it depth and texture in the minds of your players and encourages them to see and treat it as though it were real. (Let's be clear: Detroit is a real place, but the Detroit of your chronicle isn't. It's a fictionalized version of a real locale, twisted to match the **World of Darkness**, but it will seem more genuine to your players if you take a bit of time to research and detail it.)

Think about the mortals who live in the locale, going about their days and nights ignorant of the **World of Darkness**,

yet knowing that they live in a sometimes dangerous and uncertain world. How do they live? What are their politics? How do they entertain themselves? What local customs or mannerisms make these people unique or special?

Try to imagine what your locale's institutions and bureaucracy might be like they were infiltrated by vampires. Begin by obtaining some accurate information about your locale's government and municipal services, and pass them through the gothic-punk filter. Libraries, bookstores, and online sources will yield a wealth of information on nearly any municipality, regardless of size, including population figures, government structures, and handy maps. Then choose some physical locations in the area to replicate in the game.

For example, you might decide that the famous Michigan Theater, aka the Most Beautiful Parking Garage in the World, fits perfectly as an Elysium. Playing there isn't practical, but you could research pictures on the internet and showcase what it feels like to be there.

If you have a cooperative-orientated troupe, you might consider a city planning session with a map, where players suggest and submit items and locations of interest from the locale. This crowd-sourcing invites players to invest emotionally in the chronicle and create stronger ties to the mythos of the chronicle. A player might be curious if mortals in an unknown building in downtown are suddenly harassed by the Anarchs. The player's immersion into your chronicle will dramatically increase if said building is a known landmark that she has personally visited or researched.

Developing and Running Scenarios

Conflict reveals character. The struggle of conflict isn't just a direct means to an end — it also reveals the hidden emotional responses of your character. In ordinary life, most people go out of their way to avoid conflict, but for a successful LARP, it is an essential component of what makes a dynamic scene worthy of remembering. Characters' struggles challenge them to grow in unexpected ways, providing the spark of life that can make the difference between a two-dimensional character and a living, breathing creation that entertains and enthralls.

As the plot of the story and the intentions of the characters unfold, conflict provides a way to understand the motivations driving the characters. There are three types of character conflicts:

- Internal – character against her own nature (fear, anger, hunger)
- External – character against the environment or the setting (overcoming an obstacle, escaping danger)
- Interpersonal – character against someone else (winning an argument, fighting an enemy)

Turning a Conflict into a Scenario to Tell a Story

Conflict can drive a story in unexpected directions and generate interesting scenarios. A scenario is a scene where the player and the Storyteller cooperatively attempt to resolve a conflict through the application of rules.

Imagine you are playing a Toreador Anarch named Rose. After a decade of abuse by the Ventrue Prince and preying on stragglers out in the Barrens, she has finally managed to weasel her way into a meeting with the power brokers of the city to discuss earning her own feeding territory. Music sways the crowd, hungry to feel alive once more. The night is full of possibilities, and this is the moment when all of her scheming and plotting might finally pay off, but there is a complication. The Prince brought a handsome ghoul with a glorious voice to the party, and he seems to be winking at Rose.

This conflict can generate a number of different scenarios in which the character has choices about what action she could take. Some examples:

- Rose can smell French blood in the ghoul's sweat, which is really the only type of blood she can stomach to drink. She aches to taste him, but doing so will insult the Prince and ruin all of Rose's plans. The Storyteller can turn this internal conflict into a scenario by requiring the character to succeed in a Willpower static challenge to overcome her hunger or lust, depending on the character's motivations. The consequences of failure should be clear: if Rose loses this conflict, she's most likely going to act on her desires, and that will transform this internal struggle to an external one as she tries to feed on the ghoul.
- Later that evening, the Prince locks the ghoul away in a basement for his own protection. This situation might lead to a second conflict requiring Rose to discover a means of slaking her thirst discreetly without risking discovery by the other vampires. The Storyteller can transform this external conflict into a number of potential scenarios. She might, for instance, require a Stealth static challenge to sneak past the Prince's security guards, or an Investigation challenge to figure out how to find the secret passage known only to the Prince. Here, the consequences of failure are uncertain: maybe the security guards spot Rose, or maybe she just doesn't get to taste that sweet ghoul blood she's craving.

- Even if she's successful in the above challenges, Rose may come into direct conflict with other characters, such as the local Tremere Sheriff, who is angry that Rose dared to violate the Prince's domain (and he might be talking about the ghoul or the basement, or both). This interpersonal conflict could be resolved by intense roleplaying or by a complex scenario (see **Chapter Six: Core Systems, page 276**.) as the characters battle.

Using Scenarios to Capture the Imaginations of Your Players

An amazing scenario stems from cooperation and collaboration between the Storyteller and the players. This delicate dance requires the Storyteller to lead while allowing the players to enjoy some influence on how the story progresses. The Storyteller sets the stage using enthusiasm, descriptive wording, and creative challenges, while the players reveal aspects of their characters' personalities and values in their choices as they attempt to resolve the scenario.

Learning to read your players and figure out which emotional buttons will excite and interest them is a critical success factor to fire their imaginative engines. Some players will prefer the challenge of navigating tricky political or social situations, while others will crave the danger of riding the ragged edge of disaster. Observe their actions and choices: you can learn a lot about what your players want by sitting quietly in a corner for half an hour and just observing silently as the game unfolds. Who is skulking in a corner, doing the same thing you are doing but for in-character reasons? Who is trying to extort favors from her Primogen? Who is being a bully, a tyrant, a seducer, a traitor? Players reveal goals, ambitions, and desires through observable actions.

Listen closely to the questions your players ask you during a scene. These inquires will reveal exactly which aspects of the story that intrigue them. Once you know this, you can modify the scenario to specifically feature details that will interest the players and push the emotional buttons that help players buy into it. When a player asks whether or not some mundane object has any hidden clues, or how to find out where the Sheriff's haven is located, or where her character can score some high-grade poison, or what she knows about some obscure point of lore, she is expressing interest that you can note for later exploitation — in the best way, by turning it into story and plot.

This technique doesn't suggest that you should simply let the players do whatever they want without consequences. Quite the reverse: actions must have consequences that are meaningful for the story to matter. Players want and need to know that the world their characters inhabit is logical, even if they don't understand all of the aspects of it. If a player risks her character's life specifically by choice, you should calculate the odds fairly and determine a good means to resolve the challenge. The balance is precarious. If the player instinctually believes that the laws of the universe are arbitrary, she will be disappointed. Immersion requires the players to have faith in the Storyteller. If gravity suddenly does not work as expected, the fictional universe feels less real. On the other hand, if a Storyteller is too strict and simply leaves behind a trail of paper corpses, players will become frustrated.

Some players will suggest solutions to the scenario that you never imagined, but that's good. This isn't a choose-your-own adventure novel, so don't worry if the players decide to take a route that leads them somewhere you didn't predict they would go. Communication is important to help players visualize exactly what is happening with their imaginations. Think carefully about the choices made by the players, even if they weren't the traditionally correct choices, and be prepared to let go of your own preconceptions. Creative players boost the sense of immersion that increases everyone's enjoyment. Such moments can lead to memorable stories.

Pacing of a Scenario

Pacing is the speed of action at a game session. Some scenarios move at breakneck speed; others simmer and bubble for a long time before exploding into violence; still others move along at a consistent but moderate rate. The key to pacing a scenario is to monitor the behavior and responses of your players. Move too quickly and players will miss vital clues for no apparent reason and then spend the remainder of the evening scratching their heads and feeling frustrated as the session drags on to a late hour. A game that has slowed to a crawl bores players.

Allow the players involved in the scenario to set the initial tempo of the scenario. Some groups will also cooperate with one another in a frighteningly efficient manner from time to time, solving all the puzzles and conundrums that you thought would take them the entire night to understand, changing the pace from fast and furious to painfully slow when they run out of things to do. Others will feel completely overwhelmed by information and so uncertain of what to do next that they will cease taking an active role in the story altogether. In either case, when players start dropping out of character and seem reluctant to re-enter the game, you know that you have a pacing problem.

Some Storytellers resolve pacing problems solely through outside threats, either introducing or removing them depending on the pace they're trying to achieve. This sometimes works, but often it becomes too obvious, giving

rise to "10 o'clock monster" syndrome (the introduction of an enemy or other external threat in the final hour of the game, which is the natural time for the pace to lag). Give them the space to chew on the scenario and listen carefully to the questions they ask to see things from their perspective. Noting which questions they don't ask is equally important.

Once you have a feel for your group, you can adjust the tempo by introducing new threads. Fast-paced games throw new situations at the characters throughout the night, forcing them to deal with each new challenge as it presents itself and leaving little time for them to assess the big picture before the session is done. Slower-paced games lend themselves to extended communications between characters and therefore to more subtle intrigues and plots.

Players must share some responsibility for maintaining a good pace. If they don't make characters who want things, who actively pursue goals, and who are willing to take a few risks now and then, the entire burden of maintaining game pace will fall to the Storyteller. When players complain that they are bored, ask them what their goals are for the night — if they can't tell you, then it's probably a good idea to suggest that they form some, quickly, and start pursuing them. Characters who want nothing, who seek nothing, who desire nothing, and who are unwilling to ever risk anything for fear of losing are boring, and their players are therefore prone to becoming bored. Remember that a successful chronicle is a collaborative effort, and players must meet the Storyteller halfway.

You can also help yourself pace stories more successfully by learning to narrate spontaneously. If you have plot outlines, you can often generate scenarios on the fly that relate to the big picture while still entertaining players. For a series of tips on how to narrate spontaneously using psychological tricks, see **Spontaneous Narration, page 345**.

Alternately, you can reintroduce a plotline that the characters thought resolved in order to keep the game session going without a break in the action — you've got a list of those in your story bible, right? If you have the luxury, another way to combat player boredom and maintain pacing is by appointing an "I'm bored!" Narrator. Her sole responsibility is helping players engage with the story by asking them good questions about their goals, and maybe even narrating a few short plots that she's prepared against this very eventuality.

Developing and Running Plots

"There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which cannot be touched without emotion, even by the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equally jests, there are matters of which no jest can be made."

— Edgar Allan Poe,
The Masque of the Red Death

A plot is a series of connected scenarios that forms a story in the minds of the players. Storyteller plots will initiate through the scenarios you provide, but your players will also make a substantial contribution to the plot as they enact their characters' efforts to achieve their nightly and long-term goals. Where do plots come from? Many good plot ideas start as seeds planted in your imagination, which germinate when you learn to tap your own creativity. Television, movies, magazines, novels, and newspapers all provide potential plot ideas.

The hardest lesson a Storyteller must learn is that plot happens in the mind of the player while she is experiencing the chronicle through the filter of her character. Rookie Storytellers sometimes fall in love with the cleverness of their own complex plots. These plots usually feature prominent NPCs who make the hard choices while the players merely watch, becoming spectators in their own chronicle. It is easy to become lost controlling the infinite story universe. We have the ability to do literally whatever we want, and yet sometimes the simple truth escapes us — the story's plot happens to the characters. Every NPC, every scenario, and every scene must further the story of player-characters.

Archetypes and Designing Plots

Storytellers aren't omniscient mind readers, so it can be difficult for new Storytellers to evaluate what sort of plots might work best for the players in her chronicle. An easy way to take the pulse of the players is to review their character sheets and make a list of the most common Archetypes in the chronicle. An Archetype not only determines how a player will roleplay a character, but is also a signal to the Storyteller for what type of stories she is interested in exploring. A Bully Archetype is going to want to fight her way through a scenario. A Trickster Archetype is going to want to use cunning and guile to resolve problems.

The trick is learning to recognize the useful ideas and creating stories from them. It isn't easy at first, and sometimes it's harder than you'd like, but it's something you must teach yourself to do if you want to be a successful Storyteller.

Planning plots effectively means knowing your players and the subjects that specifically hold their interests. You might be fascinated by papal politics of the 15th century, but unless you can find a bridge to make it interesting to your players, you may end up with blank looks and players ignoring your plots. If this is happening, you should consider if you are running the wrong type of plots.

Players have widely different attention spans and need for stimulation. You will be able to amuse some players easily with little more than the story equivalent of a ball of string. Such players are the ideal recipients of long-term plot threads and subplots because they will dog them for long periods of time with remarkable determination and will spread their enthusiasm to others.

Other players with shorter attention spans require a new ball of string every game session, lest they grow bored very quickly. For these players, any plot that endures beyond one or two game sessions becomes a hopeless, confusing tangle of unwanted detail.

Some players focus on immediate social or political concerns and won't want to deal with other types of interactions. Avoid pulling these players out of intense personal scenes with plot. There is always time to trigger a story. Wait until the tempo of the game slows before springing a dramatic turn.

You will want to offer alternate plot tracks to satisfy the needs of all of your players. Keep track of the different types of plots and how they satisfy various types of players.

Warning: some plots will take your chronicle into unpredictable, strange places. Plots can be become quite complicated, especially when characters' individual schemes clash. Confusion of this sort is both a help and a hindrance. Confusion lures and attracts those players who like to be involved in as many plots as possible. Other players react badly to confusion, and they will cease to participate when a plot gets too complex for them to unravel.

If you feel overwhelmed, take a step back, consider all of the options, and then make the best decision you can with the available information.

Plot Archetypes

Remember, plots need not be tortuously complex to pique the interest of your players; the best plots often are those that simply provide a frame to which you and your players can attach more complex ideas as the story proceeds.

Consider these basic plot summaries and where they could lead your stories:

- **Seeking the Throne**: A new arrival to the city seeks to seize power through force. All other characters must decide how to best deal with this new regime. Does this new potential leader help or harm their goals? Do the characters ally with her, or seek relief from tyranny? Should they rebel, or begin jockeying for status and position?

- **Invasion**: The city is under siege from a new threat that places it in dire peril. The night looks bleak for the characters in this sort of tale; they begin the story deep in the hole, and things get worse from there. The story could revolve around a Camarilla city besieged by the Sabbat, a Sabbat-held city threatened by invading Archons, or a location held by either sect facing a threat from werewolves or hunters (see **Chapter Twelve: Allies and Antagonists, page 489)**. This type of story often pleases players who prefer the action fast and physical, offering lots of combat and violence, both planned and unplanned. Storytellers should stress the nature of this story before starting the chronicle.

- **A Mysterious Stanger**: A mysterious force, be it vengeful or mischievous, puzzles and bedevils the characters, who must determine the nature of the entity and either come to terms with it or put it to rest. This plot is particularly good for smaller troupes, as a mystery can lose its impact quickly when shared among too many characters.

- **Murder Most Foul**: This classic "whodunnit" scenario has a vampiric twist. The deceased is usually a figure of power or authority, such as a Prince, Bishop, Primogen or other influential vampire, and the circumstances of her death are unclear. It's up to the characters to determine who killed her and why, and what it has to do with them. Murder plots are useful long-term backdrops for more immediate subplots.

- **A Game of Salons**: Strife and unrest are part and parcel of undead society, whether one glides through the sophisticated salons of the Camarilla or courts death with a Sabbat raiding party. Tensions rise as rumors and omens circulate, and more than a few bold souls decide that the time to make their move is now.

Writing Plots Suited for the LARP Experience: The Economy of Cool

The narrative experience of a LARP is vastly different than traditional media such as a novel, a movie, or even a classic table-top game. Classic narratives strictly follow the story and perspective of a limited set of characters, but a LARP is the combined story of every character involved in the chronicle.

Economies function through scarcity and demand, which drives the entire system. A common fallacy of LARPs is to assume that the real game economy is based on experience points (XP).

Players do not directly compete directly against each other to earn XP. The Storyteller awards players based on attendance, costuming, and roleplaying. Players who don't earn the maximum amount of XP allowed in a given month can, with a bit of time, earn extra XP via downtime scenes, background reports, or roleplaying via email.

The true economy of a functioning LARP is the *Economy of Cool*. In this system, players consume and produce that unknowable quality known as cool. How is it that some players always seem to create characters who somehow become a magnet for the spotlight? How is it that some characters never seem to shine, despite a kick-ass history, rocking character sheet, and the amazing set of disciplines? The answer lies within the Economy of Cool.

The Economy of Cool assumes that there is a finite level of cool in any given game. Players naturally accrue social "cool points" over time and the investment of said cool points can determine how well they do in the game, and more importantly, how much fun they have.

The best LARP plots encourage interaction between characters that increases the amount of cool for everyone involved. Imagine that Rose the Anarch wants to own a nightclub. You could simply allow the player to spend XP on various Influences and Resources and then write a downtime report detailing her purchase.

Bam! Instant nightclub! How much fun was that?

What if you encouraged Rose to participate in the Economy of Cool? Imagine the following possible actions. These could lead to a number of brilliant social, player-generated plots, which may spread the cool around to other characters in the game and tie all of the characters together.

- Rose could go to the Ventrue and ally with them to help buy the property. How would that change the tension between the Ventrue and the Anarchs? Would the Ventrue Prince use this agreement as leverage against Rose?
- What if Rose went to the Giovanni to bribe some Goodfellas into protecting the club? How would the city react to the Anarchs and Giovanni working together?
- What if Rose convinced her fellow Toreador to spread the good word about her club and help her book acts? How would the Camarilla-loyal members of her clan feel about an upstart moving into their bailiwick?
- Are there musician characters in the chronicle? Imagine how they would feel if they had a chance at the spotlight by playing at the character-owned club.

You can entertain the entire chronicle by encouraging your players to include others and invest in their characters. Suddenly, those other players likewise have an investment in a fictional club because it is part of their characters' story. Slowly, that nightclub becomes a little bit more real as characters have meetings there and start to include it in their history and their roleplaying.

Social Plots

Vampire: The Masquerade is a game of manners, etiquette, and byzantine alliances. Social scenarios are often the most difficult type of story to manage because this aspect of the **World of Darkness** is the farthest from our own. The **World of Darkness** serves as a dark mirror to our society, but it is distorted and cracked. We live in a society striving toward egalitarianism, where all men and women are considered equal. Vampire society has as much in common with the Middle Ages as it does the modern nights, and it can take a bit of adjustment to properly roleplay.

Consider the following:

- A Vampire's Embrace establishes her Generation, and that determines the vampire's rank for the rest of her existence. Elders are the patricians. Neonates are the plebeians. Ancilla are merchants interacting between both groups. The vampire's rank determines how society treats her. The Camarilla strongly discourages upward mobility. The Sabbat actively preaches the benefit of diablerie. It takes mental adjustment to set aside our modern sensibilities in order to roleplay this class system. We are taught to treat each other with respect and without prejudice. Thus, it can be uncomfortable to display racism against a Ravnos or to persecute a Caitiff. We are taught that we are all equal under the law, but in the **World of Darkness**, the concept of justice is quite different. In the Camarilla, rank, standing, and clan determine how the laws of your domain will apply to you. In the Sabbat, monomacy and the strength of your pack will determine your fate.

- Boons are the currency of the undead. A boon is more valuable than cash, property, or even blood. Unless you are secretly part of the mafia, a formalized exchange of favors might seem silly. Because we are taught as children to share and help others, it can feel weird to ask your friends for boons in exchange for favors.
- A well-adjusted person's conscience discourages her from doing bad things, but vampires have a Beast. The Beast constantly encourages the vampire to perform dark deeds.
- Most people are able to walk around in the daylight without fearing the sun. We have jobs. We report our activities on Facebook. Vampires, however, have to hide their existence from the world in a cloak of lies and secrets. It is a lonely existence; the only thing that can keep you sane is another monster.

At the city level, your game's need for social plots will vary greatly depending on the size of the game and the experience of your players. Every game is, by a very loose definition, a social scenario.

Here are some tips to encourage good social plots:

- Make sure the vampires gather for a purpose.
- Have a character make the arrangements to secure the gathering site and invite the other vampires to attend.
- Give the other vampires a reason to attend, even if it is social.
- Establish the social rules of the setting. A Camarilla court game should feel different from an Anarch rave.

Networked Game Social Plots

If you are playing in a networked game, consider regional (inclusive of several chronicles in a state-wide area) or even global social plots that encourage roleplaying between domains, clans, and factions. Storytellers should inspire players to host special event games and invite all the neighboring games to attend. Characters who work to produce a successful regional salon show a high level of commitment to the chronicle and should be rewarded.

Social plots can shape social dynamics all over the world. **Vampire: The Masquerade** is a game which includes elements of corruption, intrigue, and warfare. However, it is also a game about a secret world, a hidden culture. Who else can understand vampires except other vampires? Use your NPCs to highlight important events to the player characters. Set the stage: make boons, status, and gatherings important. If you care about the details, the other participants will too.

Political Plots

Political plots focus on the acquisition and control of political and temporal power. Politics can be defined as how a group divides basic, finite resources. Limited resources in **Vampire: The Masquerade** typically include status, blood, and influence over the environment. However, a clever Storyteller can create and define other important resources and assign value to these resources with player participation. Once value is assigned to a storytelling asset, players will complete with each other to control said asset.

If you decide that a certain neighborhood in your chronicle has a plentiful blood supply, you are creating a political plot that your players can ignore or seek to control. This could lead to countless different political machinations and subtle power struggles that live at the heart of **Vampire: The Masquerade**.

You could introduce a new mortal NPC Storyteller asset that players could complete to claim. For example, you might introduce a new district attorney, Robert Bagley, who has run for office on the platform of being tough on crime. The vampire who controls or influences Bagley will have a good amount of leverage over the rest of the city.

Characters with a criminal bent might resent this new, uppity mortal. Characters who want stability will want to ensure Bagley is controlled. This battle can take many forms: influences, social scenes to subtly influence Bagley, or a brutal kidnapping to blood bind him or ensure that he sleeps with the fishes.

At a basic level, this plot involves political intrigue and plotting against fellow player-characters and NPCs.

This type of scenario only works with a great deal of Storyteller preparation. In this plot, it is the Storyteller's job to create the sandbox for the player-characters to build the plot and then get out of their way. Properly prepared political plots decrease spontaneous violence in a game because they provide a concrete means for characters to compete without escalating to killing their enemies. Bored players are most likely to start pointless attacks that drain away the game's energy. Often Storytellers ask their players, especially those with elder characters, to avoid violence, but how can we expect the game to agree unless Storytellers provide the proper playground?

Here are some examples of political plots:

- Divide the blood supply in your city into feeding territories. Give extra feeding actions to those that hold the best domains. Watch your players plot to control the best feeding territories.
- Create a chronicle wiki or website that details the mortal world of your location. Make sure to list important mortals, organizations, and buildings to paint a solid picture of your city. Each potential detail is an entire story waiting to happen. A detailed backdrop provides your players with a chance to highlight player agency in your game by showcasing player-created businesses, projects, and changes to the city. The more you allow your players to play in the sandbox, their satisfaction will increase and the battle for control over these resources will intensify. What if the local Ventrue buy the Brujah's favorite bar and turns it into a beading store? That's the sort of insult that starts a clan war.

Storytellers can encourage and educate the players on the etiquette of the setting, boons, and status via plot scenarios with NPCs. This is often a way to introduce the concept with new players.

Networked Game Political Scenarios

Network game political scenarios require the Storyteller to put in time and effort, but they can be quite beneficial. These plots encourage players to travel between games, to use boons and influences, and to create inter-game factions. The players' natural desire will often be to hold political meetings behind closed doors; encourage the opposite. Political spectacle provides grist for excellent games. Encourage all voting or lending of status to be done in public, and allow the occasional backroom deal to be made.

Event games provide great potential to generate these sorts of plots. Storytellers should encourage these games to focus on some sort of political scenario.

Here are some examples of good political scenarios for networked games:

- Important ritae
- Faction meetings
- Regional clan meetings
- Peace summits between sects
- Forming local treaties with independent clans

Storytellers should do some careful research to figure out what political plots might be possible in a given state. Allow for mortals like lieutenant governors, network reporters, judges, and CEOs of large companies to become pawns up for grabs. Player-characters will expend boons, influences, and even go into debt for access to the right resource. This will encourage characters to interact and seek assistance from other domains, and build a strong regional game.

Archon characters can serve as a strong device to encourage games to avoid straying too far from the baseline canon. The Archons should reward the characters that stick the closest to canon. For example, if an elder treats a Caitiff like dirt, even if the Caitiff is popular, the elder should be rewarded. Archons are good characters to show players how the Storytellers expect them to play the game. The best way to encourage desired behavior is to reward it.

Justicar characters can also be used to encourage good behavior on a global scale. There are two kinds of political power: hard and soft. Hard power is the ability to martially inflict your will on others. Soft power is the ability to influence others to follow your will. The Justicars have a lot of both hard and soft power. National administrators can influence the entire network this way — characters look to the Justicars to serve as examples. As such, these NPCs should be perfect models of canon and set the administrators' expectations for elder players. If the NPCs are grossly unsubtle, how can you expect the players to act any differently? Justicar NPCs should use their soft power to encourage the national game to engage in proper behavior. Want player-characters to respect boons? Justicar NPCs should be giving, taking, and spending boons. Want to punish a character who is acting crazy? The Justicar doesn't have to get involved directly; instead, she can simply imply to those who owe her boons that something should be done about the problem vampire.

MacGuffin Plots

A MacGuffin is a term coined by famous director Alfred Hitchcock for an object of high value and often mysterious properties. The classic hard-boiled Noir example is a locked briefcase containing an unknown prize, which the main characters battle over to claim ownership.

The proverbial MacGuffin might be a special ghoul, an ancient text, or a priceless painting. It must be valuable enough for the characters to desire it and provide some sort of political or social advantage. Once introduced, the Storyteller's role becomes an observer and occasional referee as the characters in the chronicle lie, cheat, and murder to possess the ball.

MacGuffin Example

During a renovation of a local hotel downtown, a secret room was discovered that once belonged to a former Prince of the city. You might introduce information, via news reports or influences, that an old leather-bound book was discovered and then quickly sequestered by a man in black suit. Prophetic dreams might reveal that an ancient text has been uncovered with deadly secrets within its pages. Once the characters know that said book is valuable, they will compete against each other to acquire it and then keep it.

The Hero's Journey

Joseph Campbell proposed the theory of the Monomyth, or the Hero's Journey. This theory proposes that one old story from humanity's ancient history echoes in every known culture or time period. This is the classic tale of the young hero who accepts the call to adventure, takes a dangerous journey into the unknown, and returns triumphant against overwhelming odds to share knowledge. This plot is innate to our culture, but it requires that the focus be pulled off of other characters and focused on the unique character, a.k.a. the hero.

This plot can be dangerous, especially in larger games, as it can stop the fun for everyone else while a single player gets the spotlight as she battles the villain.

A wise Storyteller attempting to run this sort of plot will spread the key roles to various players and attempt to give each player a turn in the spotlight rather simply being parts in someone else's story.

Venturing into the Haunted House: LARPing a Dungeon Crawl

One of the most popular myths is that of the hero visiting the Underworld. In modern times, the Underworld is represented by a haunted house, into which the heroes must venture to gain an understanding and acceptance of death. Roleplaying games often translate this myth into the infamous dungeon crawl, where a coterie of characters must journey into a dangerous place to defeat monsters and villains threatening them.

It is important that Storytellers develop immersion when running this plot. If the players can imagine the horrors that their characters face, they can feel the thrill of the adventure and the depths of the terror offered in this scenario. Like the Hero's Journey, this plot can isolate players not directly involved in the action. A Storyteller can engage all of the players by offering the uninvolved players the chance to play the role of the monsters and villains, with the promise that they will have their turn in the spotlight in the future.

Player Agency and the Railroad Plot

Railroad plots have been around since the earliest roleplaying games. Simply put, a railroad plot is any scenario that doesn't permit the players to make genuine choices. They either do exactly what the scenario requires, or they stop playing — those are the only available options. When players complain that a plot is "on rails," they mean that they feel they don't have any real agency, or at least none that they can see.

Traditional video games often run on a preprogrammed railroad plot that allows players to progress to the next level only when they have completed each sequence at the designated point. The action occasionally stops when players are forced to endure animated actors ranting at them via predetermined cut-scenes, which robs players of their agency. Eventually, the players internalize that they can't change anything and simply wait out the timer until their turn to act.

Rookie Storytellers sometimes try to use this tactic in a LARP environment. They create a complex plot with an almost unstoppable villain who simply cannot be defeated until a predetermined set of conditions are met. Each game, the villain or her underlings make an appearance, shout threats, and randomize the game without worrying about the consequences, because she's totally immune to player responses.

The story of every roleplaying game is all about the player-characters. Everything a Storyteller does must be viewed through this filter. If you are more interested in telling a story about your unbelievably awesome NPCs, then you might be railroading your players into your story. A Storyteller's presence should always be felt, but rarely seen directly.

If a scenario feels like a cut-scene from a video game where the NPCs are playing against each other, and the characters can't make an impact on the story, you might be running a railroad plot.

Ask yourself these questions before running a plot:

The Railroad Test

- Can the player-characters alter the final outcome of this plot?
- What stakes do the player-characters have in this scenario? What can they win? What can they lose?
- How does this plot further the story of the player-characters?
- What does this story reveal about the characters?
- If your player-characters try something cool that's not accounted for in your plot, will you let them try it?
- Does the plot block access to key NPCs, locales, or events no matter how cunningly the player plans, because your timeline is inflexible?

If you can't answer these questions in a way that gives agency to your players, then you need to figure out why you want to run this plot, and possibly alter its focus so that it is about the characters, and not about you or your NPCs.

Storyteller Techniques: Tips and Tricks of the Trade

The following recommendations provide guidance for running good scenarios, for Storytellers of all skill levels.

Fade to Black

Fade to Black borrows a technique filmmakers use to separate scenes and allow for a dramatic stop in the action. When a character is facing a horrible fate, the Storyteller hints at what might occur via spoken imagery then says simply, "fade to black." True horror is the unknown, and sometimes leaving the player to determine her own dark fate in her imagination will be much more frightening than anything that you can conceive.

Example: Jen is narrating a scene for Greg, whose character has just fallen into the clutches of a particularly displeased Tzimisce bishop. The bishop intends to torture Greg's character, employing the dreadful powers of Vicissitude to inflict great pain and suffering, but Jen knows that this might make Greg acutely uncomfortable. She's quite capable of describing every moment of the character's misery, but elects instead to say, "Okay...you know you're in deep trouble, and that your captor intends to cause excruciating pain to you as he tries to 'persuade' you to reveal the location of the Anarch safe house. You try to steel yourself for what's coming, but it's even worse than you ever imagined in your most horrible nightmares. The Fiend leers as his talons dig under the flesh of your shoulder and then…fade to black." There's no need to continue — Greg's imagination will fill in the blanks, and sometimes a player can imagine far worse details than what a Storyteller can conjure with mere words.

Spontaneous Narration

Sometimes players will proceed through stories really quickly, to the point that they have eclipsed your plans for the plot. An improvisation technique will help you entertain your players and bring them back to the overall story. Ask your players questions and listen carefully to determine which answers excite them the most. If you are crafty, the player will actually tell you exactly what they want from the plot.

If you are running a scenario where an ancient, frightening Malkavian elder is plotting to frighten the characters, you can ask the players a couple of questions and they will actually tell you what things would frighten them. Like an investigator, you can use deductive reasoning to create customizations for the scenario.

Fade to Black and Player Comfort Level

Some players aren't interested or comfortable with the more visceral aspects of horror. If you sense that one of your players is uncomfortable, you should stop the scene and mediate immediately. You can use Fade to Black to quickly end uncomfortable scenes. Fade to Black does not save a character any consequences, but it does respect the comfort level of the player without ignoring the tone and flavor of the World of Darkness.

Spontaneous Narration Example

The Storyteller wants to highlight that the elder Malkavian, Midian, is frightening and wants to terrify the players.

Storyteller: Midian narrows his eyes and glares at you as though he is gazing into your soul. "Should you cross me, I shall have your body dragged through court as Achilles did Hector. You will know every possible meaning of the word suffering. Your family shall lament your birth."

Player: Holy crap? Does Midian know about my little brother?

Storyteller: Is there a way that he could know?

Player: That Malkavian found out about him two months ago, remember?

Storyteller: Midian continues. "Thankfully, your sibling is here to endure the punishment for your sins."

If you're really in doubt about what to do in order to fix the pacing or offer your players a fun game, ask your players what their characters want to do next. Listen carefully to their answers and try to tailor your responses appropriately. This tactic gives you room to breathe and think, and more importantly, it gives you a sense of why the action has declined.

Time Stop

A scene can quickly get out of control when many players talk loudly over one another, and tensions rise as players are immersed deeply in the game. Characters may have access to powers that can combine in strange, unexpected ways. Sometimes, you need to simply stop everything, take an account of exactly what has happened, and give the players a needed break. If this happens, announce "time stop" to inform your players that they should all stop talking amongst themselves and wait patiently in place until the Storyteller has a chance to audit the scene and determine the best course of action. The goal of this technique isn't to punish or inconvenience players, but to give the Storyteller a better chance of resolving the situation quickly and enjoyably for everyone.

There's nothing wrong with calling for a Time Stop to ponder the scene, ask questions from players, and take a moment to decide where to go next.

The Impact of the 24/7 Game

When does the game end? *Does* the game ever end? Players have access to technology that allows them to participate in portions of the chronicle continuously, 24 hours a day, often without the Storyteller even being aware of it. Some players will want to engage in protracted and highly detailed downtime actions over email, interact with fellow players or roleplay scenes via instant messenger, or share information via texting. Others will plan and plot between games using internet voice services, and still others will make use of social media to extend the action of the game.

This behavior is even more prevalent in networked games. Players will use their smart phones to communicate, in real time, with players all over the country or world, while a game session is running. Are their actions in-character (i.e. is it the character or player who is using the phone to query allies in distant cities about the visiting Prince who just arrived, or to petition for political support against a rival who has just embarrassed her?)

You may find your workload doubling because players expect to be able to continue playing the game at any time they wish, but forbidding them to use the internet or mobile phones is unlikely to succeed. You must therefore determine what boundaries and expectations to set with your players regarding the level of downtime interaction you can manage, how you'll manage it, and in what ways you will allow it to impact the chronicle.

Here are some considerations:

- Employ the Downtime System presented in this book to help you limit between-game activity to a level that you can realistically manage. (See **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, Feeding and Downtime Actions, page 295**.)
- Decide what your response time will be to incoming email. You may hope to answer all game-related emails within 24 hours of receipt, but sometimes that's not realistic. Tell your players what to expect, and notify them when you can't meet your self-imposed deadlines. Lack of a stated policy creates the unrealistic expectation that you'll reply to all player emails very quickly, perhaps within the hour.
- Consider appointing a Narrator to handle downtime activity, and check in with her regularly to make sure she is not overworked.
- What, if any, strictures will you impose on players who wish to use smart phones to contact other players who aren't present at the game for in-character communication? Are phone calls always in-character and therefore subject to being noticed, overheard, and interrupted? Does the player making the call or text need to log it with the Storyteller in order for it to be considered part of the chronicle's action?

- Decide if you will limit the types of actions that characters can take between game sessions. In particular, will you allow characters to engage in online downtime scenes that require or include challenges and tests? How about character death — can an online scene include the risk of Final Death, or must that always occur at a live game session?
- Work out how you'll track and log all the downtime interactions that will occur via email, instant messenger, text, and voice chat. The details of these scenes may be important later.

Knowing When to Stop a Game Session: No One Makes Good Decisions at 2 a.m.

There will come a time when the game runs for many hours. Maybe it's very late, but your players want to keep going until they resolve the plot, the combat, or whatever scenario has them excited. They will claim that they need to finish the scene or they won't be able to do anything else until then. The truth is that Storytellers are human, and sometimes they hit the limits of their mental and physical energy. If you have reached that point, and you are running a scene late into the night, hours after game should have ended, then you have the option to simply pause the scene and end the game. It is always better to stop the game when you're feeling too fatigued to make good decisions rather than blunder forward and derail the scene or cause serious damage to the chronicle. Your players will be disappointed, but they will also appreciate your efforts to ensure game quality after they calm down.

What Could Possibly Go Wrong? Plot Pitfalls

All Storytellers make mistakes sometimes. Try not to feel too anxious about your mistakes; instead, strive to learn from them and make amends if that's called for. Here are a few common mistakes that even experienced Storytellers sometimes make.

Draft Dodgers

Well, it's happened again — the players who volunteered to portray key NPCs contacted you at the last minute to inform you that they won't be able to attend the game after all. It's 10 minutes to "showtime," what do you do? The fastest remedy is to recruit a replacement player immediately or portray the NPC yourself if possible. Alternately, you could postpone the scene involving these NPCs until you can fill the roles, but in any event no solution will be perfect, and you'll be left feeling burned even if the no-shows had good excuses. If a volunteer flakes out on you more than twice, it's probably best to call on someone else for help next time.

Favoritism

It's almost inevitable that you will be accused of favoritism at some point during your Storyteller career. Sometimes these accusations are completely groundless, motivated by jealousy, immaturity, or a sense of entitlement. Sometimes there may be a grain of truth to them. Learn to ask yourself whether or

Redlining: Editing the Results of a Scene Afterwards

Redlining is when a Storyteller alters the continuity of a scene for the chronicle. A chronicle is a collection of scenes that form a long-term story, and altering even a single scene once it is complete can completely change or damage a chronicle. Some of the reasons why a Storyteller might decide to redline a scene include cheating, character death as a result of a serious error in a rules call, or a result that would harm the integrity of the chronicle.

For example, if a player manages to convince a Narrator that she should be allowed to appear on the news and rant about vampires, the Storyteller might simply declare it didn't happen and alter events.

If a player is discovered cheating in an intense and competitive combat, resulting in an unfair character death, the Storyteller might wish to consider redlining the scene. However, this is not an excuse to question every rules decision to an extreme level. Typically, a single rules call won't dramatically alter a combat one way or the other. If the scene could not have been reasonably completed without said bad rules call, the Storyteller should consider redlining the scene. A single trivial error is not an opening for a player to escape a character death.

not you're allowing favoritism to creep into your decisions, and if the answer is "yes," then you owe it to your players and the game to acknowledge your mistake and then do what you can to make things right. If you're convinced that the accusation is baseless, take the accuser aside and discuss the situation.Try to get to the root of the problem, asking why she thinks your decisions favor another player undeservedly.

The best way to defend yourself against favoritism is, of course, not to practice it. Sometimes it happens unconsciously despite your best efforts against it. In competitive environments, you should consider assigning a Narrator to run combat scenes for your close friends or loved ones where character death is a possibility.

Bad Calls

When you're responsible for managing an event with many moving parts, you're bound to sometimes have an off night and make a ruling that you later regret. Maybe you unilaterally declared a change in game policy right in the middle of a game session, without considering all the ramifications of your decision. Or maybe you simply forgot how to apply a particular rule and inadvertently altered the outcome of a scene.

Unfortunately, trying to repair the damage caused by a bad ruling often causes more harm to the story than just gritting your teeth and shouldering on. This is especially true if your mistake altered an important plot, changed the story continuity, or resulted in significant change, such as the death of a character. In such instances it may not be possible to undo what was done without inflicting even more damage, and in such cases it is usually advisable to apologize to all parties involved, learn from the mistake, and move on. Storytellers are not omniscient, and it is better to keep the trust of the players than to pretend that you can't error on occasion.

Awarding Experience Points

During life, we learn from the mistakes of yesterday and prepare for the challenges of tomorrow. Experience in Mind's Eye Theatre is represented by experience points (XP) given to characters at the end of each session. The number of XP awarded depends on how well a character performed during the course of the story and how active the player was in the game.

Award XP openly and be prepared to explain the rationale for your decisions in accordance with the rules. If the players disagree, hear them out and make sure you know the whole story, then award XP to those who have earned it. Be careful, as awarding too many XP can make characters too powerful too quickly and give players lax attitudes toward working for their goals. On the other hand, awarding too few XP disheartens the players and damages their sense of achievement.

Awarding XP, therefore, requires a delicate balance between satisfying players and maintaining the integrity of the game.

The following guidelines will assist you:

- **Automatic**: Each character receives 1 XP per game session, representing the acquisition of common, everyday knowledge.
- **Roleplaying**: The best way for administrators to encourage roleplaying is to reward it tangibly with 1 XP.
- **Leadership**: You should award 1 XP to each player who had a starring part in a story. Someone who got involved, and by her efforts propelled the plot, deserves another XP. Note that if more than one of the players was integral to the progression of the story, each of the players who showed such leadership should be awarded 1 XP.
- **Sharing the Spotlight**: Some players will naturally gravitate towards the spotlight through sheer charisma. Other players will need some help finding their share of the glory. Players who extend a hand to their fellow players and encourage collaborative play should be rewarded with 1 XP to encourage this good behavior.
- **Sportsmanship**: Players who demonstrate grace in defeat and good sportsmanship in victory should be rewarded with 1 XP to encourage good behavior.

Bonus Experience Award System (Optional)

XP increase players' investment in a chronicle by rewarding them for participation and increasing the fun for everyone involved. Using the bonus experience award system, Storytellers have an opportunity to immediately reward good behavior from players.

When the Storytellers feel that a player is actively increasing the enjoyment of the game for everyone, she may award 1 bonus XP immediately.

Some of the activities that might warrant a bonus XP include:

- A character trying a completely new tactic, even if it fails. This encourages players to continue to innovate and keeps them invested in the story.
- A player who takes risks with her character but who does so involving the rhetoric or ideals of her character.
- A player who encourages others to have their chance in the spotlight while patiently waiting her turn.

Storytellers should give these rewards during extraordinary circumstances, or else risk the players coming to expect such bonuses and robbing them of their power.

Networked Chronicle XP Rules (Optional)

Large networked games that run long-term chronicles often have unique issues with record keeping and regulating XP. The following rules are designed for large dispersed games (running simultaneously in more than one city) and for games that last for more than one year. Feel free to use some or all of the following rules depending on the needs of your chronicle.

Standard Monthly XP Caps

If your game encompasses more than one city, consider a standardized XP cap in order to make the game fair for players throughout your organization.

- Set a monthly XP cap of 10 points. This keeps the earned XP fair and removes the advantage of players who can easily drive to a large number of games.
- Set a cap of 6 XP per game. It's important to encourage players to attend more than one game per month, but a significant section of your players will likely only attend one game per month, so it's important to make the first game more rewarding than the second.
- Provide the opportunity for players to earn supplementary XP up to the monthly cap. Some of your players will be very interested in your game but are unable to attend more than one game per month. Allowing those players to earn the remaining 4 XP per month by writing stories about their characters or roleplaying online can provide an important boost to player interest.

Graduated Experience Cap for Long-term Chronicles (Optional)

Chronicles last as long as required to tell the desired stories. Some last only a few game sessions. These tend to last a short time, with large amounts of XP awarded. Long-term chronicles require a slower burn. Some chronicles last decades and, unless the amount of XP allowed into the game is carefully managed, the game will suffer from a devastating arms race of XP, and newer players will feel lost and underpowered when trying to join.

Scaling the XP awards allows long-term chronicles to reward the characters who have survived over the years without severely penalizing new characters. The following table outlines a scaled system where the amount of XP a character can earn in a given month is gradually decreased as she earns more XP.

Rather than a flat XP cap for all players, any game running longer than one year should introduce graduated XP caps with the following rules:

- Characters with less than 100 earned XP can earn up to 10 XP per month.
- Characters with more than 100 earned XP (not including initial XP) can earn up to 8 XP per month.
- Characters with more than 200 earned XP can earn up to 6 XP per month.
- Continue reducing the amount of XP a character can earn; for every 100 additional earned XP, reduce the XP cap by 2 per month, until the cap reaches 2.
- Experience caps should never be dropped below 2 per month.

Note: initial XP does not count toward the total XP earned.

Amount of Total XP Earned	Amount Character May Earn in a Month
<100	10 XP per month
101 - 200	8 XP per month
201 - 300	6 XP per month
301 - 400	4 XP per month
401 +	2 XP per month

New Character Incentive (Optional)

Graduated XP caps can go a long way towards making your chronicle appealing for new players, but if your chronicle rolls on for an extended period of time you may want to incorporate the New Character Incentive rule. The New Character Incentive is an XP package awarded to new characters to allow them to better integrate into the chronicle without feeling underpowered. Guidelines for calculating the New Character Incentive are listed below:

1. Calculate the total earned XP available to characters in your chronicle. This number should reflect the maximum amount of XP possible for a character to have earned over the course of your chronicle.
2. Alter your Setting Style Document to include the following statement: "Initial XP is the base award (default 30 XP) + New Character Incentive (25% of the earned XP in the chronicle)"

Assuming that the total earned XP for your chronicle is 200 XP, then the initial XP for a new character would be: base (30 XP) + 25% of the total earned XP (50 XP) = 80 XP.

Note: initial XP does not count towards earned XP when calculating XP for the Graduated Experience Cap.

Set Dressing

As any writer will tell you, it isn't enough merely to have excellent characters, a captivating theme, or an interesting plot — you must also help your audience, in this case, your players, imagine as much of your world as possible. The space you're playing in can impact your players' perception of your overall story — if dressed well, it can inspire. Conversely, if your space is mundane and full of distractions, your players will have greater difficulty getting into character and staying there. The more you can help them visualize the world they're in, the stronger they'll engage with the story within it.

Tips for Securing and Paying for a Game Site

Locating the perfect place for game is often the biggest logistical challenge a storytelling staff will face. The ideal game location will be safe, comfortable, and of an adequate size to accommodate your game. Ideally, the space will also offer sufficient privacy so that the game does not disrupt members of the public, and it will feature some flexibility of space, so players can come together in large groups or break off into individual scenes as the night progresses.

- **Rented Space:** Many games rent space from various businesses — art galleries, coffee houses, banquet halls, clubs, and small theaters make great candidates for games of all sizes. Rented spaces, in addition to meeting all the basic needs for a game, are also usually well-decorated and typically provide parking, restrooms, and other comforts for players.
- **Public Space:** If cost is a concern, consider finding a public space, such as a park or university, in which to play. Sometimes the absence of mundane furniture and lighting can provide great freedom for your players' imaginations. Be sure, however, to take safety into consideration and also take steps to avoid disturbing others when playing in public space. Always communicate with park and university management and get permission to use the space, and make sure that you have a backup plan in place if weather or other disruptions necessitate a change of location.
- **Private Space:** Some of your players may have homes large enough to host games. Private homes can sometimes be particularly challenging — it takes some extra work to imagine a comfortable, normal space as anything other than what it is, so putting additional effort into transforming the space with decorations, music, and lighting is crucial. Also be sure that your game respects the host's home and abides by any additional rules or restrictions she may wish to place on the game.

Lighting

Just as the act of dimming the lights in a traditional theater helps minimize distractions and enhances the audience's immersion into the story, so too does good lighting affect the mood and tone of your game. Even simply dimming the lights as game begins, and turning them back up at the end of the night, will give your players distinct cues that help them get into and out of character.

LED lights offer a safe and inexpensive alternative to traditional candles, and modern electric candles are nearly indistinguishable from the real thing. Colored light bulbs also offer an inexpensive and simple way to change the lighting in your space. Avoid wax candles or other items which require open flame — many play spaces prohibit them for safety reasons.

Music

Few things set the mood like music — just ask your players. Many **Vampire: The Masquerade** players spend considerable time crafting specific playlists of songs for their characters, taking advantage of music's ability to help us get into a desired state of mind or convey nuanced emotion.

Portable electronics make it easier than ever to enhance a game with music, even if you're in a public play space. It's easy to place a phone or tablet in an area and use it to play your pre-selected songs — but if you do so, make sure that the item is also secure and not likely to be lost. Of course, if you're using a space with a higher-quality sound system made available for guest use, you should take advantage of that benefit.

There are a wealth of music collections available that are suited for game. Movie soundtracks provide excellent general ambiance. For elegant political intrigue, consider a traditional orchestra recording; for a seedy club try a compilation of out-of-date dance mixes. The variety is endless.

Selecting music is also an excellent task to delegate to your players. Give the players whose characters are hosting game the opportunity to pick the music and many will be thrilled at the chance to convey their creativity through music. It's easy to legally create shared playlists on many online music services — and your players may even start listening to your game's custom soundtracks between sessions. Just be clear

about any guidelines you feel are necessary for the music played during live game sessions — particularly regarding music with explicit lyrics or especially dissonant sound.

Decor

Many games maintain a library of generic, inexpensive décor that can be used to quickly dress up any given location and create unusual ambiance. Plastic tote bins make excellent portable storage devices, and they also help clearly identify which items are available to players who wish to help decorate the game space.

Consider the following:

- **Fabric:** Pieces of decorating fabric in various lengths and colors are the single best items for quickly dressing a game space. Artfully draping a piece of silver cloth over a standard folding chair suddenly transforms it into an elegant seat; attaching light fabric in asymmetrical drapes across a ceiling can imitate an underground lair. Decorating fabric is versatile and easy to use — just take care to avoid creating any fire hazards.
- **Folding furniture:** Portable and simple, folding furniture can alter the ebb and flow of a play space to a large degree. With the addition of an extra table and a few chairs, an outdoor deck can become a terrace café, or a park bench can suddenly become a corporate office.
- **Small objects:** Thrift and second-hand stores are excellent sources of small, interesting objects that can be used to decorate a space. Vases, candlesticks, cloth flowers, and inexpensive pieces of art are all great additions to your décor box.

Props

Unlike generic décor, props can be used to great effect to set a specific mood, convey an unusual setting, or even serve as the centerpiece for a plot. Giving your players an object that can be picked up, moved, and visually followed will entice your players to interact.

For example, let's say that you're running a plot where the characters discover a rare book containing unusual information. When you bring that object into the story, you can augment it by also providing your players with an old, hardbound book, perhaps with an index card or printed page inside describing its contents, to use as a physical representation of the book itself. This will not only help build the initial characters' interest, but it will also get the attention of other players, who may wish to inquire about, purchase, or even steal the book from its current owners.

Storytellers can also use pre-determined props to indicate the presence of recurring non-player characters (NPCs). For example, you may choose to wear a particular fedora every time you need to portray the local crime lord. By giving this NPC an easily identified, distinctive item, you will no longer have to verbally describe the NPC to the players after they've encountered it once. In this way, you can encourage players to stay in character and react without interrupting the scene with unnecessary questions.

Set Dressing Narrator

At the beginning of a game session, when many players are likely to have questions for the Storyteller or her staff, it can be difficult to find the time to break away from players in order to dress the game space. Consider assigning a player the role of set-dresser and prepare her with some simple instructions before each game session. Arranging the lighting, choosing the music, setting out the décor and preparing the props allows players' creativity to shine and often inspires them to suggest and explore other ways of enhancing your play space.

Mediation

Mediation is an alternative dispute resolution system where two or more players discuss resolving a scene outside of the standard rules. Astute uses of mediation can help maintain the quick pace of a scene and allow players to continue roleplaying when the outcome isn't in doubt or the players are more interested in roleplaying.

Successful mediation involves balancing two factors: what players want for their characters and what their characters are capable of doing. It may seem that characters involved in a combat scene have motives that are downright incompatible. At first glance, opposing characters bent on killing their enemies might not seem to have common ground for mediation. The Storyteller should ask each player what outcome would be acceptable to them and offer a quick compromise.

A player who initially intends to kill an enemy may come to realize that she is best served by her enemy's survival. Perhaps she can cow him into joining her cause instead, or she can force another character to get an entire group to back down or face dire consequences in the future. The target just wants to escape. A fair negotiation might result in the attacker roughing the victim up as a warning to quit messing in her business, but the target ultimately gets away. The intended victim's player might point out that the consequences of murder just aren't worth it, but if the other player agrees to let her live, she will stop trying to steal her business. The victim's player could offer to spread word not to challenge the aggressor.

If they agree to the negotiated outcome, the attacker gets to display her prowess and send her enemy packing, while the subject lives to see another day. Furthermore, neither side has to deal with consequences like police action or the creation of a new character. Everyone benefits.

Negotiation as an alternative to combat can be as simple or involved as players' desire. However, it is important for the mediator to take careful note of the agreed-upon result. A player who immediately turns around and violates her mediation kills the fun of the game and breaks the letter of the rule as well as the spirit. Disregarding an agreed-upon mediation is cheating, and the Storyteller should react accordingly.

Remember that while mediation is an out-of-character resolution mechanic, nothing says it can't be handled as in-game conversation as much as possible. Indeed, experienced players can often work negotiation into a scene rather seamlessly, its presence only apparent if they have to refer to attributes and numbers as part of the process.

Handling Disruptive Players

Some players impact the game negatively. Every Storyteller will encounter a disruptive player. You'll sometimes know when you have a problem player because other players will tell you about her, often at great length — but not always. Sometimes you'll be obliged to recognize the problem without help. In either case, it is part of the Storyteller's responsibility to handle these issues, and your options depend on the exact nature of the problem. In almost all cases success requires a delicate touch. In only the most extreme cases of willful player misbehavior is permanently ejecting the player from the game the right answer. Regretfully, sometimes that is the only reasonable decision you can make if the player won't reform after being confronted. Between that final straw and ignoring the problem in the hope that it will go away (it won't), there are other options.

Consider the scale of your game when evaluating problem players. A single problem player can utterly tank a small-scale game, because her behavior touches all players and can get out of control before you can act. In a large-scale or networked game, the same issue may not be as grave because the size of the game means that it can absorb a moderate level of misbehavior without breaking, giving you a little time to deal with it. Still, you must recognize and deal with the problem early if you want to achieve the best result. Always be civil and direct when dealing with a problem player; state your concern calmly but clearly, and be firm in making your decisions. You are acting on behalf of all your players whenever you must deal with this kind of problem.

Rules Lawyers

Some players, often called "rules lawyers," derive more enjoyment from debating the meaning of the rules than they do from playing the game. Often they confuse one for the other. All Storytellers must make rules interpretations on the fly from time to time, deciding how to handle a situation not covered by this book, and often they must do so quickly and under pressure. Rules lawyers hate this necessity; it makes them very unhappy, and particularly so when the Storyteller doesn't interpret the rules the way the rules lawyer prefers.

These players become a problem when their need to impose their interpretation of the rules on the game and its players begins to either undermine the Storyteller's ability to keep the game moving – because the player wants to stop the action to argue every ruling and interpretation – or diminishes the ability of the other players to enjoy the game. To deal effectively with rules lawyers, you must know the rules as well as you can, and be ready to establish your role as the game's arbiter.

Try explaining to the rules lawyer that it's your prerogative as Storyteller to enforce and interpret the rules, and to make snap judgments on occasion. Provide the player with a clear escalation path: tell her exactly how to make her disagreement known and in what ways it's appropriate to do so. Maybe schedule a time to discuss after the game session is over, maybe ask her to send you an email, but always request that the player stop disrupting the game to make rulings the focus. Sometimes rulings made on the fly must be explained or amended after the fact, and as long as players are willing to accept that, you shouldn't have to have this conversation too often.

Overly Competitive Players

There are players who, for what probably seem like good and valid reasons, see LARP as a kind of competitive sport in which victories are scored by comparing body counts: the more characters they kill, the higher their "score." They have little interest in the more thematic and narrative elements of the game. Sometimes they actively discourage those elements in order to maintain an environment where murdering characters for the competitive thrill remains the paramount focus. It's important to note that this play style is not wrong or bad — it is, however, not sustainable as the sole basis for a chronicle. The zero-sum nature of this expression of the game means it ends only one way (with everyone or nearly everyone dead), and it denies or diminishes the ability of other players to enjoy the game in different ways that are more sustainable. It's not just that these players are competitive; it's that they refuse to accept that there is any

other valid way to play the game, and therein lies the danger, because the story and all other considerations get shunted aside in favor of direct, head-to-head adversarial play.

Some tips to handle overly competitive players:

- Provide NPCs for these players to engage in warfare tactics. If you have a number of these players, teach them to entertain each other by encouraging them to play NPCs against each other.
- If you have a small chronicle, you may need to speak to the players and ask them to split their coterie to balance the power of the game.
- Explain to competitive players the joy of losing and the drama of recovering from defeat, and encourage them to resort to less lethal means of testing themselves via social battles.

Negative Metagaming

Sometimes players allow their characters to use knowledge that they, the players, possess but that their characters would not or cannot know. That's *metagaming*, and at best it is unfair; at worst, when it is done deliberately in order to gain an advantage in the game, it is cheating. Players frequently gain knowledge their characters don't possess just by talking with their fellow players outside the game environment, and since they're unlikely to stop hanging out with their friends, they should actively police themselves against this behavior. Because a player read this book, she knows that discipline X does thing Y, but unless your character has this power or has a reason, gained through in-game experiences, to know what it does, allowing your character to also know this information is metagaming. It's even worse if you allow your character to act on this information, even though she cannot possibly know it, in order to gain some kind of advantage.

When you identify metagaming, speak to the offending player as quickly as you can, reminding her that her character cannot use information gained outside the context of the game. Advise her to remain in-character at all times if she can, and to consider the origin of the information her character possesses before she acts on it. A player may occasionally collude with another in order to contrive a situation in which her character has a reason to pass on valuable information, and while it's difficult to prove that such incidents are intentional, they are also damaging to the game and should be discouraged.

Intentionally Disruptive Players

These players are the real deal, people who deliberately disrupt the game because they enjoy doing so. Maybe it's a player who shows up intoxicated to every game, or maybe it's a player who has difficulty coping with personal, real-life issues so that her frustrations and shortcomings spill over into the game. Regardless, when a player is deliberately wrecking the game, removing her is the best option. You likely aren't a mental health professional, guidance counselor, spiritual advisor, or anything of the sort — you're here to manage the game and to make it fun for the players. Denying this kind of player access to the game is part of that responsibility.

Creating an Inclusive Game

Live-action roleplaying, like many other hobbies, appeals to a broad base of individuals; attracting people from a wide variety of ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, and backgrounds. Certainly, the community is vastly more inclusive and open than it was when **Vampire: The Masquerade** was first introduced more than 20 years ago. Similarly, the gaming community has grown and changed, becoming more and more diverse.

Vampire: The Masquerade is a game for mature individuals, with themes that touch on very real personal and social issues. Occasionally, a theme or plot can be contentious, heightening emotions, invoking cultural biases, or depicting scenarios that are uncomfortable for some players. As the leader of the troupe, the Storyteller has a responsibility to ensure that her game is safe, welcoming, and responsible in its management of these themes.

Listen to your players, leverage their knowledge, and participate in open discussion about culture, history, and historical backgrounds. History is filled with bigotry and intolerance, and historically accurate character types and hard-hitting plot topics can create an uncomfortable gaming environment or invoke negative portrayals. Remember that a game of **Vampire: The Masquerade** isn't intended to provide completely accurate historical recreation. Instead, it should be a fun, theatrical exploration of historical themes. Find ways to integrate these items that show many sides of each issue; encourage your players to talk to one another before playing character concepts that might make other individuals uncomfortable. Show respect when a player indicates that something crosses her boundaries, and do not allow concepts that are outright offensive.

Avoid casual or excessive use of negative racial stereotypes in the NPCs that populate your chronicle. The **World of Darkness** makes very strong use of archetypes, but when

pushed too far, these can turn into cartoonish caricatures of race or culture. For example, in **Vampire: The Masquerade** canon, members of the Assamite clan grow physically darker as the centuries pass, but blackface is not a joke, and it is not "good costuming."

Gender, too, can be a sensitive issue. Women are becoming more prevalent in gaming communities, and it is wonderful to see sexual diversity in LARPs. Remember that it can be intimidating to walk into an environment obviously dominated by the other gender, especially when the setting has a great deal of history or if the game is extremely complex. Regardless of an individual's gender, treating someone as if they are less important, less "dangerous" as a vampire, less informed about the rules, or simply less intelligent, is condescending and rude. The same applies to homosexual or transsexual individuals; everyone should be made welcome and celebrated for the varied talents they bring to the game.

Sexual motifs and subjects must also be handled with great care. By its very nature, **Vampire: The Masquerade** encourages a component of sensuality and seduction, beauty and avarice. But Storytellers must remember that some individuals may have histories of rape, violent assault, or other traumas, and such individuals should *never* be made to feel uncomfortable by the sexual themes of a Vampire LARP. Warn your players ahead of time if a scene will touch on these motifs, and always allow your players to "fade to black" rather than detailing a difficult scene in-character.

Do not allow others to question a player's right to be an active participant. Players should never be told they aren't an "authentic" gamer simply because their interests lie in costuming or theatrical presentation rather than in-depth rules calculations. That's as ridiculous as throwing someone out of your game simply because she can't afford to wear a suit. Players are attracted to the LARP environment for many different reasons. Encourage everyone to participate, respect the community, and contribute. A hard-core mechanics person might trade her expertise for a few hours of sewing lessons, and a dedicated theatre buff might be able to advise the avid historian on the best way to present her character's archaic foibles. Remember that your players will have a wide range of knowledge, interest, and ability. Be sure that you ask questions, rather than making assumptions about an individual's favorite mode of play.

As noted, **Vampire: The Masquerade** is a game of gothic horror, in a challenging and unfair world. It is a game for mature individuals, touching on extremely difficult themes. We each have personal boundaries and comfort zones, and it is important to ensure that every player – no matter their personal background, ethnicity, sexuality, or culture – feels comfortable and welcome. To this end, Storytellers should always remember that they are the protector of the troupe, and they have a responsibility to be welcoming and conscientious to all players. Offering a safe, open, conversational out-of-character environment for your players will go far toward making a great game.

A Night at the Museum

She wore her old, faded jeans, an oversized sweatshirt from the university, which she managed to squirrel away from her sire, and glasses she no longer needed. Sophie almost felt as though the last three years living in the shadows had never happened. She took the steps slowly, consciously mimicking the slow speed of a human who might tire from the exertion. The last time she had been to the museum alone was the night that she caught her sire's eye. The neonate couldn't help but shiver at that memory.

The Detroit Institute of Art featured neo-Italian Renaissance architecture with Roman arches and large white marble columns, which were illuminated eerily against the night skyline. It was late, but the museum buzzed with activity. This was a playground for minions of academia and the elite who grasped at pretense and culture.

Sophie had spent most of her adult life studying here. She flashed her recently renewed credentials at the security guard, who buzzed her into the main foyer, which led into a byzantine maze of galleries and exhibits. She turned towards the secured door leading to the stacks and the sub-basements and hopefully away from prying eyes.

"Excuse me." The voice was low, gravelly, and far too close for comfort. She slowly pivoted towards the voice until she caught sight of a tall, gaunt man in a crumpled suit walking towards her. His face had sharp, angular features framed by shoulder-length, black hair. She knew him from her release party. It was Darren Lockwood, Detroit's Keeper of Elysium. "I'm the *Guardian* of this sacred place. That area is out of bounds for our kind. Guests are encouraged to remain in the galleries for their private meetings."

"I am Sophie Rourke, *Favored* child of Elder Vivek. I actually work here." She lifted the badge hanging around her neck as evidence. "I'm working on a new study of Vincent van Gogh's famous self-portrait, which could revolutionize how we think of this very important painter. His own paint might have poisoned his blood, contributing to the mental instability that led him to take his own life."

Lockwood leaned close, sniffing her as though he could smell the lie upon her, and then folded his arms across his chest. "I have been charged with a duty and I am always *Triumphant* when I am set to a task. This Elyisum hasn't been broken for a hundred years and will remain so under my care. The Courtesies require that a court officer vouch for your conduct. Your sire is at the salon in the east wing, but we can contact him and get his word in this matter."

If they were outside the Elysium, Sophie knew that she could charm him with nothing but a wink, a smile, and a liberal dose of Entrancement. She'd quickly turn this mighty Gangrel into a simpering puppy. Lorenzo Giovanni warned told her Lockwood traveled deeper into the wildlands that any other vampire dared, and he found something terrible that changed him forever. She could not bully or intimidate this one, but he had a known weakness: a soft heart. "I want this to be a surprise. I want to make him proud that he Embraced me. Is there something else I could do to get permission?"

"If you find another court officer to vouch for you, you may proceed."

Sophie panicked for a moment until she remembered the business card in her bag. She fished through it until she found the card, crumpled and bent. *Darla Wilkerson.*

She dialed the number and waited for a response. "Yes." The voice on the other end responded curtly.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

"This is Sophie."

"I am aware who you are. What do you want?"

Primogen Wilkerson already disliked her, so Sofie knew she needed to take a submissive tone. "I'm trying to get access to the stacks at the museum, but Mr. Lockwood insists that I need your help. I know it is an inconvenience, but I'd appreciate if you could take care of this *trivial* matter, and then we'd be square."

"Put him on the phone."

She passed the cell phone to the Keeper of Elysium. He listened quietly for a few moments and then spoke into the phone. "Very well. By your *Noble* word then."

Lockwood returned the phone, then turned away. "Ms. Rourke, if you violate my trust, there will be punishment."

Sophie placed the cell back to her ear. Primogen Wilkerson spoke without waiting for an acknowledgment. "Whatever you are doing at this moment, don't get caught! I trust our business is concluded."

"Yes. Thank you."

Primogen Wilkerson hung up without further conversation.

Sophie passed her badge over the metal plate and the steel door unlocked. The stacks were virtually empty, save for a lone janitor who slowly finished collecting garbage from the bins and then quickly shuffled into the next section.

Lorenzo Giovanni and Wadjet Abdullah offered her half a million dollars for this simple job. Sophie had the mortal connections to access the target without using powers that would violate Elysium. Theft from humans could be ignored easily, but violating the sanctity of an Elysium carried a death sentence.

She couldn't understand why they would bother for an artifact that clearly was some sort of fraud. The only mystery left was to determine if it was Cal Tech or MIT that arranged it.

Sophie examined the tattered news article once more.

She had quietly checked her sources in Detroit. No one at the university or the museum took this prank seriously. It wasn't even stored in the protected archive. Faux artifacts disappeared all of the time, it was part of the joke.

AP WIRE:

Strange Orb Discovered in Tunisian Ruins

A strange, metallic-looking sphere of unknown origin and purpose has been discovered by archaeologists exploring the Punic ruins of Naro, near the coastal town of Hammam-Lif (حمام الأفلان,) in Tunisia. The sphere was uncovered by a camera-equipped robotic exploration rover on the floor of previously sealed underground chambers in what was believed to be a Phoenician Temple at the thermal springs, about 10 miles southeast of the city of Tunis. The orb is about 8 inches in diameter, made of a silvery metal, covered in golden writing, and is thought to be at least 2,800 years old.

Archaeologists believe the sphere is an offering of some kind, as the temple was used by priests. For now, "no one can establish its function, because it is an unprecedented discovery," said archaeologist Jevel Moghadam in a Tunisian news release, issued by the National Anthropology and History Institute. Archaeologists are taking the sphere to cutting-edge laboratories in America, to perform imaging studies on the sphere, along with other artifacts found in the temple, in an attempt to better understand what roles they played in ancient Phoenician society. While in the U.S., the artifacts will be on display at the Detroit Institute of Art.

She opened the case, puzzled by how anyone could imagine that this smooth metal globe could be anything but modern. She couldn't translate the Sanskrit, but that would be easy enough to fake with modern translation software. Touching the orb brought a tender shock to her fingers. Surprisingly, the

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

metal was warm and soft, as though touching flesh. The strange letters shimmered and shifted to English. Clearly this was some sort of prank. How else could she read it? Yet the words make her blood feel like ice.

Embrace not love, for love in my Embrace shall wither and die.

There was something strange and horrible about this orb. She felt it now, but knew that she couldn't deny the Independent Alliance's demands.

She stashed the orb into her bag as planned. Sophie had intended to read for a while, to allow time for the Keeper to lose interest in her activities, but her skin crawled. Something was wrong, and she wanted to be rid of the orb as quickly as possible. She rushed out of the stacks, loudly pushing open the doors, and then left the lobby, barely concealing her panic. The Keeper watched her with a glare, but did nothing.

Shouldering her bag, she trudged the line between casual walking and jogging until she finally surrendered all pretense and shifted to a hard run in order to reach her Mercedes in the library parking lot two blocks away. She unlocked the trunk with her electronic key and quickly stashed away the bag, but as it opened stifling shadows billowed all around her.

A thick, unnatural fog of liquid shadow engulfed her, consuming all light. She closed her eyes and tried to scream, but darkness muffled the sound. It felt like dying a second time. Tentacles of shadow, as cold as grave, whipped around her, slamming her to the ground.

When she felt warmth once again and the night breeze against her skin, Sophie peeked her eyes open to discover the blessed halogen light of the street lamp flickering above her.

Her bag was gone and with it the orb. What had she done?

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Nine: The Camarilla

"Living openly among mortals has been our ruin!
We violated the spirit of the Sixth Tradition, and we pay for it in blood!
Mortals are too numerous and too jealous of our power. They will try to destroy us as long as they know of us.
It has always been so. We must turn our backs on them. We must hide our faces away from their envious eyes."

— Rafael de Corazon, Toreador elder, Founder of the Camarilla

Through a Glass, Darkly — History of the Camarilla

As the Dark Ages reached their apex, the world was on the edge of ruin. Plague devastated Europe, diminishing the herd and forcing vampires to compete for limited resources. Ancient feuds and grudges reawakened as elders waged shadow wars against their enemies. Few remembered the lesson of Carthage as vampires lived on the edge of society, neither hiding their presence nor taking care to keep watch over their herds.

The nights filled with danger as the Inquisition indiscriminately hunted vampires and publically burned them. Elders sacrificed the lives of their blood-bound childer to the Inquisition, hoping for a chance to escape, but the faithful were relentless. In addition to the mortal threats, the Assamites actively sought elders to diablerize, and the Anarchs allied with them, needing assistance from experienced scouts, advisors, and sorcerers to strengthen their own rebellion. As a result, the Anarch Revolt began doing serious damage to the elders of many clans, freeing their childer and proving themselves a viable threat to even the most entrenched luminaries of the clans.

A single, brilliant idea, proposed by an influential elder coterie in 1435 at a specially-called convocation in Vienna, changed the world forever. This coterie, called the Camarilla, convinced vampire society to modify its millennia-old laws. The often-ignored Caine's Sixth Law, *the Silence of the Blood*, became the First Tradition, known as the Masquerade: *Thou shalt not reveal thy true nature to those not of the Blood. Doing so shall renounce thy claims of Blood.*

The change was met with a good deal of skepticism, as few wanted to cast off their perceived power over the mortals. Over the next couple of decades, the small coterie acquired influence and support from its peers to convince the world that vampires never existed. They encouraged mortals to adapt the scientific method, and slowly vampires became legends and superstitions to frighten children.

The Camarilla even discarded the very word "vampire," preferring the more gentle term "Kindred" to refer to ties of blood among its own kind, from elder to neonate, from sire to childe. They praised the Path of Humanity as the key to salvation, and the old Roads were abandoned. Hiding from mortals required curbing the excesses of the past, surrendering old feuds, and discovering new ways vent the Beast.

The name "Camarilla," initially meaning "little chamber" in Spanish, came to mean a group of courtiers who surround and advise a king. The influential coterie of the same name built a system of influence, prestige, and cronyism into a sect that has since come to dominate the world through the strength of this elegant idea.

As the coterie slowly came into dominance and blossomed into a vampire sect, it became known as the *Ivory Tower*, a euphemism used to describe a world where intellectuals engage in pursuits that are disconnected from the practical concerns of everyday life. Prestige and power in the Camarilla became an end to itself as political subtlety and social maneuvering proved critically important to a vampire's success — and survival.

Victory in the Ivory Tower requires relentless ambition, elegant thinking, and the ability to wear a humane mask while understanding that you are a monster underneath.

The Founding of the Ivory Tower

"In the game of queens and kings, we must sacrifice our compassion on the altar of impregnable certainty. To rule wisely, one must rule utterly. Justice has no mercy."

— Hardestadt, Ventrue elder, Founder of the Camarilla

In 1381, a band of English peasants rebelled against their local lord, sparking a major uprising across England. The loyalist forces of Richard II quickly ended the Peasant's Revolt, but the conflict drew the attention and support of a large number of young and frustrated vampires who sympathized with the downtrodden mortals. This inspiration smoldered for a decade before it sparked the First Anarch Revolt.

In 1394, Ventrue elder Hardestadt and Tremere Councilor Meerlinda called together the most influential elders of Europe to discuss the matter; they proposed a daring plan to create a shadow organization that would control the mortals. A number of potent vampires, including Prince Mithras of London, rejected this suggestion out of hand, not wishing to cede any of their local authority. Other elders relished the plan, but feared taking action while the Inquisition openly hunted them. Thus the proposal was largely forgotten, except by a few ambitious vampires who eventually formed the coterie known as the Camarilla.

A clever group of neonate Tzimisce developed a mystical ritual (later called the *Vaulderie*) that shattered the blood bond through a weaker communal blood bond. Inspired by Tyler's insolence and bolstered by the diablerie of their elders, the rebellious youth, now called *Anarchs*, marched through Europe, laying waste to the work of centuries and claiming the blood of their sires. At the height of the madness, the rebels destroyed the Lasombra Antediluvian and claimed to destroy Tzimisce himself as well. Eager for the opportunity to diablerize European elders, the Assamites joined the fray on the side of the Anarchs.

The fires of the Inquisition continued to burn undead, sending countless swaths of neonates to their deaths as the elders hid from the violence. Many believed that a final war with the mortals was the only option for the survival.

Inspired by the tragedy of the Peasant's Revolt, childer began to plot treason against their sires. A young Brujah named Tyler led a coterie of defiant neonates in the first strike, a siege against Castle Hardestadt, where they killed and diablerized an unknown number of Ventrue elders.

Hounded on all sides by the Anarchs and the Inquisition, Hardestadt called for a second convocation of elders in 1435.

Hardestadt's Secret

The prestige of Ventrue elder Hardestadt helped convince many elders to adopt Rafael De Corazon's radical notion of the Masquerade and to create the Camarilla to enforce it.

Unknown to most vampires, the assault on Castle Hardestadt in 1395 completely succeeded; the Brujah Anarch, Tyler, diablerized the influential Ventrue elder. His eldest childe (Hardestadt the Younger) assumed his sire's identity to create the charade that Tyler's attack failed. Fearful of reprisal from Clan Ventrue, Tyler kept this victory a secret.

For many centuries, only a select group of Ventrue elders knew the secret of Hardestadt the Younger's deception. A decade after the Gangrel abandoned the Camarilla, the noted Gangrel researcher Beckett uncovered this ruse. Fearful of exposure, Hardestadt the Younger hired assassins to silence Beckett — they did not succeed in this task. The Ventrue cancelled the assassination contract a decade later, when Imperator Karsh led the Gangrel back into the Camarilla.

He proposed an arrangement, under which certain vampires would receive authority to cross clan and territorial lines to deal with the issues threatening vampire society as a whole. Petty concerns over local authority once again threatened to kill any progress towards a solution. True to form, most elders offered little more than skepticism and prepared to leave for their own secure havens to wait out the storm in the same manner they had weathered many trials for centuries.

At the end, Rafael de Corazon, then an unimpressive Toreador leveraging his sire's respected name, took the chance to address the elders of the convocation. He recited Caine's Sixth Law. *"Never shall thou reveal thy true nature to those not of the blood. Doing so shall renounce thy claims to my covenant."*

His words were met with stony silence, but de Corazon did not yield the floor even when booed or threatened. He continued to recite the Sixth Law and then railed against the elders for allowing the abandonment of the tradition that kept them all safe. The impassioned speech reached even the most closed minds.

Hardestadt used the opening that de Corazon provided to push through the idea that the Sixth Law, now renamed the Masquerade, needed to be enforced by a new shadow organization.

Within a few decades, these seven Kindred, now known as the Founders, persuaded a substantial collection of elders to join their cause. The Founders needed a unified military force to combat the Anarchs. The elders controlled their own broods, ghouls, and agents, but clearly those resources had previously failed. If they were going to survive, the elders realized that they needed to coordinate their efforts and combine their forces into a cohesive military unit. Later these warriors were nicknamed *Myrmidons* after the soldiers who followed Achilles in the Trojan War.

The Founders jointly commanded the Myrmidons, and much of their ranks were drawn from the Founders' own childer. They were responsible for protecting the Founders whenever they met to discuss their plans and objectives; but more than that, they were regularly dispatched on missions of terror and assassination, targeting the most well-known Anarch leaders. Tyler managed to dodge half a dozen assassination attempts, but her fellow leaders were not so lucky.

Inspired by the success of the Myrmidons, elders organized war coteries across clan lines, gathered from across the known world, bound by a single purpose to stop the Anarchs. Displeased with the disruption of their lines of communication and commerce, the Followers of Set assisted a number of these coteries with supplies, information, and assistance traveling through dangerous lands.

The certainty of the danger finally united the elders in common purpose, and they began to regain ground from their fractious childer. Once the Myrmidons finally discovered the hidden location of the legendary Alamut, the secret fortress of the Assamites, the demise of the Anarch Revolt was all but assured.

By 1493, the leaders of the Anarch Movement were defeated by the power of the Camarilla. The Founders organized a convention to parley with the Anarchs. The Convention of Thorns convened in an abbey in England, and there the Anarchs accepted terms for surrender. The Treaty of Thorns allowed Anarchs to come into the fold of the Camarilla as prodigal childer under the auspices of a subordinate organization within the Ivory Tower.

The Assamites surrendered rather than face extinction. The Founders were less kind to the Assamites and punished them with terms set in the Treaty of Tyre, which formally limited their movements and practices. In a bid to prove their loyalty to the Camarilla, the Tremere cast a mighty curse upon the Assamites that prevented them from gaining sustenance – or the benefits of diablerie – from drinking vampire blood.

This powerful gesture was necessary for the Tremere to overcome the other vampires' mistrust and concerns. The arguments against acceptance of the Tremere were numerous, including the fact that siding with the Tremere would cause the Tzimisce to forever be enemies of the Camarilla. Fighting alongside the Warlocks during the Anarch Revolt was seen as a necessity, but many were leery of a formal alliance with the Usurpers as the other clans privately remembered Clan Tremere's relentless pogrom

The Founders of the Camarilla

Adana de Sforza (Brujah)
Milov Petrenkov (Gangrel)
Camilla Banes (Malkavian)
Josef von Bauren (Nosferatu)
Rafael de Corazon (Toreador)
Mistress Fanchon (Tremere)
Hardestadt (Ventrue)

against the Salubri. Some blamed the Warlocks for the plague that followed the slaughter of the gentle healers.

The Tremere, however, were prepared for these objections; they had planned for this moment for centuries. They had slowly built a network of boons, allies, and favors, especially with the Ventrue and Toreador. A number of Tremere had been vital to arranging safe passage for the elders to Vienna. In the end, practicality won — it was simply too convenient to have the Warlocks and their impressive mastery of Thaumaturgy as allies. However, the Camarilla insisted upon certain concessions in order to formally accept the alliance. Clan Tremere was forced to sign an oath stating that it would release all slave Gargoyles, destroy the ritual used to create them, and never attempt to make more. Thus, the Tremere become the seventh pillar of the Camarilla.

With this consolidation of power, the Camarilla came into prominence as the guiding force of vampire society. However, the Convention of Thorns did not completely resolve the Anarch problem. An extremist faction that reveled in the violence and developed a taste for diablerie refused to return to the same stifling society that caused them to rebel in the first place. These miscreants rejected the purported peace and fled to Scandinavia to nurse their wounds and grudges. When they re-emerged from their self-imposed exile, they reformed into the sect that would become the Camarilla's staunchest and most bloody opposition: the Sabbat.

A Gilded Cage: The Normalization of Kindred Society

Victory in the Anarch Revolt brought a good deal of prestige to the nascent Camarilla. The Founders pressed their advantage by encouraging the adoption of their version of the Traditions, with the long-ignored Masquerade as the centerpiece of their structure. Motivated by the Inquisition and trepidation about the power of the Camarilla, vampire society followed the Founders' lead. Vampires would no longer openly lord their power over mortals. Instead, the Kindred would act from the shadows, enforcing the Traditions and protecting themselves from the fires of mortal wrath with a charade that would come to span the globe.

The world had changed during the Anarch Revolt. If vampires wanted to live under the protection of the Masquerade, they had to change as well. Princes still ruled specific domains, but their rule now incorporated a codified set of Traditions, as well as limited oversight from the Camarilla. This encouraged travel as alliances formed across domain and clan lines. A new social order formed based on recognized standing in the Camarilla.

At the Founder's next assembly, the Convention of Thorns, the Master of Ceremonies, Brujah elder Eleanor de Valois, put a forth a motion to determine whether the authority of the Founders and their agents should continue to preside over the Camarilla now that the war was over. The attendees overwhelmingly voted to allow the Founders to continue as the Camarilla's *Justicars* with no higher power mandated to watch over them. The newly created position of Justicar served as the sect's highest authority, and the position was to be reevaluated after a period of 30 years.

The newly elected Justicars rapidly realized that while their sect had come through its ordeals with a newfound strength, the duties required of them as judges, magistrates, and peacekeepers kept them from their true goals of advancing the cause of the Camarilla itself. A special Grand Conclave was called by all seven Justicars in 1504 to address this issue.

Only the Camarilla's elite attended this particular gathering — it was specifically kept secret from those not invited to attend. At this assembly, held in a small town outside Vienna, the Founders explained to the gathered Kindred that they could no longer fulfill the duties required of them as Justicars if they were to successfully lead the Camarilla to its rightful place of dominance.

Seven new Justicars, one of each clan, were chosen by a vote of all those present. The Founders formed a new supervisory council that had the power to overrule the decrees of a Justicar — the *Inner Circle*. Justicars now served a 13-year term, after which they were reviewed, and possibly replaced, via a vote of the Inner Circle. Wisely, the Inner Circle staggered the introduction of new Justicars to ensure that their agents would have the weight of experience to indoctrinate new members.

Some elders present at the conclave objected to so small a faction holding so much power, but the Founders utilized boons and debts to ensure that the vote to modify the Camarilla's structure passed by a reasonable margin.

The Promise

Although the Cappadocian clan remained neutral during the Anarch Revolt, it too was touched by upheaval and rebellion.

With secret assistance from Clan Ventrue, Augustus Giovanni, the head of a merchant family Embraced into the Clan of Death, rose up in treasonous insurrection and diablerized the Cappadocian Antediluvian, remaking the clan in his image. This *coup de famille* did not go unnoticed by the Camarilla as the newly self-styled Clan Giovanni began to wage small-scale wars against Camarilla domains in an attempt to expand its wealth and territory.

Despite the Giovanni's advantages, including Necromancy and ghostly allies, the Camarilla quickly forced the Giovanni to surrender and agree to a treaty of political non-interference. The Camarilla accepted the surrender and sent Rafael de Corazon to negotiate with Claudius Giovanni over terms. Together, they drafted the *Promise*, a document that shaped and regulated all further Giovanni-Camarilla relations for centuries.

War Between the Sects

As the Camarilla grew in power and influence over the world, it became clear to the Inner Circle that their new sect required an internal structure to maintain that influence. At this time, fighting with the emerging Sabbat was limited to minor border skirmishes. The Ventrue and Toreador tightened their influence over their domains, making it almost impossible for Sabbat agents to gain a foothold within their dominions. The Nosferatu and Malkavians quietly monitored enemies of the sect and brought information to Princes during times of need. Clan Tremere wielded its great thaumaturgical might for the benefit of the Ivory Tower, blocking mystical threats. Led by the Brujah and the Gangrel, the military might of the Camarilla was too great for enemies to succeed in an open assault. The Justicar's officers, then known as *Sheriffs*, effectively countered any Sabbat feint or tactical maneuver before it degenerated into open warfare.

Subtler attacks, however, were effective. In September of 1595, the Black Hand staged a *coup d'etat* that nearly slaughtered the entire Inner Circle. Toreador Justicar Jean-Paul Pierre LaMont turned traitor and betrayed the location and the security precautions of the conclave to an enormous Sabbat war pack. Had it succeeded in launching the planned surprise assault, the Sabbat might well have slain the entire Inner Circle in one fell swoop. Sheriff Federico DiPadua noticed a subtle but sudden change in LaMont's behavior, and upon investigation DiPadua discovered the invasion force.

His coterie engaged the enemy while DiPadua himself raced back to the Grand Conclave and warned the assembly. The Justicars, Sheriffs, and even the Inner Circle were forced to battle their way through the Black Hand's soldiers. It is rumored that at least one member of the Inner Circle fell that night. DiPadua was commended by the Inner Circle with the title of Archon, which later became the standard title for all agents of the Justicars.

The elders of the Camarilla were outraged at both the betrayal and the assault on their persons, and they retaliated enthusiastically. Never in all the years since have there been as many Archons in service at any given time as there were Sheriffs in the years between 1595 and the early 1600s.

The New World

Despite placing multiple agents in the Spanish court, the Inner Circle never could determine with any degree of certainty if Lasombra influence played a part in the decision to finance Columbus' voyages. The discovery of the Americas allowed the Sabbat to flee across the ocean in ever-increasing numbers throughout the 17th century. The Justicars and the Inner Circle grew sharply divided over what actions, if any, to take in response. Most Kindred of the time still held an intensely Euro-centric worldview, and many felt that the Sabbat should be permitted, even encouraged, to withdraw to the New World, and good riddance to them.

Conversely, other Kindred recognized that expansion into new territories would provide opportunities for younger vampires without threatening the stability of their elders, and thus lessen the chances that the Camarilla would see a repeat of the Anarch Revolt. Childer and grandchilder of European Princes and Primogen made their way westward, and several Archons went with them as protection and the eyes of the Inner Circle.

The situation in the New World settled into a stalemate. While the Camarilla had interests on both sides of the Thirty Years' War, and may have helped to encourage the French and American Revolutions, there was little movement in the struggle between sects. Allegiances solidified, rhetoric was tossed back and forth, and skirmishes were fought with little effect, but mostly the 17th and 18th centuries were a time of entrenchment and reinforcement for the Camarilla. Burgeoning industrialization moved more and more mortals to the cities and opened new avenues of power; the Camarilla clans were more interested in pursuing that power than fighting off war packs. In addition, after the American Revolution, a number of Anarchs seeking a new start also made their way to the United States, drawn by the mortal ideal of electoral democracy.

The conflict between the Sabbat and the Camarilla reignited during the War of 1812 between the young United States and the British Empire; it concealed an all-out war between the Sabbat and Camarilla for control of the Atlantic seaboard. Flanked by Sabbat territory in Quebec and Florida, the American Camarilla lost the East Coast a city at a time during the next 50 years. The Camarilla managed to retain control of a few key cities after the onslaught, but the fighting in the nighttime streets never truly ended.

The next decisive battle between the Sabbat and Camarilla did not occur until the mid-1800s, as the two sects fought for control of the newly opened frontiers. Both saw opportunities in the wide expanses of land, which provided room to grow and entrench themselves so thoroughly as to be impossible to

dislodge. The Camarilla came extremely close to losing this territory (and, according some scholars, America itself), but several sudden Sabbat losses granted the Camarilla a reprieve, allowing it to force the Sabbat back. Some still claim that only these losses allowed the Camarilla to maintain itself in America; such claims, however, usually bring chilly silences to the rooms in which they are mentioned.

In the early 1900s, the Sabbat exploded into a civil war, and the Camarilla took advantage of this situation to strengthen its foothold in the United States. The New World quickly became divided by the three vampire sects into well into the 20th century.

The 20th Century

The 20th century saw a number of devastating conflicts and changes in the world as mortals adjusted to rapid industrialization, political strife, and social changes. The abdication and assassination of Czar Nicholas II and the rise of Soviet Communism nearly ignited a war between several European Ventrue and Brujah.

World War I damaged Camarilla stability as the worst battles of the conflict occurred in Camarilla-dominated Europe, allowing the Sabbat unprecedented latitude to launch revenge invasions without risking its own territories. Yet, just a decade later, the Sabbat lost the precious few gains they made during the Great Depression's economic devastation. Few of their herds and mortal pawns were of the proper economic demographic to ride out the crisis.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, British colonial expansion claimed a substantial portion of the Indian subcontinent. Many British Kindred followed their herds in search of new territories, but quickly discovered that the Ravnos, a clan previously believed to be homeless and nomadic, already claimed much of the land. The battles over Indian territory claimed the lives of important elders, bringing tensions to a new high. Events elsewhere in the world prevented the Camarilla from giving its full attention to India, and local elders quickly realized that they couldn't win a war. As a result, both sides agreed to a mutually beneficial peace.

World War II tested the Masquerade's limits. Initially, a number of European elders, particularly from the Ventrue, Toreador, and Tremere clans, supported the Axis powers, using them as a firewall to protect themselves against a second Sabbat invasion. However, once the discovery of the concentration camps leaked, many Kindred opposed the Nazis with all the might and influence they could muster.

The Inner Circle refused to pick sides in this mortal conflict. The Justicars were sharply divided between supporting the greater good for the Camarilla or the mortal populace of the world. As a result, they supported, thwarted, or attempted to manipulate Hitler's war machine according to their individual ambitions and morals. However, it eventually became blatantly apparent to all but the most deluded Kindred that Adolph Hitler was a danger to the world. Still, the war and the Holocaust created rifts between many Camarilla clans and Kindred, and as long as the war raged, it seemed as though those wounds would never heal.

This situation changed quickly, however. Fear and terror pushed political rifts into the past when the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The mortals now possessed the ability to destroy an entire city, perhaps the world, in the blink of an eye. Not since the nights of the Inquisition had there been so great an argument for the preservation of the Masquerade.

The Red Star

"I might have expected this from a whelp, but not from you, Tanner — to bring me here with a small army of Gangrel to destroy a lone Toreador."

— Xavier de Calais, Former Gangrel Justicar

In July 1999, a Red Star shone in the sky, signaling a series of changes that became known as the *Week of Nightmares*.

The Mystery of Milov Petrenkov

Gangrel Founder of the Camarilla, Milov Petrenkov, signed the Convention of Thorns and inducted Clan Gangrel into the Camarilla in 1493. He served boldly for hundreds of years and then disappeared from sight shortly after World War II. Some believe that Petrenkov fell into torpor in the wilds of Africa. Others speculate that he might have run afoul of the Laibon. The lack of his presence in the Inner Circle allowed Xavier to pull off the impossible and lead the Gangrel out of the Ivory Tower. Now that the Wanderers have returned to the Camarilla, could the return of Milov Petrenkov be far behind?

The Sabbat saw this event as a holy revelation and started an immediate crusade. They Embraced massive quantities of mortals, driving them towards the Camarilla in savage waves. The Sword of Caine seized the cities of Atlanta and Washington, D.C. in a bloody assault. The war between the sects reignited, sparking skirmishes across Europe and the Americas.

During these battles, the Gangrel Justicar, Xavier de Calais, discovered a frightening creature beneath New York City, which he believed was inarguably a clear sign of an awakening Antediluvian. Xavier returned from the battlefield to speak with the Camarilla's Inner Circle, but failed to convince them that the rising of the Antediluvians posed a danger to the sect. Angered by what he saw as a lack of pragmatism against a threat to his clan and the world, Xavier resigned from his post as Justicar, abandoning the Camarilla. Furious over the seemingly pointless sacrifice of their clanmates, a majority of the Gangrel followed, declaring themselves independent and owing no further allegiance to the Camarilla.

After the star appeared, more and more Caitiff began to surface across the world. This proliferation of thin-blooded vampires greatly damaged the Masquerade, and the Camarilla tightened its security sharply, trying desperately to stem the tide. These security measures included the eradication of unclaimed Caitiff; many sect elders deliberately turned a blind eye to this pogrom.

Exodus of the Schismatics

"From meditation, comes understanding.
In stillness, there is a touch of death. Remember, young one:
silence can be a source of great strength."

— Tegyrius, Assamite Justicar

The Children of Haqim quietly withdrew from vampire society after the humiliation of the Treaty of Tyre. They discreetly served Princes around the world as assassins in exchange for blood tithes, which were used by the Amr in order to research ways of breaking the Tremere curse. The arrival of the Red Star stirred an ancient Methuselah named ur-Shulgi, who had slumbered for almost 2,000 years deep in the bowels of Alamut. Known as the Eagle, ur-Shulgi claimed the Obsidian Throne and then immediately broke the Tremere curse on his clanmates, allowing them to freely diablerize other vampires once more.

As the new Eldest of Alamut, ur-Shulgi demanded the clan return to its ancient ways – practices and beliefs no longer followed by modern Assamites – and forbid the worship of Allah. The resulting internal schism broke the clan in two. Sensing his sire posed terrible danger, Al-Ashrad, the Amr of the Sorcerers, fled Alamut with a splinter faction composed mostly of vampires of the Vizier caste. They petitioned the Camarilla for membership, and were eventually accepted as a pillar clan of the Camarilla. Tegyrius, an ancient legal expert said to have marched with Alexander the Great, became the Assamite Justicar.

The Nights of Turmoil

"The world's turning to shit, but we've got a job to do."

— Theo Bell, Brujah Justicar

Fearful of the Red Star's significance, many vampires sought knowledge of Gehenna and ways of mystically protecting themselves as they readied for the End Times. The Camarilla tried to ignore the *Nights of Turmoil*, killing anyone who spread information about the Red Star. After the Gangrel abandoned the sect, the Inner Circle was forced to tighten its hold over princedoms and domains, fearing that other clans might follow. Desperation led some Kindred to make literal deals with devils, accepting infernal pacts.

A small group of vampires, known as the Josian Archons, were commanded by the Inner Circle to take charge of investigations into Gehenna and to root out infernal corruption within the Camarilla. The Kindred population largely ignored the Josians until Tegyrius's justiciarial appointment. Under his influence, the Josians acquired significant political backing and were able to rout the spread of infernalism in the Camarilla.

Theo Bell, Brujah Justicar

Known for his anti-establishment views about the Camarilla, it was a great surprise to Kindred society that Theo Bell accepted the position of Brujah Justicar after hunters defeated entire cities of Sabbat and his former employer. Many believe that Bell feared the Inner Circle would overreact in violence directed toward the mortal population, especially after the Inner Circle created the position of Imperator. Others speculate that Bell's newfound respect for the Camarilla has something to do with his sire, Don Cerro, and the growing conflict between the Brujah and the Ventrue.

The Sabbat's crusade against the Camarilla lost steam as the Cainites lost faith in the Red Star and spread their resources too thin. A well-organized group of mortal hunters lashed out at the Sabbat, devastating populations in Detroit, Puerto Rico, and Manila. Mortal hunters and covert government agencies tracked down entire dioceses of Sabbat and destroyed them.

The Camarilla, which had more success avoiding the attention of mortal hunters due to its Tradition of Masquerade, avoided the bulk of these hunter assaults. However, tragedy struck in 2010 when often-unsubtle Brujah Justicar Jaroslav Pasek died in a daylight raid at the hands of a vicious gang of hunters, which allegedly wielded Truth Faith against him. Pasek's replacement, the legendary Archon Theo Bell, rallied the Camarilla and kept further losses to a minimum.

The Masquerade was a hair's breadth from failing and blame fell upon the clanless. Swaths of Caitiff were destroyed simply for the crime of lacking a clan. Archons and Princes alike enthusiastically carried out Camarilla pogroms to quell their citizens' fears. The clamor for eradication has since cooled, but most Caitiff keep their nature a secret, fearing death or worse if they should be found out.

The Edict of Succession

After the Nights of Turmoil, the Camarilla realized that to ensure the sect's longevity, it would need to find a way to slow the rise of Caitiff and halt the overpopulation of vampires in non-Camarilla areas. Mortal hunters were on the rise, and cities with a significant number of vampires risked investigation and eradication by these agencies. In 2007, the Edict of Succession was issued by Anastasz Di Zagreb, Tremere Justicar, and ratified by four additional Justicars: Cock Robin of the Nosferatu, Guil of the Toreador, Lucinde of the Ventrue, and Pascek of the Brujah.

The announcement was met with both trepidation and celebration. The edict establishes a new political status quo, placing power into the hands of those who hold domain — whether they are Anarch or wholly Camarilla. So long as an Anarch domain places a limit on the Embrace, its leaders are granted authority to rule as they see fit, and their territory is secure from Camarilla incursion. To accept protection under the Edict is to acknowledge Anarch ties to the Camarilla. Legally, the Edict of Succession merely defines the relationship between the two sects as established in the Treaty of Thorns. The edict implies that the Second Tradition is sacrosanct, and some argue that therefore it may eventually

— The Words of Their Graces —

The Justicars are judges of all, Camarilla and Anarch, for as writ in the Convention of Thorns, the Tower is one and the same. As a sect, the Camarilla upholds Six Traditions, though Anarchs are bound to only one. Yet in these troubled times, the burden of population endangers us all.

The Second Tradition clearly states: "Thy domain is thine own concern. All others owe thee respect while in it. None may challenge thy word while in thy domain." The Justicars recognize that, while Anarchs do not espouse the language of polite society or refer to themselves as Princes, they clearly hold praxis over domains; as Anarchs are Camarilla citizens, defacto, those domains are Camarilla. Therefore, we hereby extend the protection of the Second Tradition to Anarch domains, so long as those territories do not jeopardize the survival of us all.

With this in mind, the following edict is proclaimed:

Any Anarch domain at peace with the Justicars, and not in open rebellion, nor engaging in defiance against them, shall be respected so long as its citizens restrict the occasion of Embrace to no more than three in the years between each Conclave. Those territories which defy this edict shall no longer have the protection of the Second, and Their Graces shall support a return of those domains to a more responsible praxis.

The Curious Case of Prince Tara and the Domain of San Diego

Notorious Anarch Tara ventured to California at the start of the Second Anarch Revolt, seeking an opportunity to gain power. Her brood's support was a major factor in the defeat of Don Sebastian and his alliance. When the Anarchs needed someone to lead the fight in San Diego, Tara immediately volunteered.

Once there, Tara discovered that the Prince of San Diego had been killed. Quickly, she declared herself Baron of San Diego. Over time, a rival gang of Anarchs ousted her, forcing her to flee the city. Tara waited until her enemies had been weakened by fighting the Sabbat and then returned with a force of her own. Once she had secured the city, she formally surrendered her Anarch station and pledged loyalty to the Camarilla in order to gain support for her claim on the city. Very few San Diego vampires challenged her, as they were tired of the fighting within the domain. They hoped the Camarilla would bring peace and order to the domain which had for so long seen only war.

apply to the Giovanni, Followers of Set, or any other group not actively involved in warfare against the Camarilla (i.e, not the Sabbat). The Justicars have not made any clarification or proclamation on that minute issue of law.

A number of elders and Princes view this as a victory, both strengthening the Second Tradition and bringing the Anarchs deeper into the fold. The prohibition against widespread Embrace benefits the Camarilla in three ways. First, it prohibits the creation of childer which, as they are Embraced by thin-blooded Anarchs, are likely to be Caitiff. Second, it keeps the total number of Anarchs from growing too rapidly. Lastly, it prevents general overpopulation, thus helping to keep vampires as a whole hidden from hunter surveillance.

Some warhawks within the Camarilla seethe at the idea of being unable to reclaim Anarch cities through force of arms. However, the politically astute quickly realized that praxis seizure was still possible, similar to a weak Prince falling to a stronger successor; the Edict simply means that the eager interloper must be a bit more politically cautious. Further, Anarch domains that grow to enjoy the protection of the Second Tradition (while more-or-less upholding the Third) may grow complacent or even find themselves enjoying the benefits of a secure domain. Some of these territories may even convert to the Camarilla, finding the other Traditions no longer cause as much affront.

Rise of the Imperator

During the Nights of Turmoil, the Inner Circle created a new position – *Imperator* – responsible for protecting the sect from mortals and leading the sect's war against the Sabbat. A number of potent vampires jockeyed for the position from across the world.

Clan Brujah proposed a surprising candidate. Germaine, a notorious Anarch criminal on the Red List, sought clemency

Love and Revolution: Germaine and the Red List

As a neonate, Germaine seduced the Toreador Countess d' Adhemar, a childe of Justicar Guil, and together, they filtered information back to his Anarch allies to keep the Brujah one step ahead of the Toreador. The ploy worked, and the French revolutionaries were able to capture the king and queen before they could escape Paris. The Toreador deeply felt the defeat, and they knew that someone within the clan had betrayed them. Countess d'Adhemar used all her cunning to hide her guilt during the ensuing investigation. In the end, the Toreador blamed Germaine, and in their fury, they posted Trophy.

Madame Guil has done little to track down Germaine. The Sabbat repeatedly attempted to recruit him. Countess d'Adhemar also ruthlessly seeks to destroy Germaine and cover up her involvement in the revolution more than 200 years ago.

and removal from the roster of *Anathema*. As an Anarch returned to the fold, Germaine's return would have been a prize coup for the Brujah and the Camarilla. Surprisingly, Justicar Guil did not object to his nomination, despite some quiet grumbling from the Toreador.

Karsh, then the Warlord, made a grim bid on the last night to claim the title of Imperator. He faced a stalemate. Many Kindred were still angry that the Gangrel abandoned the Camarilla. Karsh promised that one night soon the Gangrel would seek to return to the fold. The assembly, especially the Assamite Justicar Tegyrius, protested Karsh's proposal until a number of Ventrue elders turned their support to Karsh, revealing a verified letter of support from Hardestadt himself.

Despite the Brujah's determination to assist one of their own who had been unfairly treated by the Camarilla, the Inner Circle named Karsh the Imperator, granting him significant authority to raise a military for the sect's protection. This political maneuver led to yet another period of tension between the Ventrue and Brujah.

The Imperator's first action was to convince a Nosferatu Prince, Stanford Warwick, to break with the Nosferatu tradition of solidarity and discover the Sabbat's plans. Warwick decided to sell out his *antitribu* brethren in order to save a city filled with Camarilla vampires. The Inner Circle used Warwick's information to defend Cleveland and eradicate a number of Sabbat packs, which would have fed dangerously on the populace.The Sword of Caine was forced to fall back.

Following that victory, the Camarilla pushed south to retake Atlanta and western Georgia, holding off Sabbat packs in Birmingham and Montgomery. A demilitarized zone formed along the Alabama border, which still stands in modern nights.

The Inner Circle's Decrees

In 2011, the Inner Circle held its 41st official meeting in Venice, as per the schedule established when the sect was founded (every 13 years). That meeting resulted in several significant changes. First, in return for his loyalty to the sect during his service to Karsh, Stanford Warwick accepted appointment to become the Nosferatu Justicar. Many Camarilla Nosferatu quietly curse him for his treason to their clan, but there is little they can do to punish the ambitious vampire without risking terrible consequences.

Second, the Inner Circle quietly "clarified" its official position on the Antediluvians and encouraged their operatives to spread this new propaganda throughout the Ivory Tower. Rather than claiming these creatures don't exist, the sect now asserts that the progenitors are loving fathers and mothers, and the ancient tales exaggerate their dangerous hunger.

The Inner Circle claimed Bangladesh was destroyed because Ravnos was attacked, not because he lusted after the blood of his childer. However, the sect still considers the Book of Nod heresy, a superstitious invention of myth perpetuated by the Sabbat. All those found with such knowledge are condemned as Sabbat sympathizers, traitors to the Camarilla. All but the very youngest Kindred are very much aware that, until recently, the "party line" on the Antediluvians was something very different than the views now stated openly in Elysium by elders who calmly swore the opposite just a few years ago. Few are foolish enough to point out this inconvenient truth.

The Return of the Prodigal Clan

"We will prove, with our hearts and our blood,
that we can once again be leaders of the Ivory Tower."

—Darren Lockwood,
Gangrel Keeper of Elysium, Detroit

During their time in self-exile, the Gangrel formed a tenuous alliance with the Tremere. During the Nights of Turmoil, the Tremere spoke vociferously against excluding the Gangrel and against the Inner Circle's stance that Antediluvians did not exist, citing their own experiences with the purported infernalist Saulot during the Dark Ages.

The Sabbat turned their attention towards the isolated Gangrel once they were done with the Followers of Set and the Giovanni, thinking that they could press-gang the

Current Justicars

Anastaz di Zagreb (Tremere) — Lucinde (Ventrue) — Madame Guil (Toreador)

Tegyrius (Assamite) — Theo Bell (Brujah) — Stanford Warwick (Nosferatu)

Dona Manuela Bolívar, La Llorona (Malkavian)

entire clan into joining the Sword of Caine. Clan Tremere saw a chance to make an ally out of a former enemy and provided the Gangrel with crucial assistance against the Sabbat, which allowed the Wanderers to escape.

Later, Clan Tremere convinced the elders of the Gangrel to return to the Ivory Tower and renew the ties of loyalty. It was clear to the Gangrel that the Sabbat would not leave them in peace to seek out their own ways. In 2011, the Inner Circle accepted the Gangrel back into the Camarilla, although the clan was denied the special graces and laurels offered to the pillar clans.

The tense alliance continues even after Clan Gangrel's return; the clan of Wanderers does not forget a debt. Although they have been welcomed back into the Camarilla, the Gangrel are still the black sheep of the sect, a constant reminder of the Inner Circle's failure to face the threat that nearly destroyed them all. The Inner Circle has not yet appointed a Gangrel Justicar, and it is rumored that it will be some time before the Gangrel are considered a pillar of the Camarilla once more.

Imperator Karsh speaks for the Gangrel to the Inner Circle when it is required, but the details of said conversations are unknown. Few have heard from the Inner Circle in several decades, leading many to wonder who is directing the destiny of the Camarilla. The Imperator continues to maintain his troops, calling them by the ancient title Myrmidon, claiming that they are needed to face numerous dangers still present to the sect.

Rumors abound that Karsh intends to seize control of the sect, replacing the Inner Circle with a more militant leadership.

Breaking of the Promise

In 2010, Clan Giovanni sent a private declaration to the Inner Circle, stating its intention to break the Promise. They claimed that their clan needed to fully engage with Kindred society in order to survive after repeated Sabbat attacks on the clan's holdings.

The perceived impudence incensed the Camarilla, which saw this declaration as a challenge to its power and authority over mortal affairs and the Masquerade. A small faction among the Ventrue, led by Purissimma Geiss, argued in favor of an alliance with the Necromancers. The Tremere and Brujah found common ground on this matter and sternly rejected any such indications. Clan Tremere did not want another clan with mastery of blood magic to swell the ranks of the Camarilla and threaten its monopoly. The Brujah recently lost several of its own interests to the Giovanni, especially in Las Vegas, and were in no mood to support the Ventrue or their allies.

The Camarilla threatened a second war with the Giovanni until a number of Followers of Set used an untold number of centuries-old boons from dozens of highly ranked members of the Camarilla, including the Inner Circle itself.

As a result, the Ivory Tower quietly capitulated, announcing that Clan Giovanni was released from the Promise, but that they were barred from membership in the Camarilla. The Giovanni seemed quite content with that limitation, as long as they were allowed to conduct business in the open without harassment.

The announcement of the new Independent Alliance founded in Las Vegas was met with cold silence from the Camarilla. Historians remember the ancient spice trade between Venice and Egypt, and find it rather natural that these two clans should find common ground. Many elders believe that these two notorious clans are far too untrustworthy to keep to such an agreement. They anticipate that the severing of the alliance will leave both groups bitter rivals and provide future opportunities in the Jyhad.

Dona Manuela Bolívar, Malkavian Justicar

Allegedly, Dona Manuela Bolívar is a young elder born on the shores of Venezuela. Some believe that she is related to the legendary revolutionary Doña Manuela Sáenz. Out of respect, members of the Camarilla refer to her as "Libertadora del Libertador" or *the Liberator of the Liberators,* for driving the Sabbat out of Camarilla territory. Bolívar is known to be soft-spoken and genteel, but frighteningly insightful. It was quite the surprise when captured Sabbat infiltrators reacted with a hitherto-unknown terror at her presence. Some questioned why these monsters link the Malkavian Justicar to the legend of La Llorona, or the Weeping Woman. Some have speculated that Bolívar is much older than the Camarilla has been led to believe and might have been the inspiration for the Aztec goddess Xochiquetzal.

Victory for the Camarilla in South America

The Sabbat and the Camarilla bitterly contested for control of South America for the entirety of 20th century. The sects engaged in fierce skirmishes using guerilla tactics. This provided a critical opening; in a single day, an organized cabal of hunters, burning with righteous faith, struck down a number of the packs in Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, leaving an opening for the Ivory Tower to claim dominion over these lands.

The tattered remains of the once-mighty Sabbat were driven into exile rather than face the new Malkavian Justicar, Dona Manuela Bolívar. Captured Sabbat infiltrators, fearful of speaking her real name, would only tremble at the thought of her and whisper the name "La Llorona" ("the Weeping Woman").

Led by Alexandria, Prince of Buenos Aires, the Camarilla subtly influenced a rapid modernization project in many of the cities, stimulating the economy by leveraging the rich natural resources and funneling the profits into securing the countries for the Ivory Tower. It is rumored that the next Grand Conclave will be hosted in South America.

Global Authority: The Architecture of the Ivory Tower

"A king is born, lives, rules, and dies.
Only Kindred dominion survives the passage of time."

— Lucinde, Ventrue Justicar

The Camarilla is, theoretically, a federation of domains and the Princes that rule them. In truth, however, there is a constant struggle between the local authority of Princes and the global purview of Justicars to protect the Masquerade and the sect.

The Camarilla was initially a loose association of domains, coteries, and important Kindred in an alliance based on enlightened self-interest. The vigilance and labor required to maintain the Masquerade and defend the Ivory Tower from external threats gradually forced the creation of a global political structure to deal with issues too large for a single domain to handle. While the Ivory Tower claims the entire world under its dominion, there are swaths of the world where the Sabbat or other vampires hold near-absolute sway.

Global organization between the Camarilla's various domains encourages travel and ties cities together with boons and common history, thus decreasing the danger shared by everyone in the Ivory Tower.

Inner Circle

The Inner Circle is the secretive cabal, compromised of a single member of every pillar clan, that controls the Ivory Tower. It is the archetypical secret society, inspiring legends for countless conspiracy theorists' nightmares, exerting its will subtly, with frightening effectiveness. Few know the identities of the current membership of the Inner Circle, but none can deny that these Kindred are the true political hub around which the Camarilla revolves. None are certain exactly how the members of the Inner Circle achieve their position, except simply by surviving to be a ripe old age and ascending to monstrous power.

Every 13 years, these secret masters meet in Vienna to discuss potential threats to the Camarilla and the sect's future. Many believe that the Inner Circle takes an active hand in guiding the Ivory Tower, directing the Justicars as necessary and shifting the direction of the sect. Those who have aroused the Inner Circle's collective anger have usually done so in spectacular fashion, resulting in the greatest punishment that can be levied: a place on the Red List, essentially guaranteeing the criminal an eternity-long blood hunt.

Members of the Inner Circle can expend their status namelessly, using the Justicars as their mouthpieces for the expenditure. Often when they do this, they choose to expend the status *Ominous*, which is only possessed by the Inner Circle, in order to allow the politically savvy to understand where the command originated.

The Inner Circle's authority includes:

- Appointing or removing Justicars
- Determining the Ivory Tower's political and social direction
- Ruling upon Camarilla-wide issues and doctrine
- Issuing edicts to alter the fundamental doctrine, law, or custom of the sect
- Defining methods of judgment and punishment
- Naming individuals to the Red List
- Appointing or removing the Imperator
- Holding immunity from the authority of any lesser sect office
- Appointing Alastors to the sect
- Holding global status jurisdiction

Myrmidions

According to the Iliad, Myrmidions were legendary warriors commanded by the infamous demigod Achilles. The Founders of the Camarilla borrowed this mighty name for their own military commanders during the Anarch Revolt, until the name Archon came into common service. The Imperator reclaimed this name for the warriors who serve under his banner.

If Archons are the Sheriffs of the Justicars, then the Myrmidions are the Scourges of the Imperator. Many of the Myrmidions are former criminals who were pressed into service to earn pardons. While their slates have been technically washed clean, many elders remember the dark crimes committed by these former miscreants and simply prefer them to be out in the wilds fighting for the Camarilla rather than attending court or visiting Elysium.

Myrmidions possess all of the authority of Archons, but instead of the abiding status *Noble*, they possess *Sanctioned*. (See Archons, page 373.)

A member of the Inner Circle gains the abiding status traits *Ascendant*, *Authority*, *Commander*, and *Ominous* during her tenure in office. *Ominous* is an NPC-only abiding status trait granting the highest level of command; nearly everything that is allowable falls within its capacity. When a member of the Inner Circle expends a status to give an offending Kindred the negative status *Disgraced* or *Forsaken*, this status can only be removed by another member of the Inner Circle.

Imperator

Faced with increasing threats from the Sabbat, hunters wielding True Faith, and their own internal strife, the Camarilla's Inner Circle recently decided to appoint a military commander to lead the militia of the Camarilla. This commander is known as the Imperator.

The Imperator acts as the voice of the Inner Circle on matters of war, coordinating efforts between Princes and the Justicars via his agents, known as the Myrmidons. The office has the authority to grant clemency, for virtually all crimes, to warriors who fight on behalf of the Imperator. A number of Harpies disapprove of this new policy, claiming that it distorts the order of society and weakens the power of the Princes. Few have refused to acknowledge the Imperator's authority. The Imperator can only be removed from office by the will of the Inner Circle and is immune from prosecution from any lesser Camarilla office.

The Imperator's authority includes:

- Raising and coordinating a militia to deal with a specific threat or enemy, when sanctioned by the Inner Circle
- Granting clemency, even to those blood hunted or on the Red List, to those who fight on behalf of the Imperator
- Appointing Myrmidions
- Issuing edicts from the Inner Circle changing global policy of the sect, solely for the purpose of protection
- Calling and enforcing a global blood hunt on a sect member who refuses to lend aid
- Holding immunity from the authority of any lesser sect office
- Holding global status jurisdiction

The Imperator gains the abiding status traits *Ascendant*, *Authority*, and *Commander* during his tenure in office. When

A Potential Crack in the Ivory Tower

Some believe that the Imperator is a direct threat to the Inner Circle, and that he is raising an army to seize complete control of the Camarilla. Thus far, political movements have been subtle, but surprisingly Imperator Karsh has received a good deal of support from powerful Princes angry at the Justicars' slow power grab and political machinations to weaken the Princes' position.

the Imperator expends a status to give an offending Kindred the negative status *Disgraced* or *Forsaken*, this status can only be removed by the Inner Circle, or by a Justicar during a Judicial Conclave of the sect.

Justicars

Elected by the Inner Circle to 13-year terms, the Justicars are the global Camarilla authorities empowered to act as judge, jury, and executioner. Each of the pillar clans of the Ivory Tower seats a single Justicar. Justicars enjoy immense power over Kindred society and the Camarilla. The greatest authority that a Justicar possesses is the power to issue an edict, a formal judicial review that clarifies how a Tradition shall henceforth be interpreted or introduces a new lesser law of the Camarilla.

These dangerous vampires serve not only as grim judges and agents of the Inner Circle, but also as leaders and protectors of society, encouraging social discourse and alliances within the sect. They sometimes call and manage conclaves for the purpose of encouraging Camarilla Kindred to host salons, creating a place for chance meetings that might otherwise never occur. A right or wrong word from a Justicar at the proper moment can be better coin than gold or status. Justicars are regarded with awe and fear. No Kindred dares to refuse them, even if it aids in that vampire's own destruction. The Justicars stride the Camarilla like colossi, and the shadow they cast is long indeed.

Empowered by the Inner Circle, the Justicars have the ability to ensure that an insane or criminally despotic Prince is formally removed from power before she does too much damage to the Traditions, or turns the tide of battle against the Camarilla. A Justicar can automatically strip a Prince of all abiding status traits related to that office. In addition, a Justicar can announce a global blood hunt upon criminals of the Camarilla. Such a global blood hunt can only be removed by sanction of the Inner Circle. Justicars can also propose new additions to the Red List to the Inner Circle and offer bounties on behalf of their clans.

A Justicar welds great power within the Camarilla during the term of her office, but she must leverage it carefully, lest those she wronged seek revenge once she is released from service. Rarely will a Justicar involve herself in domain affairs until the problem is so great that the Masquerade is truly in danger. If a domain's problems spill out beyond its borders to endanger other domains, an Archon may be sent to investigate and resolve the matter.

Justicars can be formally removed from office by the will of the Inner Circle; they are immune from prosecution from any lesser Camarilla office. Should a Justicar prove to be too autocratic or incompetent, a clever opponent may humiliate her via a Motion to Censure at a Judicial or Grand Conclave. A Justicar who has lost the favor of the assembly, despite her considerable political advantages, is considered by the Inner Circle to be too weak to be a viable officer; they are usually discharged. Such an event is rare; it has only occurred twice in the history of the Camarilla, most recently to Brujah Justicar Pascek shortly before his murder at the hands of hunters in 2010.

A Justicar's authority includes:

- Calling a Global, Judicial or Regional Conclave
- Issuing a writ to require the presence of any *Accepted* sect member
- Issuing an edict to alter the laws of the sect
- Removing the praxis of a Prince, stripping her abiding status
- Issuing blood hunts on criminals and enemies of the sect
- Holding immunity from prosecution from any lesser sect office
- Appointing Archons into her service
- Appointing the host of a Conclave to be *Primus Inter Pares*
- Holding global status jurisdiction

Edicts of the Justicars

The Traditions are the source of all authority in the Camarilla. Princes have the right to enforce the Traditions locally, but it is within the authority of the Justicars to review and interpret the Traditions on a global scale. These edicts often signal an important change in Camarilla policy. For example, the Edict of Succession (see page 366) heralded a new political conception of what it meant to hold praxis over a domain and a willingness of the Camarilla to include independent and Anarch domains under its umbrella. An edict is always vetted and approved by three or more Justicars before being announced at a Judicial Conclave.

A Justicar gains the abiding status traits *Ascendant*, *Authority*, and *Commander* during her tenure in office. When a Justicar brands an offending Kindred with the negative status *Disgraced* or *Forsaken*, this status can only be removed by the Inner Circle, the Imperator, or by a Justicar during a Judicial Conclave of the sect.

Archons

"Sure, the Camarilla is pretty fucking far from perfect, but it's the only way to keep a society of supernatural apex predators from tearing itself apart. That's why I'm willing to risk the Final Death to keep it going."

— Jessica Kesch, Malkavian Archon

Archons are the empowered agents of a Justicar. They serve as the eyes and ears of the Camarilla, representing the first line of the Ivory Tower's global justice. Justicars send their Archons to investigate troubling rumors and discover potential problems before there is a crisis. If an Archon finds only minor trouble, she usually gives the local Prince or Sheriff advice on how to handle the situation and a warning that it had better be cleaned up when she returns. If she finds serious trouble, she takes care of it personally. While Archons may employ ghouls or younger Kindred to handle drudge work, most Archons expect and are expected to be totally self-sufficient, only contacting their patron Justicar when their investigations are complete or to present regular status reports.

An Archon is exempt from prosecution for violating the Fifth and Sixth Traditions in direct service to her Justicar. It is expected that an Archon shall ignore the Tradition of Hospitality if doing so would endanger the completion of her task. Should she find cause, an Archon is allowed to kill with impunity in the name of the Justicar she serves. If she finds exceptional problems, she escalates the situation to her Justicar, possibly to the point of a Judicial Conclave.

Archons are not immune to the requirements of etiquette or the anger of the Harpies. Should an Archon misstep socially or politically, she will punished just like any other officer. Such social punishment implies that the Archon has overstepped her authority. Often, a Prince will punish an Archon to send a message to a meddlesome Justicar whose work clearly impedes upon Prince's prerogatives under the Second Tradition.

An Archon can go for weeks without contacting her employer, especially when operating under cover. This habit may have disastrous results if a Justicar fails to realize that something untoward has happened to her Archon.

An Archon's authority includes:

- Holding exemption from prosecution for violating the Fifth and Sixth Traditions while in service
- Holding immunity from blood hunts other than from Justicars, the Imperator, or the Inner Circle
- Appointing up to two Servires (permanent deputies) into her service
- Holding status jurisdiction directly related to her given task

An Archon gains the abiding status traits *Commander* and *Noble* for her tenure in office.

Josian Archons

The Josians were once an elite taskforce of Archons dedicated to uprooting Gehenna cults, while also secretly investigating discovered lore for any evidence that Gehenna may be a real danger. Once Tegyrius was elevated to the office of Justicar, he sought authority over the Josians from the Inner Circle and was eventually approved. Tegyrius altered the group's original charter and, in addition to their existing duties, he gave them orders to hunt the infernal within the Camarilla, using his authority as Justicar to support their actions.

The Josians are given a wide latitude, and they are trained in traditional Assamite fighting styles, the better to face any Baali and diabolists that might be long-ingrained within the sect. Many ancient vampires, revitalized by Tegyrius's purpose (or compelled by boons to serve him), have joined the Josians. A number of powerful elders have taken a personal interest in the Josians, providing training, mystical aid, and political support. Many of these patrons include Malkavians, Ventrue, and Toreador — the same alliance of clans that fought against the Baali at Carthage.

Alastor

An Alastor is an agent of the Inner Circle charged with hunting down the Anathema: vampires who have been added to the Camarilla's Red List and targeted for destruction by the entire sect. Should a vampire who is not yet an Alastor manage to destroy one of the Anathema, she is automatically press-ganged into service as an Alastor. While the Archons answer directly to the Justicars, the Alastors answer only to the Camarilla's Inner Circle. Any Kindred (even an Alastor) who diablerizes an Anathema takes the victim's place on the Red List. Alastors have a mystical red tattoo (similar in appearance to the Ankh of the Camarilla) placed on their right palm to denote their position.

An Alastor's authority includes:

- Entering any domain in the search for Anathema
- Holding exemption from prosecution for violating the Fifth and Sixth Traditions while hunting Anathema

An Alastor gains the abiding status trait *Commander* during her tenure in office.

Domain Positions: The Foundation of the Camarilla

The backbone of the Camarilla is the strength of domains and the Princes that rule them. The Justicars argue that the Tradition of Masquerade justifies their ever-increasing authority. Princes counter by simply pointing to the Second Tradition: "Thy domain is thine own concern." Advocates for domain-centric politics argue that the Camarilla doesn't have a true centralized government, only an Inner Circle that meets infrequently and a roving enforcement squad of Justicars, many of whom are as hypocritical and corrupt as any other self-interested Kindred.

Princes are considered the true strength of the Camarilla. Most Kindred develop ties of loyalty through lineages or clans, making it difficult to truly impose central authority on the Camarilla's membership. A strong Prince with a good deal of support can hold off a Justicar politically, if she is clever and has gathered a good deal of support. The advancement of technology has allowed the Justicars to keep a watchful eye on the Camarilla and slowly claim political territory traditionally held by Princes.

Over the centuries, the Camarilla has established a standard set of leadership positions used in most domains. Kindred society has come to accept these positions as honorable and necessary to help domains act according to the dictates of the Traditions. These offices offer a structured society a bloodless way for perpetuating the Masquerade, granting power to those who can best promote the way of the Camarilla, and punishing those who work against it.

Prince

"You've been reborn into a sect hundreds of years old, whose leaders convinced the world our existence is a fabrication. Suffice to say, there are some expectations. In exchange for the birthright and education you have already been given, you will adhere to our laws and customs — the Traditions. And should you wish to advance in our society, you will have to impress me."

— Paul Walker, Brujah Elder, Prince of Kenosha

The Prince is the vampire who claims the right to rule over a domain. A Kindred becomes Prince by claiming *praxis*, and, if successful, she has the freedom to do as she wishes within her domain — at least in theory. In modern nights, the title of Prince is synonymous with the Camarilla, but the designation stretches back to the feudal structures of the Dark Ages and is occasionally used by vampires who predate the Camarilla. The title Prince applies to rulers of either gender; despite the title's patrician origins, modern usage of the term owes more to Machiavelli than to royalty.

A Prince keeps the peace and creates local laws known as the *Curiosities*; she also does whatever is required to keep the city orderly and safe from incursion. A Prince wears many hats, including diplomat, commander in chief, lawmaker, patron of the arts, and judge. While her authority derives from the Traditions, her success as a Prince depends as much if not more on her ability to manage a domain full of supernatural nocturnal predators through skillful application of influence, persuasion, personal charisma, and sheer force of will. Some Princes are indeed despotic tyrants, but few can maintain their praxis for long without some talent for able administration.

Historically, the position was claimed by the strongest vampire in a given region, ruling as she wished. Slowly, after the Convention of Thorns, the Camarilla reshaped the modern perception of a Prince, including the addition of an advisory council of Primogen. Over time, certain privileges and responsibilities became attached to the position, either at the whim of the ruler or the demands of the ruled. The position reached its familiar modern form during the Renaissance.

The true capability and powers of a Prince vary from domain to domain. A powerful Prince might elect to micromanage the entire city personally, while a less-capable Prince may be a figurehead for a potent Primogen council. The Camarilla

Hollow Titles and Petty Princes

Small towns or rural areas can only support a handful of Kindred, but a structure is still required to ensure that the business of the Camarilla, especially the Masquerade, is maintained. These thinly populated domains are often led by petty Princes who have the responsibilities of a Prince in a large city without the resources or prestige for the effort. Many times, elders prefer the relative safety of cities and find rural areas both dangerous and boring. Those young vampires who choose to brave small towns occasionally set themselves up in a semi-structured organization, with the "Prince" being the one who has the biggest gun or has earned the most respect. Neonates often refer to these petty Princes as "Prince of the couch," meaning that the entire domain could meet on the Prince's couch. A petty Prince only gains the abiding status traits *Authority* and *Sovereign* during her tenure in office.

has no set policy for succession and will usually recognize the most powerful vampire who wants to claim the title of Prince. A Prince rules absolutely, until she loses power and another takes her place via political maneuver or a bloody *coup d'état*. If a Prince shows herself incapable of maintaining the safety of the city against incursion, she may be forced to abdicate by her citizens or via a Judicial Conclave.

If the Prince suffers the Final Death or is forced from office without a clear successor, the position usually falls to the Seneschal. More than one hapless Prince has "accidently" gone to Final Death, allowing an ambitious Seneschal to ascend to the position.

A Prince's authority includes:

- Interpreting and enforcing the Traditions within the domain
- Acknowledging all Kindred arriving in the domain
- Exiling the undesirable
- Allotting feeding territory to the clans of the domain
- Declaring or revoking Elysium
- Issuing blood hunts on criminals and enemies of the sect
- Holding Right of Destruction in accordance with the Sixth Tradition
- Sanctioning breaches of the Traditions (granting the right to Embrace, and so forth)
- Punishing miscreants for violating Traditions, especially the Masquerade
- Holding status jurisdiction over her domain

A Prince gains the abiding status traits *Authority*, *Commander*, and *Sovereign* during her tenure in office. She can offer the acceptance of *Acknowledged* to any individual within her territory, without expending a status trait.

Seneschal

The term Seneschal once described a role in ancient noble households charged with managing domestic arrangements, overseeing servants, and administrating outlaying provinces. In Camarilla domains, the Seneschal is traditionally the Prince's most trusted assistant, and she speaks for the Prince in her absence. On any given night, the Seneschal must be a capable manager, executive officer, proxy hostess, or any one of a dozen other functions the Prince may require.

A Prince will often direct her Seneschal to screen Kindred who wish an audience, forcing them to convince the Seneschal of the discussion's importance. Unwise Princes may command their Seneschals to perform unpleasant duties; this almost always comes back to haunt them later. Others turn hapless Seneschals into scapegoats during uncomfortable political situations, claiming the Seneschal did not give the Prince accurate, complete, or timely information. Most vampires try to curry favor with the Seneschal, for this august Kindred usually has the ear of the important vampires in the domain. While a Seneschal may choose not to work directly against an offending vampire, a clever one can easily filter the information she puts forth so as to make the object of her ire appear a fool or a threat to the Prince.

Serving as the focus for those who would speak to the Prince allows the Seneschal access to an impressive amount of information, and many manage to keep as well informed as the Harpies. In certain cases, an informal rivalry may develop between the Seneschal and the Harpies to determine who has access to better gossip. Such competition is dangerous

for any Seneschal, for it is easy for other Kindred, from the Keeper of Elysium to the Prince, to perceive her as a rival for power and influence.

The primary advantage to taking this labor-intensive position is that if the Prince dies or is cast out by the Primogen without a clear contender for praxis, the Seneschal becomes the legal Prince in the eyes of the Camarilla.

A Seneschal's authority includes:

- Holding authority to act and speak in the Prince's stead, when the Prince is not in attendance or when the Prince is absent from the domain
- Gaining the ear of the Prince: the Prince cannot refuse to hear a request from the Seneschal. (Whether or not the Prince grants the request is another matter, but she cannot refuse the Seneschal the opportunity to make it.)
- Holding status jurisdiction over her Prince's physical domain

A Seneschal gains the abiding status trait *Noble* during her tenure in office, and she temporarily gains the abiding status *Authority* when at a local gathering, if the Prince is not in attendance.

Primogen

Jürgen von Verden, Prince of Magdeburg, is believed to have coined the term Primogen. He recruited a number of important elders to his Primogeniture Assembly to provide counsel for his war efforts to take the old Kingdom of Transylvania from the Tzimisce. Individual Princes, wanting the support of local elders and other important Kindred, shared their power with these councils. After the Convention of Thorns, it became common for domains to have a Primogen Council to ensure stability. In fact, it became a matter of prestige for a Prince to have important elders on her council as a show of strength.

The Primogens' main authority is to socially monitor, reward, or punish their clanmates within the domain. Primogen carefully watch their peers to ensure against abuse of the office's powers. Primogen who boost the prestige of their clans undeservedly and get caught will certainly receive backlash from the Harpy.

Primogen speak for their clans during Primogen meetings and at formal court. In modern nights, the Primogen Council acts as an advisory council to the Prince. Traditionally, the Primogen Council is drawn from the most influential member of each pillar clan of the Camarilla. Occasionally, a Prince might offer an influential member of a non-pillar clan a place on the council. This is unusual, but is not considered scandalous, if said Primogen is powerful and seen as a benefit to the Ivory Tower. However, should this unusual Primogen fail, the Prince pays the political price in terms of scandal from the Harpies.

The Courtesies of a domain determine exactly how a Primogen is selected. Some domains may have their clans elect their Primogen through democratic vote, while others seem to merely reach a popular consensus amongst the elders of the clan.

The Prince has the right to refuse a Primogen seat to a clan if it lacks sufficient population within the domain, or as punishment for miscreant misbehavior. This is a dangerous political maneuver, as it can lead to grudges and bad blood between the Primogen and the Prince.

Wise Kindred visiting a new city will meet first with the Primogen to learn the local Courtesies before seeking *Acknowledgement,* lest they blunder into a social error.

A Primogen's authority includes:

- Administering punishments or rewards to members of her clan
- Advising and informing the Prince about recent events
- Speaking for the clan at meetings of the Primogen Council
- Allotting feeding territory to the members of her clan, from territory granted to the clan by the Prince
- Holding jurisdiction over members of her clan who have recently visited or dwell within her Prince's domain.

A Primogen gains the abiding status trait *Noble* during her tenure in office.

Gangrel Primogen

Clan Gangrel recently returned to the fold of the Ivory Tower, but a significant number of Princes have not yet forgiven the Outlanders for their betrayal. Many Princes do not allow them a Primogen Council seat.

The Primogen Council

A city requires at least four Primogen to be considered a proper Camarilla domain, or the city is considered a Petty Domain (see Hollow Titles and Petty Princes, page 375), and that city cannot sanction a proper Harpy. A Prince who blatantly appoints excessive Kindred to the Primogen Council discovers that it is actually easier for his enemies to oust him in a bloodless coup. Should a Prince accept more than eight Primogen to her council, her own standing is reduced to a Petty Prince for being unable to rule without an excess of advisors.

Whip

The Primogen Council is usually limited to the single eldest or most influential member of each pillar clan, which limits the council membership to six or seven Kindred in most cases. Nevertheless, many Primogen like to maintain a lieutenant or executive assistant of sorts, as a means of displaying clan unity and to help manage particularly numerous clan populations within a domain. This assistant is often assigned to keep track of tedious details that do not demand the Primogen's complete attention. In Great Britain and the United States, the Primogen have adopted the term *Whip* from their mortal legislatures to describe the Kindred serving under them. The jockeying and maneuvering among these lesser Kindred can be quite intense as the Primogen like to present the position of Whip as a route to prestige and power. Primogen gloss over the fact that there is room for only one Primogen in each clan, and these subservient vampires will only get that post by leaving for another domain or over the dead body of the current one.

A Whip gains no abiding status of her own, but temporarily gains the abiding status *Noble* when at her local gathering, if the Primogen is not in attendance.

Harpy

A neonate Embraced into the strength of the Ivory Tower might find it difficult to imagine the historical world of the ancient Camarilla. The founding of the Camarilla caused a number of vampire customs to be codified into a complex, world-wide system that invests a great deal of power into the hands of a position known as Harpy. In the world of the Camarilla, where the halls of power can often resemble an old boys' club, the Harpy is as close to an equal-opportunity position as one may find. A capable Harpy is an arbiter of social propriety, an enforcer of Camarilla dogma, and a calculating favor broker who ensures that the local boon economy is secure.

The Power of the Primogen: Removing the Prince

The power of the Prince over her domain is absolute as long as she holds praxis of the domain. Should the Primogen Council stand united against their Prince, they have the ability to remove the Prince without bloodshed.

The local Primogen Council must, as a group, expend four *Noble* abiding status, the first three to symbolically strip all three positional abiding status from their Prince, and then the fourth to remove her praxis. This is a unique usage of the *Noble* status, and it can only be performed by Primogen of a domain upon the Prince of that same domain. Primogen who oppose the removal of the Prince can expend their *Noble* status to cancel one of their rival Primogen's disloyal rebellion.

Should the Primogen Council be successful in this political maneuver, the former Prince loses her praxis, the related abiding status, and all of the rights of the position. The praxis remains unclaimed and vacant until another seizes it or the former Prince forces the Primogen to submit to her will via coercion or violence.

However, this tactic does not come without a price. Primogen who expended their *Noble* status to remove the Prince must reaffirm their position as Primogen amongst their clan before they can regain that abiding status.

Social Warfare in the Camarilla

Violence in open court is detested. Kindred are expected to be in control over their Beasts and can't simply slug someone who insults them. Social miscreants who resort to this crude behavior quickly incur the wrath of the Harpies and everyone else in the domain invested in the social order of the Ivory Tower. Ignoring the accepted protocol of society is a direct affront to the entire concept of the Camarilla and cannot be tolerated, lest the idea spread that such behavior is viable. Of course, what happens outside of the eyes of the court is another matter entirely.

Boons and scandals have long been part of Kindred society, and since ancient times, Harpies have ensured that the social mores were respected and boons were recorded.

A wily Harpy can whisper a word in the right ear and cause untold damage to a Kindred's reputation; for this reason alone, they are respected. This respect gives the Harpies a certain amount of protection against violent retribution. Woe to the base villain who kills a Harpy for performing her duty! Every Harpy in the world would band together to destroy such a threat. However, those who live by the social sword can likewise die by it. A disgraced Harpy is often punished twice as harshly by her former peers because she should know better.

Any Kindred with the right combination of wit, maliciousness, and savoir-faire may insinuate herself into the position. Of course any pretender who tries but falls short will find that news of this particular solecism has reached the ears of all but the most bucolic of domains.

Many neonates question the actual power of the Harpies, claiming that a Kindred with the strength to ignore the Harpy's japes can simply enforce her will through violence. Such naïveté rarely lasts long. All of the elders have a vested interest in maintaining social power. The Harpy's work keeps conflicts confined to the social arena, and that, in turn, keeps elder vampires safer. These young vampires learn the error of their ways.

A Harpy is the apex social predator of the domain. If the Harpy feels especially vicious, she can encourage the court to politically snub a social outcast, punishing anyone who is kind to her target in public. She does so by declaring it scandalous to merely speak to said vampire in public. A vampire ostracized like this is in an impossible situation. She can't leave without being turned into even more of a laughingstock, and staying only invites more frustration as she endures barely audible titters from those in on the snub. Further, frenzying due to taunts leads to severe punishment. Kindred are supposed to be able to control their Beasts, and the weak should stay at home. Biting insults can be more devastating to ancient vampires than a blade or gun, especially in an arena where wit is the only means of attack, such as an Elysium or a Prince's court. A vampire who relies solely on brute force is helpless before a Harpy's assault. A particularly cunning barb will be picked up and repeated by dozens of other Kindred, humiliating the target wherever she appears. (Some neonates create spectacular internet MEMEs and share them between allies to amuse themselves.)

These techniques might seem mild compared to, say, ripping someone's throat out with supernatural speed and strength, but remember that the Camarilla is a society where violence against *Acknowledged* members of the court is forbidden, except in special circumstances.

The Harpy may sponsor other vampires as her assistants, as Lesser Harpies, to bring news, gossip, and information her way. A Harpy with two or more assistants is referred to by the title "Master (or Mistress) of Harpies," or simply "Master (Mistress) Harpy."

As the complex social rules of status developed within the Camarilla, the Harpies naturally asserted their authority over standing. In early nights, this authority caused a number of

Note of Caution: Avoid Bleed

Harpy players should exercise caution to ensure that their characters direct their biting comments at the mistakes of other characters, but never at the players themselves. Always keep the distinction between the character and player in mind.

problems. What if several Harpies disagreed? How do you determine if a Harpy is important enough to remove standing? Ironically, the mortal world faced a similar problem with the growing banking industry. The solution for one mirrored the other. Harpies sought support from the Primogen of their domains, much like banks sought backing from their governments for legitimacy. These nights, the alliance between the positions of Primogen and the Harpy serves as a counterbalance to the office of the Prince. A Harpy must have backing from the Primogen to maintain her position. The Primogen need a strong Harpy to ensure their power.

The Primogen Council formally selects the Harpy by a simple majority vote. As long as the Harpy maintains the Primogen Council's support, she continues to serve in her office.

A Harpy's authority includes:

- Brokering and negotiating boons on behalf of members of the domain
- Maintaining the official record of boons for the domain
- Judging and mediating conflicts over boons for the domain
- Advising and informing the Prince about recent events
- Administering praise or scandal to the Kindred of the domain
- Appointing up to two Lesser Harpies (permanent deputies) into her service
- Exiling the undesirable from the domain
- Monitoring and enforcing status expenditures within the jurisdiction of her Prince's domain

A Harpy (or Master Harpy) gains the abiding status traits *Prominent*, *Noble*, and *Guardian* during her tenure in the office. A Lesser Harpy gains no abiding status of her own, but temporarily gains the abiding status *Guardian* at her local gathering, if the Master Harpy is not in attendance.

Keeper of Elysium

Elysium is a place designated by the Prince of a city as one of the few places where Kindred can interact with their peers and be reasonably secure from violence. It is an honor to be responsible for such a sacred place. The Keeper of Elysium has impressive powers, but can only use them within certain strictly delimited boundaries. In the confines of Elysium, the Keeper has the authority to take whatever actions she feels are necessary to preserve the Masquerade and the sanctity of Elysium. Keepers are charged with the physical security of Elysium as well as the societal ramifications of what transpires there.

The Keeper of Elysium must approve all gatherings held in Elysium and may deny, without notice, any function, event, or party on Elysium if she believes that it would be a threat to the Masquerade or the attending Kindred. Residents of a domain derive prestige, power, and pleasure from events held in Elysium. Kindred love to hold business dealings and entertain visiting dignitaries from distant domains in impressive Elysiums as a symbol of power for their domain. Prestige-conscious social climbers request permission to host balls and exhibits in a beautiful Elysium. And, of course, those who wish to speak with the Prince must often enter Elysium to do so.

Additionally, the Keeper is expected to control the presence of weapons within Elysium. As such, she has the right to search any Kindred who requests entrance, and to deny entrance to anyone she pleases under the authority of her post. This includes refusing her Prince entry; the Keeper's powers overrule the Prince's authority on Elysium grounds (though exercising this authority capriciously or unwisely almost always leads to problems).

A Keeper of Elysium's authority includes:

- Removing weapons from Kindred on Elysium
- Using any force necessary to defend Elysium
- Exiling the undesirable from the Elysium
- Commanding all mortals (including Retainers) within Elysium
- Holding immunity from prosecution from the Prince or Harpy when in defense of Elysium
- Holding status jurisdiction in the Elysiums within her Prince's physical domain

A Keeper of Elysium gains the abiding status traits *Enforcer* and *Guardian* during her tenure in office.

Sheriff

The function of a Sheriff is to serve as the Prince's chief enforcer, policing the Kindred community for violations of the Traditions. Though Princes are increasingly employing cautious, tactically savvy enforcers and investigators, common wisdom continues to cast the Sheriff as the Prince's best thug.

In addition to repairing violations of the Masquerade – a task made more vital and dangerous by the rise of public media and the hunter threat – the Sheriff must always be prepared to defend the domain in time of crisis. Sheriffs and their deputies visit communal and trending hunting grounds

to ensure that everything is suitably quiet. They listen to EMTs, the police, the local media, and similar sources for rumors of suspicious occurrences.

During wartime, the Sheriff is often called upon to be the local warlord, coordinating the domain's actions and personally leading the battle. A Sheriff may select deputies to assist her in this task, granting them authority for the evening. Most Sheriffs see the Scourge's duties as encroaching on their jurisdiction, so the two positions rarely get along. The rest of the city's Kindred usually just try to stay out of their way.

A Prince typically expects the majority of her court officers to use elegant solutions, but the Sheriff is allowed a certain amount of leniency in this regard. Problems sometimes require physical resolution, and as long as Final Death is not reached, the Prince and the Primogen will look the other way when the Sheriff bends the rules. If the object of the Sheriff's ire is disliked, the Harpy might even gleefully reveal the details of her punishment to the entire court. A crafty Sheriff knows where the line is between doing her job and offending the court.

A Sheriff's authority includes:

- Protecting and repairing the Masquerade
- Appointing up to two temporary deputies into her service
- Preparing and carrying out strategies for a military crisis
- Combatting the Sabbat or other enemies of the sect
- Protecting the Prince within her domain
- Holding status jurisdiction in her Prince's physical domain

A Sheriff gains the abiding status traits *Enforcer* and *Privileged* during her tenure in office.

Scourge

The Scourge is charged with culling the city of undesirable vampires, specifically those created without the Prince's permission; often these undesirables include Caitiff and other thin-blooded vampires. Many cities have refused to institute a Scourge, but a number of Princes leveraged the fear of the infamous "Time of Thin Blood" prophesied in the Book of Nod to add to their muscle. Princes sometimes secretly use the Scourge to eliminate enemies.

Some claim that the station of Scourge is an ancient post dating back to the Dark Ages resurrected in modern times, others argue that it is an entirely new creation. Regardless of the historical truth, in cities where a Scourge stalks the night, she is a mythic bogeyman and source of fear for illegitimate vampires.

The Ivory Tower treats the position with a certain amount of disdain. Many humane Kindred actively shun those who serve as Scourge, calling them unredeemable slaughterers. The few Kindred who attempt to keep the Scourge fully integrated in Camarilla society are rarely appreciated by either the Scourge or their fellow Kindred.

On a typical night, a Scourge may travel to dismal, less-populated parts of the city. There, she searches for signs of fugitives, such as rats and stray dogs drained of blood or street people who are more jumpy than usual. Some Scourges set traps, while others hunt Caitiff down like beasts. Some Princes demand the prey be brought back alive for questioning, in hopes of learning who sired the childe. Others are content to see the heads or fangs of the night's take. Occasionally, sometimes based on a rumor or a tip, sometimes not, the Scourge visits the city's regular Kindred, looking to see if they are harboring illegally created childer. On such occasions, wise Scourges are even more cautious than normal, since older vampires are far more cunning and dangerous than the fledglings they normally hunt.

A Scourge's authority includes:

- Destroying vampires who are not *Acknowledged* by the Camarilla
- Combatting the Sabbat or other enemies of the sect
- Holding status jurisdiction in her Prince's physical domain

A Scourge gains the abiding status trait *Enforcer* during her tenure in office.

The Traditions

"Tacitus was fond of saying that 'In a state where corruption abounds, laws must be very numerous.' Nonsense! We Kindred need but six."

— Morgan Vargas, Ventrue Elder, Prince of Detroit

The Traditions form the source of all authority of Camarilla society and law. In modern nights, the Prince of a domain fulfills the elder role outlined in the Traditions. Much of vampire law and culture springs from the Traditions — presentation is outlined in the Tradition of Hospitality, the blood hunt in the Tradition of Destruction, and the parceling of land in the Tradition of Domain. To this night, they remain the bulwark of Camarilla society and are strictly upheld out of fear that ignoring them would lead to another catastrophic event such as the Inquisition or worse.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Enlightened self-interest keeps most Kindred following these rules simply because it makes too much sense and they want to avoid trouble.

The customs codified in the six Traditions have been in place in some form long before the formation of the Ivory Tower, but not every tradition has always been venerated until the Camarilla enforced it.

These six laws are the universal legislation of the Camarilla and provide the source of much of the tension between the global offices of the Ivory Tower and local Princes. Justicars point to the First Tradition, the Masquerade, as justification for the assumption of previously unknown powers to protect the Camarilla. Princes counter with the Second Tradition, Domain, and remain resolute in their authority over their domains.

Interpretation of the Traditions and customs on how a Prince enforces these laws in a local domain are informally called the Courtesies and the Intrigues.

All Camarilla neonates are expected to learn and understand the Traditions. Ignorance is no excuse when it comes to a violation of one of these precepts. These laws are absolute; any violation of them is met with swift and severe retribution.

The First Tradition: The Masquerade

Thou shalt not reveal thy true nature to those not of the Blood. Doing so shall renounce thy claims of Blood.

The Masquerade is at the heart of the existence of the Ivory Tower, and many Kindred scholars agree that Rafael de Corazon's famous speech marked the formation of the Camarilla. Long ago, Kindred could walk abroad in the glory of their power, but times have changed, and mortals have come to possess frightening technology and the power to destroy the world. During the past 500 years, Kindred have struggled to eradicate belief in and knowledge of vampires via sequestering reports, discrediting (or eliminating) witnesses, and disciplining those who violate the Masquerade.

Most Princes define a Masquerade breach as revealing yourself as a vampire to a human, through error or choice, and then allowing said human to escape with the knowledge.

The Camarilla strives to keep humanity in the dark about the existence of vampires. Many elders still remember the madness and slaughter that followed the Inquisition, and they ruthlessly punish any who repeat the mistakes that led to it. The penalty for breaching the Masquerade is, most often, Final Death. Every Camarilla vampire is supposed to be on watch for violations of the Masquerade and stop any breach she might come across. Failure to halt a violation of the Masquerade, or to report such to the appropriate authorities, is almost as bad as breaking the Tradition itself; the Camarilla takes the Masquerade *very* seriously. As a result, Sheriffs and their deputies constantly scan feeding territories for even the slightest errors in upholding the Tradition. While the other laws of the Camarilla are occasionally subject to looser interpretation, the First Tradition remains inviolable.

The Second Tradition: Domain

Thy domain is thine own concern. All others owe thee respect while in it. None may challenge thy word while in thy domain.

The Second Tradition is the foundation of a Prince's authority over her domain. When a Prince claims praxis, she is stating to all other vampires that she has the freedom to do as she pleases with her dominion.

Successful management of the domain's resources is vital to the Prince's security. The world has grown a great deal smaller in the past few centuries, and the number of Kindred vying for a piece of land to call their own grows with every night. These nights, it's a rare Kindred who holds a significant domain and isn't a Prince or a powerful elder. Often, the Prince doles out portions of her own domain in payment for some favor or service, and, in return, expects the occupant to enforce the Prince's will. Those who expect autonomy in such situations, however, are in for a terrible disappointment.

Recently, some more business-minded Kindred have taken to claiming dominion over certain aspects of mortal activity in a given city. Young vampires now squabble over brokerage firms and software developers instead of four blocks of prime hunting ground. Many elders, rooted in the old ways and firmly convinced of the surety of real estate, dismiss the trend as one more fantasy of youth doomed to failure. Others, though, have noticed the growing momentum of the practice and wonder at what might really be gained.

The Third Tradition: Progeny

Thou shalt only sire another with the permission of thine elder. If thou createst another without thine elder's leave, both thou and thy progeny shall be slain.

In the Ivory Tower, the right to create progeny is one of the more fiercely sought-after boons a Prince can offer to loyal subjects. So long as she controls the right to bring mortals into vampiric society, the Prince has a never-ending stream of Kindred currying for her favor. Before Princes littered the countryside and domain was free to any who could hold it, one generally sought the permission of one's sire before granting a mortal the Embrace. As centuries passed and the power of the Camarilla waxed, the term elder came to mean Prince.

These nights, Kindred vie fervently to make their own childer, and the Princes guard the right jealously as population control is one of the more difficult problems facing the Camarilla. Vampires beget more vampires and other sects, such as the Sabbat, have a method of natural selection that stems this problem. Camarilla neonates who follow the Traditions tend to survive and thrive under the protection of the Ivory Tower.

This presents a quandary for a wily Prince. Having too many Kindred in a city threatens the Masquerade and makes hunting more difficult. Too few leaves the city vulnerable to attack. Wise Princes enforce the Third Tradition ruthlessly. Strict adherence to the custom means that the Prince always knows how many Kindred are in her city, who sired them, and what clan they belong to, and thus can adjust the population numbers when required for the security of the domain.

Recently, some Princes have attempted to advance the Third Tradition to cover the creation of ghouls. Some clans, such as the Ventrue, vehemently oppose such measures. Others argue that the new breed of hunters requires stricter rules when dealing with mortals.

The Fourth Tradition: Accounting

Those thou create are thine own children. Until thy progeny shall be released, thou shall command them in all things. Their sins are thine to endure.

Embracing a mortal into the world of the Camarilla is a tremendous risk to the sire. The blood wreaks vast changes on a mortal's body and mind. The flood of power that comes with undeath can overwhelm a new vampire and provoke lapses in judgment that could threaten the entire Masquerade. As a result, a new vampire's sire is held personally responsible for her childer's actions until formally released before the Prince. The sire faces any penalty the childer's behavior earns in full, up to and including the Final Death.

Wise Princes implement this Tradition forcefully, feeling that the Accounting forces young Kindred to take the Embrace seriously and choose their progeny carefully. To formally release a childe, a sire must present her progeny before the Prince and announce before the court that said childe is ready to be released.

This presentation provides the Prince with a chance to interview the childe and determine if the sire educated her properly. This process will usually involve questioning about the Traditions and how they might apply to unusual situations. Failure will lead to a declaration of scandal from the Harpies and possible punishment from the Prince, perhaps even the humiliation of possibly fostering the childe with another vampire or even destruction.

Prince Kathryn Watson of Charleston leveraged this Tradition to create a local Curiosity; she required that all presentations occur within a select season each year. Sires wanting to present a childe for release are responsible for holding a release party for the entire court.

The Fifth Tradition: Hospitality

Honor one another's domain. When thou comest to a foreign city, thou shalt present thyself to the one who ruleth there. Without the word of acceptance, thou art nothing.

The Ivory Tower is a society of predators seeking to limit their blood thirst via engaging in social customs designed to smooth over tense situations. Social graces keep them from tearing into one another on sight and allow them to establish relationships other than kill-or-be-killed. The Fifth Tradition is a perfect example of this sort of social buffering, as it allows Kindred to move in one another's territory without immediately coming into conflict.

If a Kindred crosses into the domain of another Kindred, it is customary for the visitor to announce herself to prevent unnecessary bloodshed. At its simplest level, the Fifth Tradition is simply a mandate for all strangers entering a city to present themselves to the Prince. The presentation can take many forms, from a simple greeting to a formal recitation of the Traditions and one's lineage. In Edmonton, the Prince always demands a service from visiting Kindred. It's seen as crass, but it's his prerogative.

In modern nights, this Tradition is generally fulfilled by petitioning a member of the Primogen or the Seneschal to request a meeting with the Prince of a given city and requesting her acceptance. Wise Princes are content to grant this acceptance easily to temporary visitors and to closely question immigrants seeking to establish a new residence.

By *Acknowledging* a vampire who presents herself, a Prince grants that Kindred permission to stay, dwell, and hunt within her city. By presenting herself, the vampire acknowledges the Prince's authority and ensures that she isn't immediately brought down by a Scourge who doesn't know her on sight.

Some try to short-change this particular Tradition; if one can maintain a low enough profile while lacking the acceptance of *Acknowledgment*, the trouble incurred is negligible. Some feel that any sort of mandatory appearance at the Prince's behest might be a trap or a sell-out to the Ivory Tower. Others simply don't wish to recognize princely authority in any way, shape, or form. Elder Kindred – particularly if the Prince in

question is younger than they – many Anarchs, and some independents sometimes see things thusly.

However, by refusing to present herself, a vampire becomes an outlaw, and she moves from the Prince's jurisdiction to the Sheriff's — or the Scourge's.

The Sixth Tradition: Destruction

Thou art forbidden to destroy another of thy kind. The right of destruction belongeth only to thine elder. Only the eldest among thee shall call the blood hunt.

According to the oldest known readings of this law, the Sixth Tradition grants a sire or an elder the right to destroy any and all of her progeny. The Prince, under the Camarilla's auspices, holds the right of Destruction over any vampire in her domain. It is expected that a Prince shall use this power responsibly and only for the benefit of the domain against miscreants who are a direct threat.

She may extend this right to others, but ultimately the Prince is always responsible for every lawful death that occurs under her dominion. Should the Prince abuse her praxis by using the right of Destruction too cavalierly, she risks the domain rising up against her in a coup to deprive her of this power.

Sires are still allowed to destroy their unacknowledged childer before presentation, but otherwise kin-slaying is strictly outlawed in Camarilla domains. Sires attempting to reclaim the blood via their ancient birthright may find that the Prince refuses them. Once a neonate has been presented and accepted, she belongs to the Camarilla.

The ties of blood are strong, and many Princes will deliberately delay justice in order to accept boons or bribes from sires, Primogen, and other clanmates of the condemned seeking the Prince's permission to slay a wayward clanmate.

The Traditions are laws designed to protect all of Kindred society. The Sixth Tradition is paramount to maintaining civilized behavior within a domain, especially amongst predators competing for feeding territory. It is possible to petition for – or even purchase – the right to destroy another, but the Prince never grants such a right without a great cost. Creation and Destruction are the two most potent weapons in a Prince's arsenal, and she guards them jealously.

Any Kindred who seek to usurp the Prince's privilege and end another vampire's existence without permission more often than not find themselves on the receiving end of a blood hunt, a command from the Prince for all citizens within her domain to seek and destroy one so hunted.

When wielded prudently, the very threat of blood hunt is the most effective weapon a Prince can wield. Used capriciously, it can easily lead to the downfall of a city. For more information on declaring and enacting a blood hunt, see **The Blood Hunt, page 388**.

Courtesies and Intrigues: Domain Laws, Customs, and Interpretations of the Traditions

A Prince has the right to interpret how the Traditions will be enforced within her domain. These interpretations are often treated as lesser traditions and are referred to as the "Courtesies," from the tradition of French courts describing various rules and etiquette required to survive in Versailles. The common euphemism for navigating the murky intersections between the Courtesies and the Traditions is the "Intrigues." Kindred must understand the Courtesies and the Intrigues to survive in the cutthroat world of Camarilla society.

It is expected that visitors to a domain will quickly learn the local Courtesies and Intrigues of the court. A Prince will set certain expectations, and those that come under her protection are expected to know her laws. Ignorance of these customs is not an accepted excuse, and Kindred who complain too much will find punishments for violating unknown Courtesies and Intrigues to be especially harsh.

Traditionally, it is the Primogens' job to explain the Courtesies and Intrigues to visitors and new arrivals. Should a Primogen fail to properly educate a clanmate before bringing her before the Prince for *Acknowledgement*, she is usually considered to be equally at fault in the eyes of society.

The Sanctity of Elysium

The word *Elysium* comes from the Elysian Fields of Greek Mythology, a paradise afterlife where the chosen enjoyed a long-deserved peace. In Kindred society, Elysium is a publically known neutral ground, regardless of politics, which any Kindred in good standing can visit. It is a sacred place where the undead can find respite from the world and engage vampire society. This place is important to all Kindred, from the socialite to the hermit outlander, as it is the one place of sanctuary available to a vampire when she is in danger from her peers.

Many younger vampires consider the tradition of Elysium a stuffy, outdated custom, but this egalitarian practice treats all Kindred equal, regardless of station or standing. Elysium is under the "Pax Vampirica," meaning that no violence of any sort is permitted to take place there — Elysium is

neutral ground. Tempers may flare and heated words may be exchanged, but rivals are expected to keep a leash on their tempers. Grievances and rivalries don't vanish simply because a Kindred enters Elysium. Vampires who seek to bring conflict into Elysium must choose the right weapons: claws, fangs, and guns are prohibited, so one must use innuendo and gossip, rumor and scandal. Violence is strictly prohibited within Elysium, and individuals are expected to keep such behavior in check.

The Keeper of Elysium will forcibly remove those who cannot control themselves and allow these grudges to blossom into violent confrontation. Domain officers severely punish those who frenzy within Elysium, and the social consequences can be devastating for years or decades.

Attending an event at Elysium provides opportunity for both neonates and elders to relax and let down their guards, knowing that the reputation of the domain is at risk if there is a security breach.

The Keeper of Elysium is responsible for everything that happens in her jurisdiction, including scheduling or canceling events. This position involves both great prestige and scrutiny.

Residents of the domain come to pass the nights here, debating, politicking, and conducting intrigues among themselves for long hours. Kindred business of the city also takes place at Elysium, and just about every vampire will have at least one occasion to visit Elysium, if only to speak with the Prince or an elder. However, it is certainly an elder's playground, and the young who venture here are expected to remember that.

Though Elysiums often serve as gathering places for Kindred, the Masquerade must be maintained at all times if any mortals may be around. Similarly, while refreshments are sometimes served, it is considered bad taste to come to Elysium hungry, as unsated vampires often have shorter tempers. Some Princes go so far as to forbid hunting nearby, as a concentrated population of vampires could easily result in a suspicious number of deaths in the area.

If a vampire brings a guest to the Elysium, she is responsible for that guest's behavior.

The basic rules of the Elysium are simple, but are often modified slightly by a given Prince's Courtesies:

- Elysium is considered neutral, sanctified ground separate from sect or politics.
- Violence of any kind is strictly forbidden upon Elysium grounds. (In some cities, the Courtesies extend this protection to include passage to or from Elysium.) This rule includes forcefully using disciplines, even gentle ones such as Dominate or Presence, upon other guests. Some Elysiums discourage the use of any disciplines, except to protect the Masquerade. (Note that the Nosferatu are often exempt from this rule in order to disguise their true appearance. Even when there is no danger to the Masquerade, they are encouraged to continue using Obfuscate to avoid disturbing the other guests.)
- The presence of Moon-beasts (werewolves), Wild Ones (fae), or those who have drunk the heart's blood (diablerists) are forbidden.
- None may destroy art located within Elysium. (The definition of "art" has been expanded to include the artist on occasion, making the vampires of Clan Toreador some of the greatest proponents of Elysium.)
- All hunting is prohibited in the area surrounding an Elysium.
- The Elysium and its contents are sacrosanct and shall not be damaged.
- The Keeper's word is law on these grounds, and she can traditionally punish or execute anyone who violates Elyisum.

The Founding of Elysium

Elysiums are safe havens, given hallowed respect by Kindred of all sects. According to ancient tradition, an Elysium is a site whose existence (or the existence of the artifacts housed within) is critical to history, culture, or knowledge. In Europe, these locations are places of high distinguishment: ancient holy sites, famous museums, and so forth. On the younger continents of the Americas, theaters, libraries, and churches are among those buildings commonly elevated, so long as the site is prominent enough to justify eternal protection and respect.

Elysiums are not created at a whim, nor are they sanctified by a Prince's word or a Harpy's praise. In a significant city with a great deal of history, there may be as many as three to four such sites, all easily recognizable as locations of great importance in the city's past or as repositories of unique and irreplaceable culture, art, or wisdom. A Prince (or other societal leader), with the near-unanimous support of her populace, may name a new Elysium (or remove such honor from a violated site) within that leader's domain. Any such elevations are sure to be looked upon critically by the rest of the world's Kindred population. A Prince who confirms a mere nightclub or parking garage as an Elysium will be made a laughingstock, and her title is likely to be quickly claimed by a more sober and suitable individual.

The concept of Elysium predates the various sects of vampires, and it is one of the few things considered more important than politics. If Anarchs claim a territory where an Elysium is housed, they are expected to care for it and defend it even as would the Camarilla; so, too, do the owners of Elysiums within Independent domains keep them sacrosanct. Although the Sabbat claims not to care about such sacred locations, most older members of the Sword of Caine still treat Elysium with a certain amount of reverence, and even their tempestuous youth can see the wisdom in ensuring that visible and important historical locations do not suffer. There must be a world worth ruling, after all, when the Dark Father returns.

A Breach of Elysium and Social Consequences

A breach of Elysium occurs when one of the above rules is violated. (Note that the Keeper of Elysium, and her agents, are immune to these rules for the purposes of protecting the Elysium. For example, the Keeper may need to physically restrain a frenzied visitor.) The violator's intent is not relevant, only that the laws of Elysium have been broken.

Public awareness of a breach of Elysium immediately causes scandal for every member of the domain; every vampire resident of the domain automatically receives the negative status trait *Disgraced* for three months. Traditionally, the domain may not build a new Elysium nor host gatherings in other Elysiums during that time period, or the duration extends to six months.

Harpies from other cities will mock residents of a domain that has failed to maintain its Elysium. Foreign Keepers of Elysium may bar *Disgraced* Kindred from attending Elysium in their own cities.

The Kindred who violated Elysium receives the negative status trait *Disgraced* for a year and a day. In addition, the Prince and Keeper of Elysium are likely to levy devastating punishments, if not the Final Death. For example, in the domain of Detroit, an Anarch named Hopper accidently frenzied in Elysium. Prince Vargas responded by having Hopper publically scourged and then starved over the course of a month, making the point that it is always wise to feed before attending an Elysium. Some considered Prince Vargas merciful.

Once an Elysium has been breached, the location forever loses its sanctity. It can never again be considered an Elysium. Any investments in the location become useless in the eyes of the Camarilla. Vampires believe that owning such a property is bad luck. Long ago, if an Elysium was violated, vampires burned the very building to the ground and salted the earth so that nothing would ever grow there, as a warning to any Kindred who might dare to cause violence in an Elysium.

Crime and Punishment

A Prince must defend the Traditions within her domain or her praxis will be doubted in the eyes of her citizens and, worse, the Justicars. The Prince is the apex of domain justice, but the real situation is more complicated: Sheriffs, Primogen, Princes, Archons, Justicars, and the Inner Circle each significantly impact the rules of undead existence.

"The will of the city: The will of the Prince." Behind the simple words of this old saying lies a complex web of power, debt, and ambition. The Prince does determine the shape of justice within her domain, but there are many opportunities to subvert that justice, before, during, and after it reaches the Prince.

Guilty Until Proven Innocent (if the Right Kindred Accuses)

Camarilla justice is not based on a trial of the accused's peers, mystical truth-learning powers, or even direct evidence, but station and status. Status is the greatest shield a vampire

Truth and Politics

No Prince ever wants to see a vampire who holds a high position in the Camarilla accused publicly of a serious crime by someone who is her social inferior. Kindred are paranoid, jealous, corrupt creatures goaded by their Beasts into doing things that make them feel secure. The eternal strength of the Camarilla should never be called into question, lest their own power be diminished. If that means that the guilty is allowed to seemingly get away with the crime, then it is a small price to pay for the stability of the Ivory Tower. However, if a crime is serious enough, the Prince will ensure that her Sherriff investigates to uncover the truth, even if it is never uttered in court, for later blackmail and private punishment.

can possess in a Camarilla court when accused of a crime. Miscreants who ignore status and continue to press an issue, even if it is blatantly obvious that said Kindred is guilty, endanger the foundation of the Camarilla by attacking the very source of its strength and power.

Typically, a guilty individual will attempt to avoid punishment for a crime by arranging for an ally to accuse a Kindred on the fringe of Camarilla society, such as a Caitiff or criminal Anarch. This works more often than not due to the accuser's weight of status and position. The opinion and perception of court officers is vastly more important than actual evidence. If a Caitiff is accused of and executed for violating the Masquerade, and said crime happens again, then the accusers are likely to blame a Caitiff conspirator for weakening the domain.

The political and social web of the Ivory Tower depends upon the concept that standing and station are vital to the survival of the Traditions. If a Kindred who holds a court office or possesses a good deal of status speaks on a matter, society presumes that she speaks rightly unless a different Kindred of higher standing contradicts her. It doesn't matter if the words spoken were illogical or obviously false. To contradict said statement would be to challenge the weight of status behind the words.

Princes and Justicars want criminals punished, especially murderers and diablerists. However, the Ivory Tower must be maintained at all costs, and it is sedition to the Camarilla to disregard status and station and prove the entire system false.

If public awareness of a crime necessitates punishment, scapegoats with the approximate negative status are often found and punished. If no one presents actual proof, the Prince will usually offer some sort of lesser punishment if the accused confesses, except in the most extreme crimes.

If two Kindred are suspected of a crime, the Prince will carefully examine the political support and status of each of the suspects. If one of them is supported by an elder of great importance, then clearly the other one did the dastardly deed.

This is not to say that Kindred of high status can always get away with murder, but a Prince has to be sure about guilt and get proof in secret so that the criminal cannot skirt justice by publicly claiming her innocence.

Bribes and Payoffs

The surest means to prevent the Prince from punishing the guilty is to ensure that she never learns of a crime in the first place. The guilty will offer high-value boons to avoid accusations, especially if punishment is likely to be fatal. Sheriffs, Nosferatu, or other clever Kindred often accumulate an impressive array of boons by cleaning up after sloppy Kindred.

The Prince will often make it a habit to monitor the prestation owed to the Sheriff to see which of her subjects might have acquired such services.

Trials and Tribulations

Once a suspect has been formally accused, what happens next depends upon the Prince and the standards for justice in the domain via her Courtesies.

Typically, the Prince will listen to the charges from the Sheriff or another court officer and issue a summary judgment. If the suspect has managed to avoid capture, the Prince may opt to pass judgment in absentia.

If the accused is popular or notorious, the Prince may decide to hold a public trial, to demonstrate her strength, permitting any Kindred to observe, if not participate. Conversely, trials may be sequestered behind closed doors with only the Prince's hand-picked witnesses in attendance to give evidence.

Some Princes favor the Napoleonic mode of trial, where they alone are entitled to ask questions, and whomever they ask had better answer quickly, truthfully, and completely. Other Princes, usually those who have spent the majority of their existence in the United States, allow the accuser and the accused a chance to present testimony in their own words or call upon advocates, witnesses, or allies to speak

Leveraging a System of Corruption

The entire political and judicial system of the Camarilla is predictably corrupt, and the members of the Camarilla don't pretend otherwise. The alternative is chaos and inviting the Sabbat, hunters, and lupines to destroy the Ivory Tower — or so the elders claim. The best protection a Kindred of low-status has against accusations is a patron vampire of higher status to provide a proper alibi. This might cost a boon or some other steep price, but it's better than the alternative.

on their behalf. Unless there is some other agenda involved, the word of one of the Camarilla officers typically holds more sway than that of a less-illustrious vampire.

Once the Prince reaches a verdict, she must convey it, along with any sentence, to the court. The Prince may make the pronouncement herself, or she may delegate the job to another Kindred or servant.

If the verdict is guilty, but the accused is not in custody, the Prince may require the city's Kindred to provide any and all aid in bringing the criminal to justice. In the event that the sentence is Final Death, the Prince may order a blood hunt.

Delivering Justice

Camarilla justice is not as bound by jurisprudence as mortal justice. A Prince is more or less free to apply any punishment she desires so long as she does not offend her subjects to the point of rebellion. Some strive for ironic justice, shaping the punishment to fit the crime, while others simply select the harshest punishment they can justify, trusting that it will discourage any further offenses. In most cases, diablerie and breaches of the Masquerade result in Final Death, preferably after slow torture.

A selection of punishments in descending order of severity follows. The list is not exhaustive; Princes are known to be quite inventive when sentencing criminals. It is also worth noting that the actual form of the punishment can vary extensively. One crime may merit death by sunlight while another may result in death by beheading. One Prince may exile a criminal by leaving her by the side of the road in a werewolf-infested countryside; another may have a blood hunt drive her from the city; another may construct a catapult to throw the criminal across the local river.

Ultimately, the Prince chooses how to punish those who break the Traditions in her domain.

Severe Sentences:

- **Final Death:** The criminal is beheaded, burnt, or otherwise slain, ensuring complete destruction.
- **Torpor:** The criminal is forced into torpor, either through blood loss, injury, or both.
- **Long-term staking:** The criminal is staked through the heart and either hidden or placed on display.
- **Draining and exile:** The criminal is almost completely drained of vitae and then driven from the city.
- **Exile:** The criminal is driven from the city.
- **Blood bonding:** The criminal is forced to drink the blood of another Kindred over three successive nights. Most commonly, the criminal is blood bound to the Prince, one or more of the Primogen, or the victim of the crime.

Moderate Sentences:

- **Enforced servitude:** The criminal is forced to serve another Kindred, possibly even a ghoul.
- **Torture:** The criminal is forced to endure some physical, psychological, or social torture.
- **Draught of blood:** The criminal is forced to drink the blood of another Kindred once or twice, bringing her closer to a blood bond or completely binding her, if she has already drunk of that vampire's vitae.

Minor Sentences:

- **Loss of station:** The criminal is removed from a court office and loses all associated perks and status traits.
- **Loss of property:** The criminal is deprived of some possession. This can include the destruction of a childe or a ghoul.

The Blood Hunt

"You want to know eternal? Heal the wound.
Paint over the scar. But you can never, ever take away
the humiliation of utter defeat. Live with that, Gangrel dog."

— Antar, Nosferatu Elder,
Architect of the Camarilla

The most devastating weapon in a Prince's arsenal is the blood hunt, an order calling for the Final Death of a criminal within her domain. A Prince typically gives this punishment when a miscreant has committed a serious offense, such as kin-slaying, diablerie, breaching the Masquerade, or any other behavior that a Prince deems to be a sufficient threat to the safety of the Masquerade and the Kindred of the city as a whole.

Princes have used the blood hunt as a means to eliminate political or personal opposition as well, although this is, strictly speaking, forbidden, and misusing a blood hunt can result in severe consequences for the Prince in the long term.

A Prince may declare a blood hunt if the crime is serious enough to be a threat to the domain, and its perpetrator has evaded more conventional justice. The Prince may command the presence of all Kindred in her domain and make a public proclamation, stating the name and crimes of the subject, or she may issue the edict to the Sheriff and

the Primogen with the expectation that they pass it along to those under their sway.

Any Kindred who hears the order for a blood hunt is expected to participate. Any Kindred who provides assistance to the target of a blood hunt will often become the next to be hunted.

The target of a blood hunt receives the negative status trait *Bloodhunted*, which confers the following penalties:

- The target of a blood hunt permanently loses all abiding, innate, and fleeting status traits, and gains the negative status *Forsaken*.
- The target of a blood hunt cannot offer or claim boons for any reason. Some criminals will try to bribe other Kindred with promises of payment afterwards, but few will take advantage unless they believe the target will survive the ordeal.
- Any Kindred caught associating with or assisting a *Bloodhunted* vampire within the limits of the domain automatically receives the negative status trait *Disgraced*.

A blood hunt is limited to the borders of a single domain, although the social penalties for carrying the *Forsaken* negative status remain in effect as long as the target has it.

Other Princes may uphold this blood hunt by a simple announcement that they support the blood hunt within their domain, carrying all of the effects of the sentence in their domains. This is often a political means of gaining future support from fellow Princes, as they will expect that their blood hunts will be reciprocated in the future.

Some vampires use the chaos during a blood hunt to settle scores and get rid of rivals and enemies, and many vampires have indulged in the chance to commit diablerie on the target or on other vampires who had the misfortune to get caught in the crossfire.

The speed with which the blood hunt is prosecuted often depends on the popular sentiment behind the Prince's edict. If the Primogen or other Kindred see the blood hunt as merely the persecution of one of the Prince's rivals, they are far less likely to pursue it as avidly as they would if they believe that the subject was the author of some truly heinous crime or a threat to themselves.

The domain will generally approve of a Prince calling a blood hunt on a criminal who has brought other Kindred to Final Death, committed diablerie, seriously threatened the Masquerade, conspired with the Sabbat, or presented a threat to the population of the domain in other ways. Kindred are less concerned with an enemy who might pose a risk or inconvenience to the Prince's political career and start to get paranoid when the Prince begins invoking the blood hunt over such minor matters. In such cases, they might also start looking toward the replacement of such an extreme ruler.

Rewards of a Blood Hunt

The Kindred who brings down a *Bloodhunted* criminal automatically gains the fleeting Status *Triumphant*. In addition, she may gain the following rewards:

- A boon from the Prince
- Personal domain
- The right of *Amaranth* (legal permission to diablerize the bloodhunted target)

Laws of the Blood Hunt

There are laws that apply to blood hunts, which are religiously enforced by all Princes who sentence a criminal with a blood hunt. Kindred obey these laws or risk becoming the quarry of the next blood hunt.

- The Masquerade is sacrosanct and must not become a victim of the hunt. Some Kindred find it all too easy to get caught up in the thrill of the hunt, but it is vital for them to realize that it does no good to bring down a criminal if a greater crime is committed in doing so.

Lextalionis and the Blood Hunt

The traditional legal institution behind the blood hunt is the ancient law *lex talionis*, a legal principle that can be summarized as "an eye for an eye." Perhaps that is why the term *Lextalionis* has become an informal short hand for a blood hunt that offers the specific trophy of the right of Amaranth over the criminal. Some Princes are leery of awarding Amaranth, fearing their citizens might develop a taste for it and continue the practice away from the spotlight.

- The blood hunt is a grave matter of justice. None are allowed to aid the fugitive or interfere with the hunters. Helping the criminal in any way is considered a crime.
- The blood hunt formally ends at the limits of the domain, unless other Princes extend the hunt into their own domains. This practice is a rule of thumb; the Prince will punish no one for carrying the hunt further unless a hunter violates another Prince's domain. Taking a blood hunt beyond city limits (as defined by the Prince's control, not by lines on maps) is simply too risky. Princes must jealousy guard their praxis, and hunting in a foreign Prince's domain without permission will cause all manner of political ripples.

A blood hunt remains in effect until the destruction of the quarry. It can only be removed in the following ways:

- The Prince who first issued the blood hunt can formally rescind the blood hunt at great cost. She loses the ability to blood hunt criminals for the next six sessions or three months, whichever is longer.
- If the criminal petitions a Justicar at a Judicial Conclave, she can ask for a trial. If vindicated, the Justicar has the authority to remove a blood hunt. This is rarely done as it upsets the natural order of the Ivory Tower, but it has been done, especially in cases where Princes abuse their powers to remove rivals.
- A Prince is immune to blood hunts called by other Princes. If the target of a blood hunt acquires a legitimate praxis, then the hunt is lifted. Petty Princes are not eligible for the same immunity.
- If the Prince who issued the blood hunt dies or is removed from power, the blood hunt is removed unless the next Prince upholds the hunt.

The blood hunt ends only when the fugitive has been destroyed and the victor returns to court to show proof of the kill. Should the quarry escape, the blood hunt is considered ongoing until the *Bloodhunted* vampire is dead or has managed to have the sentence lifted. Despite the cessation of an active hunt, the order to destroy the hunted Kindred remains in place until proof of the fugitive's death is brought back to the Prince.

Conclaves

A conclave is the epicenter of politics and society in the Camarilla, serving as the highest court of Ivory Tower, the legislative body that chooses the Camarilla's direction, and as a stage on which to reaffirm the principles of the Camarilla. For elders, it is a salon without peer, an opportunity to meet others of their station, socialize, and deal with one another without constant interruptions from the "children." For ancillae and neonates, it is a social scene to meet clanmates and friends, a place to swap gossip, and (if one has the courage) to venture into the world of vampire politics on a grand scale.

The opportunity to participate in a conclave is also one of the few reasons many young vampires do not defect to the Anarchs or Sabbat, or simply abandon the Camarilla altogether, as it is a time when the young may speak directly to the elders. Neonates have a chance of being heard, as well as having an opportunity to vote on the direction that the Camarilla takes.

All Camarilla Kindred who hear the call to conclave are welcome to attend. In addition, independents are grudgingly tolerated as well, since the conclave's business can relate to vampires as a whole. Invitations are typically sent to a domain's Elysium and then shared by the Keeper of Elysium. Childer and coterie-mates carry the news back to absentees.

Only Justicars may call for a Grand Conclave or a Judicial Conclave, but any Prince may call for a Regional Conclave. Attendance at said event will depend on the reason for the Regional Conclave and the prestige of the Prince. (Some elders quietly point out that Regional Conclaves should be referred to as "convocations," but the name stuck in the vernacular and there's little to be done about it now.)

The logistics involved in running one of these gatherings prevent them from being announced on a whim; by the same token, Kindred only cancel a conclave under the greatest duress. Because so many attendees are elders and other potent-blooded luminaries, hosts keep the location of the gathering secret for as long as possible, even as the conclave's organizers try to plan around the needs of those who may be coming from a great distance.

Grand Conclave

A Grand Conclave is the highest social and political event in the Camarilla. The mighty and young mingle to discuss and debate the future of the sect itself. Hosting a conclave successfully brings no small amount of prestige; Justicars often give this opportunity to Princes of their own clan. A Prince who hosts a conclave gains the innate status *Primus Inter Pares* (First Among Equals) for the duration of the conclave.

A Justicar usually informs the Prince of the hosting city four to eight weeks in advance, but she may give less notice for particularly pressing matters. The Prince is, of course, free to decline the honor, but doing so suggests that the Prince is not as capable as she should be. This makes the dubious

Prince and her domain likely candidates for investigation after the current crisis has been dealt with. In most cases, the Prince simply accepts and redoubles her efforts to sweep whatever problems are vexing her under the rug.

As soon as a Prince learns that she is expected to host a conclave, she will probably want to summon all her trusted assistants and begin making preparations. Some Princes have contingency plans in place for just such an event, others improvise. Should the Justicar doubt the Prince's competence, she may assign some of her Archons to aid (or direct) the Prince's staff. Specifically, the Prince expects the Justicar to name the Kindred in charge of security for the conclave. If she does not choose an Archon, the selected Kindred effectively gains the rank of Archon and all its privileges until the end of conclave.

Among the many matters the Prince and her staff must contend with are security, should the Sabbat or Anarchs decide to mount an offensive; accommodations for the city's guests, especially the more volatile and less publicly presentable ones; and an appropriate location for the conclave itself. The hosts must also ensure that there is an adequate source of vitae: a particularly difficult task, given that many Ventrue are reticent about letting others learn the specifics of their rarefied needs. Some Princes also take this time to clean house, shoring up alliances and taking care of those little annoyances that could embarrass them during the upcoming event.

Most Justicars announce the date and location of the conclave well in advance. Kindred may hold smaller conclaves with less notice, but it's polite to give the invitees enough time to get their affairs in order before they are asked to travel on business. All Camarilla members who hear of the conclave may attend, but most only show if the conclave addresses some matter of interest to them. This means that the Primogen of Lisbon will probably not feel the need to attend a conclave dealing with a rash of infernalism in Detroit, though a Tremere scholar who investigated a similar event in the 18th century may feel compelled to make the trip. In certain cases, hosts will permit a rare independent to attend as well, but she will be carefully monitored. The Sabbat are more likely to be topics of conclaves than participants; it is difficult to imagine a situation where they would be permitted, much less directly invited.

Kindred may start to arrive in the city as early as a week before the conclave. Though everyone is busy, the guests expect the Prince to allow them an opportunity to present themselves. Justicars frown on Princes refusing entry to Kindred at the conclave, and vampires still debate whether the rules of the conclave or the rules of the city pertain to those against whom blood hunts have been declared. While the Prince greets the newcomers, the Seneschal may disburse advice and instructions concerning the ways of the city. Such information may include where not to hunt, the boundaries of Elysium, how to contact a clan Primogen, and where hunters are known to reside. At the same time, the Sheriff and her deputies try to keep tabs on the new arrivals and do what they can to verify that no enemies of the Camarilla sneak in amid the confusion.

Attending a Grand Conclave

The first few hours of each evening of a Grand Conclave are reserved for socialization and private meetings. At the appointed time, the Kindred gather in the location where the public business of the conclave will take place. The Speaker of the Conclave will call the conclave to order with a few words and then the real political action begins.

The customs of conclave were brewed from a strange agglomeration of ancient Greek jurisprudence, European courtly etiquette, and primal predatory instinct.

To the uninitiated, Grand Conclave can seem like a series of dangerous trials, from choosing the right seat, to knowing when to stand or sit, to knowing how to address the assembly. The Harpies watch carefully for any error or slight.

Neonates and independents are seated toward the back of the council chamber, and often find that they have trouble catching the eye of a Justicar. If they are allowed to speak, there is no guarantee that any of the elders will actually

The Speaker of the Conclave

The office that sanctions the event selects the Speaker of the Conclave. This coveted position serves as the chair for all of the public discussions at a conclave. Some Justicars take this role for themselves, if they wish to aggressively push an agenda. Others will select an Archon or a Prince who has been properly educated and motivated as to their wishes. It is traditional that the hosting Prince serves as Speaker of the Conclave for Regional Conclaves.

listen to what they have to say. Nevertheless, conclaves are one of the few situations where a younger vampire is guaranteed the right to speak and be heard by her elders.

Discussion continues throughout the conclave under the guidance of the Speaker of the Conclave. As the presiding officer, it is her duty to see that attention does not get diverted and that any Kindred who has something to contribute gets the chance to do so. She may limit the loquacious from speaking too long and may order the removal of any disruptive vampires from the chamber. It is her job to see that the Camarilla reaches a decision.

Traditionally, the duration of conclave business is limited to a designated period (sometimes only a few hours each night). When the topics have been discussed thoroughly by the attendees, the Speaker of the Conclave closes discussion. She will usually then verbally review the discussion, describe the two or three most popular courses of action, and order a recess for everyone to contemplate and discuss the matter in private.

The Justicar and her Archons will do their best to ensure that no overt public coercion or skullduggery occurs during that recess. However, recess is one of the most politically frenzied times one will ever encounter at a conclave, and what happens in private away from the eyes of the public is often overlooked.

The hosting Prince will try to keep the visitors within the grounds of the conclave to make it easier to guard against treachery. To this end, the Primogen and their clans often prepare seminars, parties, and other diversions to keep the guests entertained during their stay. Some younger Kindred suspect that the true business of the conclave takes part during the recess periods, when the neonates are being distracted and the elders retire to their own diversions.

At the end of the recess, the Speaker usually restates the choices and calls for a vote. Every Kindred present is allowed to vote. Voting can take many forms, including a show of hands or by marking the choice on paper; Archons commonly tally the results.

The votes may be counted publicly or privately. Once the Speaker completes the final tally, she announces the results and ritually states that this verdict represents the will of the Camarilla. She instructs all attendees to adhere to its decision and to inform all others of what has transpired.

After the vote, the hosting Prince usually throws a final party where the assembled Kindred celebrate their membership in the largest vampiric sect in the world. In most cases, the Justicar leaves to report the results to the Inner Circle immediately after reading the verdict, though she might leave an Archon or two behind to see that everything ends smoothly.

After the Show

Once a conclave ends, it is expected that visitors will depart in a timely fashion unless they seek formal permission from the hosting Prince to remain. The Sheriff often spends a good part of her time watching guests depart and tracking who remains. It can take months for the domain to return to normal, as residents must undo the preparations they made for the conclave, including mollifying officials and taking care of any minor problems or Masquerade violations.

Participants may gain or lose much based on their actions at the conclave. A Kindred's actions may affect her status, respect, reputation, and allies, and even a neonate may earn the respect or enmity of an entire clan through her actions. Those who successfully host or command the security of a conclave usually gain a status trait in recognition of their efforts. Those who blunder can expect to pay the price, losing status in amounts commensurate with their errors and the size of the conclave. Such vampires suffer from the negative status *Disgraced*.

Those who please the Justicars or organize a well-run conclave will often be rewarded with valuable fleeting status such as *Courteous*, *Favored*, *Honorable*, or *Loyal*.

Judicial Conclaves

Justicars usually convene Judicial Conclaves for two purposes:

- To determine the guilt or innocence of a vampire, or even a domain, which falls beyond the scope of princely justice
- To formally investigate a potential threat to the Camarilla via formal discussion, interviews, and testament

A Justicar, often flanked by her Archons, presides over the trial with an iron fist, discouraging any discussion that does not pertain to the guilt or innocence of the accused. In such trials, guilt is assumed, and the accused must fight to prove her innocence. Most Justicars ask questions, listening to any Kindred who dares, or is ordered, to speak. Unless the Justicar has reason to believe that the accused has undue influence over the domain even when incarcerated, Judicial Conclaves rarely involve Kindred from beyond the city.

Judicial Conclaves are meant to be quick, efficient, and final. By the same note, Judicial Conclaves rarely last more than a handful of nights. The Justicar is empowered to judge such cases and issue both a verdict and a sentence, but she may call for a jury of respected Camarilla Kindred to decide the accused's fate. Nevertheless, the Justicar can overrule the vote if she believes that coercion or gross corruption has been brought to bear.

Socializing and Judicial Conclaves

Despite the narrow purpose of Judicial Conclaves, planned social occasions are often sprinkled between testimonies and judgments to help release tension. This helps increase the attendance of elders and other important members of the Camarilla not personally invested in the issue or crime that caused the Justicar to call for the Judicial Conclave. Some of the attendees are very motivated to make deals for support over the issue at hand, and enterprising Kindred can make quite the profit.

Some Justicars favor trial by ordeal. If a Kindred's sentence includes an ordeal, she must undertake a difficult task, often under a challenging time limit. If the accused succeeds, others consider her debt paid and her innocence proven. The tasks assigned in ordeal are often potentially fatal — few who fail an ordeal survive.

If the Justicar issues another sentence, it is carried out immediately after the verdict has been reached, and the Justicar departs for the next crisis soon after. The Justicar may order one of her Archons to stay behind to ensure that no punishment is brought to bear on any who may have testified in an unpopular manner, but they rarely stay more than a couple of nights. Such unfortunates may consider seeking other residence if they have made powerful enemies.

Regional Conclave

A Regional Conclave, or a regional convocation, is similar to a Grand Conclave, except that a Prince invites others to attend and discuss regional or national concerns across multiple domains. The rules of conduct mirror that of a Grand Conclave on a smaller scale. Typically, the hosting Prince acts as moderator, unless said Prince wishes to hand over the gavel to a foreign Prince with greater standing.

Formal Motions of Conclave

In theory, any member of the Camarilla can call for a motion at a conclave, but typically the Speaker of the Conclave will only recognize prestigious members of the Ivory Tower (such as Princes, elders, or impressive Harpies), up-and comers with important information to the topic at hand, or enemies she wants to embarrass. Some clever Kindred bribe the Speaker of Conclave beforehand to ensure that they are selected.

The protocol for calling and deciding upon a formal motion is as follows:

1. The Speaker asks the conclave for any motions.
2. The petitioner must be formally recognized by the Speaker of the Conclave and given the chance to speak. If the Speaker selects the petitioner, she will formally announce that said petitioner has the floor.
3. The petitioner takes the floor and outlines her proposal. Proposals may concern how a Tradition is interpreted, a motion for clemency on a previous punishment, or plans for the future of the Ivory Tower.
4. The room then discusses the proposal or asks questions, moderated by the Speaker. The Speaker has the option to surrender the floor to any attendee to speak or give testimony.
5. If the Speaker believes that there has been sufficient discussion, she calls for a vote.
6. Votes consist of a simple yea or nay. If the votes are tallied publicly, the discussion often becomes loud and boisterous. Kindred are often tempted to use their supernatural powers to influence others' votes, but this practice is strictly prohibited. Kindred are punished severely if caught. For example, in 1814, a Toreador was caught using Presence during a vote and then was forced to spend the rest of the conclave staked on display on the main floor, while the entire assembly laughed at her.
7. If the motion passes, the Camarilla puts its weight behind it, and the proposal becomes one of the formal Curiosities of the Camarilla.

Motion of Censure

A tradition handed down from the Roman Senate, a Motion of Censure expresses strong disapproval or harsh criticism from a political body. A Motion of Censure is the only method by which Princes may counterbalance the power of the Justicars.

To enact a Motion of Censure:

1. A Prince of the Camarilla must ask to be acknowledged by the Speaker at a conclave.
2. This Prince must formally call for a Motion of Censure, which the Speaker cannot halt.
3. The petitioning Prince then must outline the reasons why she is calling for the Motion of Censure.
4. The assembly must discuss the motion; Kindred may speak and express approving or opposing opinions.
5. Once discussion concludes, the assembly votes. If successful, the conclave's formal censure of the Justicar is recorded.

A successful Motion of Censure has no formal consequences. A censured Justicar still holds her office, but she will have to stand before the Inner Circle and face harsh scrutiny for the scandal. This rarely goes well for the Justicar, but if she survives, she will ensure that her displeasure is known to those who spoke against her.

The Red List

"You have no need to roar, when true power kills with a whisper."

— John McAdams,
Brujah Alastor of the Camarilla

There are criminals hidden in vampire society who are so notorious and feared that their very name inspires feelings of dread. Known collectively as the *Anathema*, the names of these monsters are recorded on a roster known as the *Red List*. Anyone on the Red List is effectively subject to a permanent blood hunt in any Camarilla-controlled territory. The Red List ranks members according to the infamy of the undead.

To gain the "honor" of a place on the Red List requires truly monstrous crimes beyond the pale of membership in the Sabbat, serial diablerie, or even infernalism. To be an Anathema is to be considered a direct threat to the security of the Camarilla.

To place a vampire upon the Red List, three Justicars must expend their *Ascendant* status traits at a conclave to announce the introduction of a new Anathema. Afterwards, the Justicars will present all of the relevant information about the villain.

There are only two ways to for a criminal to remove her name from the Red List: die or serve the Imperator as a Myrmidon.

It is considered strictly taboo to diablerize any member of the Red List, for fear that a small part of the soul of the damned survives and taints the one who killed her. Those who dare break this taboo quickly find their name replacing their victim on the Red List.

Petitioning the Justicars to add a Criminal to the Red List

Only the Inner Circle and the Justicars have the right to add a criminal to the Red List. However, any Prince or elder may bring forth a motion at a conclave (see **page 393**) to recommend a candidate to the Justicars. The Justicars are not required to accept this motion, but it is considered scandalous for them to refuse this recommendation without cause.

To petition the Justicars to add a known criminal to the Red List:

1. A petitioner representing an elder, a powerful coterie, or an entire clan must present a motion to a Grand or Judicial Conclave.
    a. The petition must outline the crimes of the accused, the exact bounties offered for her destruction, and the names of those offering said bounties.
2. The Speaker will hear testimony as per usual, and when she believes the topic has been discussed enough, will call for a vote.
3. Should the motion pass, the Speaker is obligated to send the motion to the Justicars and await a judgment. If three Justicars are present, a recess may be called so they may consult and make a decision.

The Trophy

A bold vampire who successfully destroys an Anathema is rewarded with a prize known as the Trophy. Sometimes called "The Mark of the Beast," the Trophy is a tattoo of ink and blood that is thaumaturgically applied to the right palm. This tattoo is recognizable to any Justicar, Prince, Archon, or politically powerful member of the Camarilla as a sigil of an Alastor.

The Trophy has the following mystical properties:

- Once applied, the Trophy is forever connected to the Alastor. Severing the hand or even the limb will not remove the taint of the Trophy. It will simply appear on another part of the body until the missing limb is regrown.
- The Trophy can be detected via Auspex or other supernatural means as a mystical ritual, even under clothing.

- The Inner Circle has the ability to monitor every action that an Alastor takes via a sympathetic link to the Trophy.
- Should an Alastor commit Amaranth, the Trophy will mystically destroy her at sunrise.

The Trophy exists for the Alastor's protection, as it grants significant immunities and privileges as she works across the world to hunt Anathema. (See **Alastor, page 374**.)

Bounties on the Anathema

It is traditional for the clan, elder, or coterie sponsoring the addition of the Anathema to the Red List to offer a bounty.

Once a new Alastor is confirmed with the Trophy, she is eligible for these significant rewards. Some of the previous bounties from clans have included:

- A fortune in gold and other hard currencies
- Instruction in rare disciplines, Thaumaturgy, or Necromancy
- Grant of domain
- Forgiveness for past crimes, including the removal of all blood hunts
- Blood boons from Princes and elders

Anathema

The monsters on the Red List are collectively considered to be amongst the most dangerous creatures on the planet. They are crafty and strong enough to be a direct threat to the Camarilla and survive its attempts to bring them to justice. The Anathema are powerful enough individually to raze cities and slay those who hunt them.

And they have nothing left to lose.

Previous members of the Red List have included carriers of mystical diseases, Sabbat warlords, serial diablerists, infernalists, threats to the Masquerade, and other horrors that even the Kindred fear. Each of the Anathema is uniquely frightening with their own motivations, agendas, and goals.

The only common thread among the Anathema is that the Camarilla views them as supreme threats. Storytellers introducing Anathema into their chronicles should be careful to ensure they suit the themes and logistics of their stories. If the story revolves around intrigue, the Anathema can add a new complication to the table. If the story focuses on the struggle against the Beast, the Anathema can represent the ultimate manifestation of the Beast run rampant. If the story centers around fate and self-determination, the Anathema could have been made what it is through forces beyond its control — or entirely of its own volition. Anathema are larger than life creatures that can be used to encapsulate the worst, and possibly even the best, of what it is to be Kindred.

Prestation and the Ivory Tower

"There is no power without price."

— Ignatius Insolens,
Tremere Regent of Nuremberg

Immortal predators do not measure wealth in gold, money, or possessions. They can achieve these things simply by existing long enough and managing resources wisely. That which comes from mortals is transitory and might disappear at a moment's notice. Vampires have existed through the rise and fall of mortal empires.

Boons are the coin of the Kindred and reflect one's wealth in the Camarilla. A boon is the acknowledgement of debt between two Kindred, usually recorded by the Harpy of the domain. This formalization of relationships between two predators allows for the complex social structure of the Camarilla to exist without open violence.

All Kindred involved in the deal must be amenable to the boon, and any stipulations or clauses carried on the boon must be stated when it is recorded. The vampire who owes a boon is typically referred to as the *debtor*. The vampire who owns the boon is known as the *creditor*, as she offered services in promise of a future payment.

A debtor can only permanently rid herself of a boon by repaying it or formally ignoring the favor, risking the wrath of the Harpies. Regardless of the standing of the creditor, if the debtor ignores a major, blood, or life boon, she always loses status — nobody likes a vampire who brushes off someone who just went through serious hardship on her behalf. (See **Boon Breakers and the Harpies, page 397**).

Creditors who accept a boon typically require one stipulation: "You cannot physically harm me for the duration of this boon." All stipulations must be recorded by the Harpy and are enforced by said office.

The Measure of a Boon

Over the last 600 years, Harpies around the world have worked diligently to quantify boons and encourage a thriving economy, which keeps the Ivory Tower operating. The following metrics have evolved to prevent misunderstandings and wild boon inflation across the Camarilla.

Trivial Boon

A trivial boon is a simple favor owed for receiving a minor service, political consideration, or forgiving a social *faux pas*. This type of boon should be freely offered and accepted, much like a business card. Payment of a trivial boon should involve simple one-time favors or services that take no more than a single game session or a night to complete.

Example Scenarios Involving Trivial Boons:

- Making a formal social introduction to an important Kindred
- Covering a potentially embarrassing social *faux pas* in front of the Harpy
- Warning someone about a potential danger to them
- Supporting a political or social agenda that doesn't undermine your own position
- Assisting with a task for the evening, such as working security for a salon
- Leveraging one of your disciplines to aid your creditor's cause

Minor Boon

A minor boon represents a favor that requires a significant amount of time or effort, but low risk. Payment of a minor boon should involve simple one-time favors or services that take no more than two game sessions or a month (whichever is longer) to complete.

Example Scenarios Involving Minor Boons:

- Helping someone find safe passage through a hostile city
- Leveraging backgrounds and influences on someone's behalf
- Revealing crucial information
- Disposing of a threat without risking life or blood
- Teaching low levels of common disciplines

Major Boon

A major boon represents a large debt that requires a good deal of time or resources to pay, which may involve risking your personal political or social capital. Payment of a major boon should involve one-time favors or services that take no more than six game sessions or three months (whichever is longer) to complete.

Example Scenarios Involving Major Boons:

- Leveraging your backgrounds and influences to someone else's agenda
- Teaching the creditor advanced levels of a common discipline or low levels of an uncommon or rare discipline
- Revealing a major secret that is potentially very damaging
- Purchasing a major business, building, or land
- Aligning yourself with a political or social agenda that potentially harms your own position with your clan and allies, such as supporting someone's bid for praxis

Blood Boon

A blood boon is a sacred debt that can only be repaid by shedding blood on behalf of the creditor. The debtor will betray allies, ruin her reputation, or place herself in a potentially life-threatening situation in order to further the agenda of the creditor, thus the name "blood boon."

Example Scenarios Involving Blood Boons:

- Coming to another's aid and suffering grievous injury
- Betraying clan secrets or teaching proprietary disciplines, knowing that you will be labeled a traitor if discovered
- Assisting in a praxis seizure via force, and killing allies to see it done
- Holding off a fearsome enemy so that the creditor can flee
- Murdering a rival or an enemy knowing that you might be blood hunted if you are caught

The Backbone of the Boon Economy: Trivial Boons

A trivial boon is an excellent way to start a relationship. Is there an elder you want to meet? Offer a trivial boon to the Kindred who can make the introduction for you. Are you afraid that you mildly offended the Prince? Offer her a trivial boon.

Life Boon

A life boon is a rare boon that should only be given in circumstances when a vampire saves another vampire from an external threat that will destroy the life of the debtor. A powerful vampire cannot simply threaten a weak enemy and claim a life boon for not destroying her. Owing a life boon can be tragic. Many vampires consider owing a life boon as equivalent to being an unreleased childer. To owe a life boon is to surrender all of your own will until you have saved the life of the one that owns your life boon.

Example Scenarios Involving Life Boons:

- Protecting a fugitive (who might even be *Bloodhunted* or on the Red List) on behalf of your creditor
- Protecting your creditor from the Prince's justice to the bitter end
- Hiding a terrible crime, such as diablerie or infernalism
- Saving the life of another vampire from an enemy at significant risk to your own life

Kindred Credit: Owing Boons

Harpies distrust outsider Kindred who refuse to owe boons. In fact, a Kindred who does not have at least one registered boon to another member of the Camarilla suffers from the lesser social ban (see **page 403**).

The Camarilla depends on the interconnected web of status and prestation to help preserve the Traditions. A vampire who owes nobody has nothing to contain or chain her actions. A vampire who refuses to play by the system is worse than a rogue. Neonates refer to these loners as "vampire hobos," living on the edge of society and ignoring bonds of loyalty or propriety.

An advantage to owing a boon is that once a vampire offers a boon to repay a debt or forgive an insult, the topic is usually never discussed again. Offer an insulted vampire a boon and, if accepted, you are certain that she will not seek revenge in the future. If that insult is brought up again, the Harpies will socially eviscerate that vampire for ignoring a boon paid in good faith.

Some vampires find offering boons a blow to their egos, as it feels like a loss. However, the only real loss to an immortal is Final Death. Kindred not connected to others via boons lack the basic protection offered by owing an immortal predator a debt. A vampire who is owed a boon will wish to see it collected eventually. Once a boon is owed, a relationship is created. The creditors you owe now have an invested interest in keeping you around. After all, no one wants their debtors to suddenly go missing.

Conversely, young or powerless vampires cannot be bullied into owing a boon to an elder merely because of the vast gulf of social power that exists between them. A service must be provided or a real insult must be levied to result in owing a boon. Lazy elders who try to pick low-hanging fruit will find that the Harpies and other elders scrutinize their transactions very carefully. The Kindred who attempts to erroneously claim to save another's life will find others angry at them for devaluing boons.

Collecting Boons

A vampire with a host of boons can call upon the skills, powers, and influences possessed by vampires across several domains.

Boons offer control over your enemies rather than risking your existence by killing them. Forcing your enemies to submit to your will is the ultimate experience for a vampire. Why would you allow your enemies to escape so easily?

Refusing a boon from a vampire is akin to saying you believe that vampire is dishonorable. These relationships help Kindred foster control over their existence and gain allies. If nothing else, you should use boons from your allies to counter boons that others might have over them.

Boon Breakers and the Harpies

A boon breaker is a vampire who has refused to pay on a boon owed. Stigmatizing a Kindred for this reason is the worst punishment a Harpy can levy. The Harpy must first publically give the debtor a chance to repay the boon. Should the debtor not complete this task to the Harpy's satisfaction, she declares the rogue vampire a *Boonbreaker* and conveys the following social effects:

- All boons owed to and from a boon breaker are null and void. The vampire now exists as a rogue on the edges of vampire society.
- As long as the vampire suffers from the moniker of *Boonbreaker*, she carries the negative status *Disgraced*.

Often, debt holders owed by a boon breaker will hunt down and kill their former debtor. Most Princes will banish boon breakers from their domains, lest that vampire damage the reputation of the entire city.

A boon breaker may appeal to the Harpy who punished her for mercy, once she has shown a willingness to address

her crimes and pay her boon. A Harpy who forgives boon breakers too often will find her fellow Harpies monitoring her actions a little closer.

Should the Harpy refuse mercy to a *Boonbreaker*, the former debtor may attempt to appeal to a court of Harpies numbering at least seven but no more than 13 (often referred to as a *Murder of Harpies*). The *Boonbreaker* may tell her story and offer evidence. The Harpy who awarded the negative status has the option of defending her actions. At the end, each member of the court will publically announce her vote. Should the Murder of Harpies overturn the *Boonbreaker*'s negative status, the remainder of its term now falls upon the awarding Harpy to suffer. Should the punishment be upheld, the *Boonbreaker* now suffers an additional six months for each member of the court of Harpies who voted against her.

On rare occasions, a Murder of Harpies from domains in the region (such as a group of states or a small country) will gather at a Regional Conclave to pass judgment upon an entire domain accused of ignoring boons. Should the Murder of Harpies decide by majority vote that the accused domain has ignored prestation and station, they may declare an entire domain to be *Boonbreakers*. All boons coming into and out of that domain are considered null and void. Domains suffering from this stigma are often deemed very disreputable, and many consider anyone who lives there unaligned. Sometimes entire domains go to war over boons.

Bloodhunts and Boons

A blood hunt cancels all boons owed and owned by a vampire. The very act of a blood hunt negates the existence of a vampire. A creature under a blood hunt is no longer considered a vampire and thus does not deserve prestation. Should a vampire manage to cleanse her name and have the blood hunt removed, she regains all of her previous prestation.

Vampires Faking Their Own Deaths

Vampires occasionally fail miserably in politics, and some try to start over by faking their deaths. A wise vampire settles all outstanding affairs before attempting such a gambit.

Harpies take a very harsh stance on miscreants who attempt to escape debts to others in such a fashion. A vampire caught in such a desperate move will quickly discover that all boons owed to her have been declared null and void. This does not remove any prestation debt the vampire owed before she faked her death.

Political and Social Plots

The Camarilla is a confederation of bickering clans and paranoid city states united in a single common purpose to maintain and protect the Masquerade. Dozens of fundamental conflicts crack the Ivory Tower, such as ancient rivalries in the Jyhad, political tension, and ideological differences in the old and the young over very nature of what it means to be a vampire.

Games in the Camarilla setting involve a unique alchemy of elegant social climbing, devious political machinations, and controlling the monster inside of you while fighting the monsters outside the walls of the Ivory Tower. For a successful, exciting Camarilla chronicle, Storytellers should ensure significant political and social strife strikes the chronicle to force the players to make difficult choices about how their characters survive. Characters should be forced to explore what their choices say about how they survive in an endless night as a monster striving to live in a world alongside humans.

Every night is a seemingly endless slog of forging new alliances, enduring false hopes, and outlasting meaningless betrayals to help you survive the monotony of existence.

Internal Conflicts

- **Clans:** The foundation of the Camarilla is the common purpose of protecting the Masquerade, which unites disparate clans of vastly different perspectives and strengths. Some of these clans have been rivals for millennia. Hatred and prejudice are not so easy to overcome, even under the banner of the Camarilla. Here are but a few examples:
    - The Brujah and Ventrue have been bitter rivals since the Ventrue, along with a few allies, influenced Rome to sack Carthage and burn it to the ground. Recent events have brought old feuds back to the surface, and some believe this time these two clans will drag the Ivory Tower into a civil war.
    - The Tremere have long been hated for their power and malignant misdeeds including, but not limited to, the pogrom against the Salubri, the creation of Gargoyles, and the usurping of the blood of vampires. Most of the Camarilla clans secretly distrust the Warlocks, but the Malkavians and the Nosferatu seem to hold potent grudges against them.
    - Caitiff have long been at the bottom of vampire society, trying to squeak out a living as outsiders.

During the Time of Turmoil, Princes across the world took action to protect the Masquerade and their domains. Scourges quietly slaughtered the clanless in a vain attempt to stave off Gehenna for a few more decades. Many privately believe that this maneuver was ultimately successful and are ready to do it once again should the numbers of the Caitiff grow once more.

› The Gangrel might be the prodigal clan returning to the Ivory Tower, but many still remember the Wanderers' abandonment of the Camarilla during a difficult time. Many now question the Gangrels' loyalty and wonder if they will leave when times again turn difficult.

- **Generation Gap:** The Ivory Tower encompasses the ancient Luminary Elders, the doe-eyed neonate fledglings, and everything in between, in the same social structure. Elders organized the static hierarchy of the Camarilla to protect their power and prevent another Anarch Revolt or mortal Inquisition. Technology and those who can wield it frighten the elders, and thus the sect turns ever more stodgy and paranoid. The young find this stifling, but what other choice do they have? They can either find a way to build some sort of unlife, or they can escape to the outlands to join the frightening Anarchs or the monstrous, fanatical Sabbat.
- **Seizing the Throne:** Many seek to use power to alleviate their boredom and the ennui of immortality. The rush of risking their reputation and even their existence for a few social laurels and temporary power overwhelm the natural survival instincts of the Beast. Weary is the head that holds the crown, lest someone else come along and murder them for it.
- **A Game of Salons**: Status and prestation are the only wealth that truly matters to an immortal predator seeking dominion over her fellow vampires. A good deal of the social activities in the Camarilla revolve around climbing the social ladder and applying boots to the faces of those seeking to move past her. Those caught up in the social scene will do anything to gain an edge, even if others must suffer in the process.
- **The Ivory Tower versus the Local Domains:** Technology allows the Justicars to slowly extend their political reach into the day-to-day politics of local domains in the name of protecting the Masquerade. Princes stave off such advances by standing behind the Second Tradition. How long until there is a civil war between the two sides and the Camarilla turns upon itself?
- **The War of Ages:** The elders continually battle each other for supremacy via subtle maneuvers that echo in the Jyhad, and the young and the powerless are merely caught in the tide, hoping to survive.

External Conflicts

The Camarilla has a number of fascinating internal conflicts and potential plots, which makes it perfectly suitable as a standalone setting, but there are a number of potentially fascinating stories that can be told via conflicts with other sects and crossovers.

Independent clans work well in a Camarilla setting as outsiders struggling to compete in a city where the political machine is directly working against them. Recently the Followers of Set and the Giovanni formed an alliance and started sending contacts to many Camarilla domains, seeking out business opportunities.

Crossover Scenarios: Camarilla and the Anarchs

The Camarilla setting is a perfect background for Anarchs to suffer under the control of the elders. Many Princes grudgingly accept Anarchs in their cities so long as they avoid too much trouble and actively work towards keeping the Masquerade. Some will see a certain political advantage in having disposable tools that can work outside the system to achieve results. Others will delight in grinding the foolish Anarchs under the heels of their boots.

This is a perfect scenario for highlighting the Generation Gap and the War of Ages political and social plots. (For more information on this scenario from the Anarchs point of view, see **Crossover Scenarios: Anarchs and the Camarilla, page 476**.)

Crossover Scenarios: Camarilla and the Sabbat

The philosophical and religious differences between the Sabbat and the Camarilla make a conflict between the two a perfect foil to highlight the themes of the setting. A grudging detente exists between the two sects, but that only obfuscates a furious, small-scale cold war.

Sabbat spies continually attempt to usurp positions of power within the Ivory Tower to erode their enemy from within and seek out tactical information that might reveal any sort of weakness. Infiltrators tempt the young with promises of enlightenment and power at the cost of their Humanity. Random raids from war packs test the borders of Camarilla domains and keep troops hungry for the eventual war that both sides know will come one night.

Defending a domain against a bloody crusade can make for an exciting, but short, chronicle. Often, these conflicts work best as occasional counterpunches to the backdrop of intrigue and scandal of the Camarilla. Storytellers running a Camarilla chronicle should leverage the Sabbat as a spice to highlight the themes of the setting.

Station and Status in the Ivory Tower

Individuals rise through the Camarilla's ranks based on patronage, merit, and supporting the status quo.

Social Station

Within the Camarilla, an individual's private worth is determined first by her generation and longevity within the sect and as a vampire. Elders have created, defended, and perpetuated a system that gives them more advantages, and ancillae are more privileged than neonates. The inequities between social stations make a great deal of difference to the Kindred of the Ivory Tower, and have been the cause of much friction between Kindred over the centuries.

Elder of the Camarilla

It is whispered that the true power of the Camarilla lies squarely in the hands of the elders. This rank is not a formal office, but is a globally recognized social station awarded to those cunning and potent enough to walk the halls of power and politics as an elder. Many elders privately feel that a strong central Camarilla authority is unnecessary and that any real attempt to impose more regulation on a bunch of ancient and powerful Kindred would only meet with disaster. Nor are they at all pleased by what many of them see as naked power grabs by avaricious and self-interested Justicars.

These ancient Kindred subtly maneuver byzantine plots behind the scenes in endless skirmishes in the Jyhad. Elders often leverage their great power and influence out of fear to oppress the young into their service, as many bitterly remember the bloody nights of the Anarch Revolts. Neonates naturally chafe under such treatment and grow jealous of the elders' positions and power. The sheer weight of their prestige creates a glass ceiling that drives many seeking their own fortunes to the Anarch Movement.

To be considered an elder of the Camarilla, a vampire must be of a potent generation (Pretender Elder, Master Elder, or Luminary Elder) and have been known to be active for at least 300 years.

An elder of the Camarilla gains the abiding status traits *Confirmed*, *Established*, and *Privileged*. Note: Kindred can only claim abiding status from a single source at one time. Serafino might be the Harpy of his domain and an elder of the Camarilla, but he can only claim the benefits of one source of abiding status at a time.

Ancilla of the Camarilla

The largest body of vampires within the Camarilla are ancillae. To be considered an ancilla of the Camarilla, a vampire must be of the 10th generation or better, and have been known to be active for at least 50 years.

An ancilla of the Camarilla gains the abiding status trait *Confirmed*. Note: Kindred can only claim abiding status from a single source at one time. Duela might be the Primogen of her clan and an ancilla of the Camarilla, but she can only claim the benefits of one source of abiding status at a time.

Neonate of the Camarilla

The youngest and newest vampires of the Camarilla are the neonates. A neonate of the Camarilla gains no abiding status from her social rank.

Symbels

Symbels are a grand tradition in the Camarilla amongst peers in station. Traditionally, the following standards apply to symbels in the Camarilla:

- Elders can only be challenged to symbels by another elder.
- A Prince can only be challenged to a symbel by another Prince or a Justicar.
- A Justicar can only be challenged to a symbel by another Justicar.

For more information on symbels, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 317**.

Status Traits

Accepted

To be Accepted in the Camarilla setting is known as Acknowledged.

- **Acknowledged:** Accepting the Camarilla's *Acknowledgement* makes you an official member of the Camarilla, beholden to the authority of a Prince and fully protected under the Traditions. To use your Camarilla status within a city, you must be *Acknowledged* by the Prince of that domain. Global officers of the Camarilla, such as a Justicar, are immune to this limitation.

Camarilla Abiding Status Traits

The Camarilla uses the following additional abiding status traits. Innate traits given by Camarilla-only merits can also be found here.

Ascendant (abiding)

You are an ultimate authority within the Camarilla. Your voice can shake political mountains and alter the sect's future.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Ascendant* status, you are immune to the powers of, and may contradict orders given by, any individual who does not have the *Ascendant* status.
- **Spent:** Expend the status trait *Ascendant* to give your target the negative status *Disgraced* or to initiate a blood hunt against your target that is global in scope. If *Ascendant* is expended three times to target the same individual (all from different sources), the individual is Red Listed. If you are blood hunted or Red Listed, you receive the negative status *Forsaken*, which applies to all Camarilla domains. Further, the possessor of *Ascendant* may also expend this status to issue a doctrinal edict altering the practices of the sect. The power to issue edicts is further defined by each position that provides *Ascendant*.

Confirmed (abiding)

You are a staunch member of the sect, trusted to know and uphold sect laws. You are given more credibility and respect than those who are new or untested.

- **Passive Bonus:** While you possess *Confirmed*, you may approach any officer of the sect without a formal introduction, without social penalty.
- **Spend Bonus:** You can expend *Confirmed* to order a non-supernatural mortal (including ghouls, revenants and the like) who is beholden to your sect to obey your instructions, unless they directly contradict with prior orders from the mortal's master (domitor, etc.). If the target refuses, you have the authority to kill the mortal (or have her killed) without reprisal, as part of the Camarilla's rules of social conduct. *Confirmed* cannot be expended in combat.

Guardian (abiding)

You are a protector of one of the most important customs of the Camarilla: either the physical champion of Elysium or the social conscience of the Kindred court. Your power within that specific arena is formidable.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Guardian*, you may award the negative status *Warned* to anyone who behaves inappropriately within your jurisdiction or does not respect the authority of your proclamations.
- **Spent:** You may expend the status trait *Guardian* to award someone the negative status *Disgraced*. Keepers of Elysium may thus punish defilers of Elysium, calling them "Profane," while Harpies may punish someone who has been proven to have broken a legitimate boon, calling them "Boonbreaker."

Noble (abiding)

You are responsible for guiding a small faction of your sect, offering gentle persuasion and mild condemnation. While you hold this office, you must guide your fellows and provide a Noble example.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Noble* status, you may award any individual the fleeting status *Acclaimed* or *Loyal* without expending this status. An individual can only hold a single status from your *Noble* status at a time, but may benefit from repeated uses of *Noble* so long as they originate from separate sources.
- **Spent:** Expend *Noble* to award an individual who has caused significant offense the negative status *Vulgar*.

Privileged (abiding)

You are a venerated member of your sect, and vampires give your opinion great weight. The sect owes you respect.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Privileged*, you cannot be openly or effectively accused of lying unless the accuser possesses the status traits *Privileged, Commander*, *Triumphant*, or *Authority*. This does not mean other characters must believe what you say, only that they cannot publically challenge its veracity.
- **Spent:** You may expend *Privileged* status to give someone the *Vulgar* negative status trait.

Sovereign (abiding)

You hold praxis over one of the domains of the Camarilla. So long as you are within your domain, your order is inviolate according to the Second Tradition.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Sovereign* status, you control the praxis of a domain. You may award an individual the fleeting status *Courteous, Enforcer, or Loyal* without expending this status. An individual can only hold a single status from your use of *Sovereign* at a time, but may benefit from repeated uses of *Sovereign* so long as they originate from separate sources. Further, you cannot be

openly contradicted within the domain where you hold praxis, unless the individual possesses either the status trait *Privileged* or the status trait *Authority*.

- **Spent:** Expend the status trait *Sovereign* to give your target the fleeting status *Sanctioned* or to initiate a blood hunt against your target. If you are blood hunted, you are considered to have the negative status *Forsaken* while in that Prince's city. This has no effect if you travel to a city where you are not blood hunted. If the wielder of this status dies or is removed from praxis, your blood hunt is also removed.

Camarilla Innate Status Traits

Architect (innate)

You fought for the Camarilla during the Anarch Revolt and were present at the signing of the Treaty of Thorns. You are considered one of the founding members of the Camarilla.

- **Passive Bonus:** While you hold the status *Architect*, you are granted special privileges. You may attend and witness any Judicial Conclaves (but may not speak unless given permission), and you may approach and petition any Justicar or hosting Prince at a conclave.
- **Spend Bonus:** You may spend the *Architect* status to place an item on the agenda as a topic for the Speaker at conclave. Unless you specifically wish to include your name, the item will be listed simply as, "Submitted for consideration by an Architect of the Camarilla."

Primus Inter Pares (innate)

When a conclave is called, the Prince who hosts the conclave is considered First Among Equals. She gains this status for the duration of the conclave.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Primus Inter Pares*, your *Authority* status "outranks" other possessors of *Authority*. Passive and expended status effects that cannot target someone with *Ascendant* also cannot target you, and uses of *Authority* cannot undo your uses of status.
- **Spent:** *Primus Inter Pares* may be spent to expend another character's *Authority*, *Established*, or *Privileged* status without effect, or to undo any previous use of those status traits within your domain.

Camarilla Fleeting Status Traits

Acclaimed (fleeting)

You have publically protected the Masquerade or otherwise upheld the Traditions when they were in jeopardy. You have been lauded by the sect. Your friends, allies, and hangers-on bask in the glory of your acclaim.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Acclaimed*, you may extend the passive bonus of any one status you currently possess (which is not expended) to one individual per night. This bonus lasts for one hour, so long as they remain within 10 feet of you.
- **Spent:** You may expend *Acclaimed* to request that an officer of the sect share her views or offer advice, publically or privately (as you wish), about a subject that is pertinent to the domain. This may be used to further political agendas or for personal gain, such as having the Prince speak about your party in order to encourage people to go or to maneuver a rival into saying something compromising.

Gallant (fleeting)

You have fulfilled a great boon-debt (such as a blood boon or a life boon) to an individual of significance within the Camarilla (such as an elder of the Camarilla, a Prince, or even a Justicar). That vampire's good word travels far, convincing others to allow you a bit of latitude in your social dealings.

- **Passive:** The *Gallant* status has no passive bonus.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Gallant* to overcome any political or etiquette-related error you have made in the last five minutes. The error did occur, but those who would be offended by it must accept your apology, and may not hold the error against you.

Sanctioned (fleeting)

You have been granted permission to be an exception to the laws of the sect. This responsibility is not conferred lightly, and misuse of this status will be punished in turn.

- **Passive:** *Sanctioned* has no passive bonus.
- **Spent:** When granted, this status allows a specifically defined breach of one sect law. You can expend *Sanctioned* to break that law without incurring punishment. This action is a exception to the specific law, allowed by an *Authority* of a domain.

Camarilla Negative Status Traits

The Camarilla has the following additional negative status traits.

Vulgar (negative)

You've committed some minor grievance against the Camarilla, enough to be scolded, but not so much as to be severely censured. You should learn from your mistakes, or you will be punished more harshly.

- **Censure:** All fleeting status traits you possess are expended without effect. Fleeting traits lost in this manner are lost temporarily and return at the end of the game session. You cannot gain any further fleeting status while under this effect. The *Vulgar* trait lasts only for the night in which you are given the status.
- **Punishment:** If you receive a second *Vulgar*, this negative status automatically upgrades to *Warned*.

Status Bans

The Camarilla has the following status bans. (For more information, please see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems: Status, page 313**.)

Lesser Bans:

- Applies to members of the Camarilla not Embraced by one of the pillar clans. Gangrel have not yet regained their status as a pillar clan.
- Applies to members of the Camarilla on a Path of Enlightenment
- Applies to members of the Camarilla who do not have any boons registered with the Harpy
- Applies to members of the Camarilla who were once members of the Sabbat, within the past 10 years

Greater Bans:

- Applies to known Caitiff
- Applies to members of the Camarilla who've committed diablerie
- Applies to members of the Camarilla who have joined within the last year

Setting-Specific Mechanics

The Camarilla setting encourages a blend of subtle politics, elegant social maneuvering, quick bursts of horrible violence, and the slow denegation of Humanity as a monster tries to cling to what once made her human.

The Storyteller's job is to maintain those themes and keep a chronicle focused on the things that truly make the Camarilla setting so incredibly interesting and rich.

Rarity Adjustments: Clans

The clan rarity system is designed to reflect the population numbers of various clans in the Camarilla setting on a chronicle scale. The appearance of a clan on this list does not mean that said clan can be a member of the Camarilla, but that it can appear in the setting. For example, the Giovanni are listed as an uncommon clan in the Camarilla setting, but the setting clearly states that they are not allowed membership in the Camarilla.

The following clans of the Camarilla are considered pillar clans: Assamite, Brujah, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Toreador, Tremere, and Ventrue.

Common Clans (available at no cost):

A setting's common clans are the most appropriate for play. There is no additional cost for playing a clan that is common to your chronicle's setting.

Common clans include: Brujah, Caitiff, Gangrel, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Toreador, Tremere, and Ventrue.

Uncommon Clans (2 point merit):

Your character is a member of an uncommon clan, one that is not ordinarily found in your chronicle's setting. This clan is not often found, and you may be something of an outsider. You will find few other individuals of your clan within this setting, and you may be afforded fewer benefits than those given proper members of society.

Uncommon clans include: Assamites (Vizier), Giovanni, Followers of Set, and Ravnos.

Assamite Bloodline Alteration for the Camarilla Setting:

A small, but passionate faction of the Assamite Vizers, called the Schizmatics, formally petitioned the Camarilla for membership and joined it in 2004. Thus, Vizer is the default caste for Assamites. To play a warrior caste (known as Rafiq) in the Camarilla setting, you must purchase an additional

2-point bloodline merit. This clan is considered uncommon only because of the small numbers that survived the schism, not due to political leanings.

Rare Clans (4 point merit):

Your character is a member of a rare clan, one found very infrequently in your chronicle's setting. Such characters may be loners, outcasts, or solitary observers of society, and they may be treated poorly or shunned by the rest of the characters in play (as may be appropriate to the setting).

Rare clans include Cappadocians (Samedi), Daughters of Cacophony, Gargoyles, Lasombra, Salubri, and Tzimisce (Carpathian).

Cappadocian Alteration for the Camarilla Setting:

The Cappadocians are virtually unknown in the Camarilla setting. However, the Samedi bloodline exists within the Ivory Tower working as bodyguards and muscle for the elders. Thus, the Samedi bloodline is the default clan for the Cappadocians in the Camarilla setting.

Tzimisce Alternation for the Camarilla Setting:

The Tzimisce clan hates the Camarilla. However, a small brood from the Carpathian bloodline is making subtle gestures of peace toward the Ivory Tower, sending emissaries to watch the Camarilla's gatherings and evaluate its leadership. Thus, the Carpathians bloodline is the default for the Tzimisce within the Camarilla setting.

Restricted Clan (6 point merit)

Any unnamed clans and bloodlines are not appropriate for the Camarilla setting. Purchasing a clan/bloodline combination for this setting that requires a player to spend more than 7 merit points is also considered Restricted. A player wishing to do so should gain permission from her Storyteller before purchasing the combination under the Restricted Clan merit.

Additional Mechanics

The following material and mechanics are generally only appropriate for the Camarilla setting, and should not be carried over to any other style of chronicle. Speak to your Storyteller before you choose any of these items for your character.

Setting-Specific Merits

Antiquities (1 point merit)

Either you've been undead long enough to have collected a veritable storehouse of antique odds and ends, or you had a windfall when some other vampire met his Final Death. You can expend a downtime action to apply the *Antique* item quality to a piece of non-combat equipment. This quality does not count against the item's two-quality limit. At your Storyteller's discretion, some of the items in your antiquities vault may be of historical value; these may draw attention from various mortal agencies, if discovered.

Architect of the Tower (2 point merit)

You fought for the Camarilla during the Anarch Revolt and were present at the signing of the Treaty of Thorns. You are considered one of the founding members of the Camarilla, and as such, are granted the innate status trait *Architect*.

Emissary to the Camarilla (1 point merit)

Not everyone at a Camarilla gathering is a member of the sect. You're not *Acknowledged*, but you understand the rules of the Ivory Tower's political game, and you use them to best advantage. Perhaps you are a Giovanni liaison, or a local Setite priest, eager to assist the Camarilla…and capitalize on its internal struggles. So long as you are not *Accepted* by any sect, you can hold one fleeting status from the Camarilla. This is an exception to the rule that prevents non-*Accepted* individuals from holding sect status.

Machiavellian Prodigy (1 point merit)

You are exceptional at presenting yourself, manipulating others, and rising to the top of your social environment. This talent has served you well since your Embrace. Socially, you are treated as though you are one social class higher than your true generation. If you are a neonate, you are socially considered to be an ancilla (and gain the abiding status allocated to an ancilla); if you are an ancilla, you are considered an elder of the sect (and gain the status allotted to an elder). Elders receive no benefit from the purchase of this merit.

Master of Puppets (2 point merit)

You have gained control of an influence network that has proven to be particularly adroit and capable. Each week you regain one spent influence action in an influence of your choice.

Monopoly (1 point merit)

You have your fingers in almost everything that happens within your city, and your clout extends much further than most. You receive a second specialization for every dot of influence you purchase.

Prestigious Sire (1 point merit)

Your sire is an impressive elder or holds an important position in the Camarilla. You possess the innate status trait *Loyal* so long as both you and your sire avoid scandal. Should either of you gain the negative status *Disgraced*, you lose the benefit of this merit until the Disgraced status trait is removed.

Social Nobility (3 point merit)

In your past, you held a prestigious social position: perhaps as a long-ruling prince, an Archon, or a famous Harpy. Although you don't necessarily hold the position at this time, your name has become synonymous with the upper echelons, and you are treated with an extraordinary amount of respect. When someone satisfactorily repays a boon owed to you, you may give them the fleeting status *Gallant*.

Setting-Specific Flaws

Accused of Heresy (2 point flaw)

Though accused of heresy in your past, you were allowed to survive. You might have been in possession of forbidden tomes, such as the *Book of Nod*, the Cainite Heresy's *Euagetaematikon,* or the *Gospel of Laodice* (and your copy was seized and burned by Josian Archons); you might have shown kindness to a Caitiff; shared information about Golconda; or done something similarly prohibited. Because of this error in judgment, your name is on the Camarilla's list of dangerous individuals, and you are closely watched by agents of the Justicars. You are treated as though you are one social class lower than your actual generation, and lose the abiding status possessed by your actual generation in favor of the one below. In this manner, an elder is treated as an ancilla, and an ancilla is treated like a neonate. If this flaw is possessed by a neonate, she is treated as though she were a Caitiff and gains the Greater Status Ban applied to Caitiff.

Forgiven Diablerie (1 point flaw)

You either committed diablerie during a blood hunt as a result of a Trophy or committed diablerie before the formation of the Camarilla. You have a writ of approval signed by a Prince or a Justicar. Although you cannot be openly punished for this past indiscretion, you have undoubtedly made enemies, and there are many elders who would delight in your ultimate downfall.

Sectarian (2 point flaw)

You earnestly believe Camarilla propaganda, and no evidence can convince you otherwise. There are no End Times, the Antediluvians are nothing to worry about, Golconda is infernalism, there was no city of Enoch, and the biblical Caine is a myth. You've heard some of the rumors, but you know that the Camarilla is eminently correct. Whatever happens, you do all you can to ensure that others toe the party line. You cannot possess the Lore skill above 2, nor may you purchase the Loremaster merit.

Tainted Embrace (2 point flaw)

You were Embraced by a prestigious member of the Sabbat, and the Camarilla is aware of your origin. Although your sire tried to force you into that sect, you rejected the Sabbat and escaped to swear allegiance to the Camarilla. Unfortunately, your reputation will forever be marred by your foul origin. Your maximum fleeting status is 1 less than usual while you have this flaw. This penalty adds to that imposed by any status ban.

Untrained Combatant (3 point flaw)

You may be an exceptional social manipulator or a keen investigator, but you were never particularly good at weapons finesse. As the Camarilla has many other avenues through which to gain power, you've never even bothered to learn such trivial things. As a result, you cannot perform combat maneuvers. Further, you cannot gain the benefit of a combat maneuver from the assist attacker tactic while you have this flaw.

Shadowed Reflections

The orb was lighter than she'd expected. Hollow, perhaps — certainly not burdened with the heaviness of solid steel. Eden drew it out of the bag and tossed the torn fabric aside, inspecting her prize. Curious, she read the gold-etched words shining on its surface. "Embrace not love…" they read, scribed in her native Italian. How strange, that an item so ancient would be so easy to read. Eden stared down at the sphere's silvery reflection, until, suddenly, the Lasombra realized she was looking into her own eyes.

A chill ran down her spine. *The legends are true…*

In the reflection, her face was slightly overlong, with full lips and wide, brown eyes above a slightly hook-shaped nose. Light skin, so pale she could barely imagine its once-golden tan. Was she still beautiful? It had been so very long since she'd seen herself, and the years ravaged everything they touched. Eden leaned closer, peering down in fascination, captured by the image of her eyes. They were lighter than she remembered, more honey than walnut stain. It wasn't surprising that she'd forgotten the exact shade; it'd been nearly two hundred years since she'd seen them.

Eden wasn't sure how long she stood there, leaning against the brick wall of the alley and gazing at the curved surface of the orb. Streetlight didn't move with the passage of time, and it was impossible to see the moon through the haze of Detroit smog. Shaking herself out of her reverie, Eden tucked the orb under one arm. She'd spent too long; her pack was waiting.

She reached up to grip the lowest rung of the fire escape and called upon the shadows to guide her movements. Tentacles slithered out of the darkness, clutching the cold metal rungs and lifting her up, carrying the Lasombra past row after row of dull, broken windows. When she reached the top, she leapt from their grasp to land gracefully on the roof of the old tenement house. Once there, Eden's movements faltered.

A tall, gaunt skeleton of a man stood on the roof, his ravaged face eclipsed by shadows.

One figure, where there should have been two.

"Kreztov," she said, recognizing the Nosferatu *antitribu's* wide, toadlike face. He smiled, a mountain range of teeth jutting out at wicked angles between his rotting lips.

"*Inquisitor* Kreztov," he corrected gently. His rumbling voice brushed the syllables like a lover relishing naked flesh. "You've been in my library, Ductus — during the last Esbat, when I was…distracted. Did you think I would be unable to tell?" His green-tinged eyes narrowed.

Eden leveled a cold stare. "I stole nothing from you. Where is my pack?"

"You stole knowledge, Ductus. That is the most dangerous theft of all."

"If you wish to punish me, you may demand a Rite of Contrition or call for an Ignoblis duel. If you feel our dispute can be settled no other way, there is always the Auctoritas. Statute twelve of the Code: *The Ritus of Monomacy shall be used to settle disputes…. "*

"You think to parrot the Code of Milan at me?" The Inquisitor tensed, his hands clenching into fists. Eden ceased all movement. Although she did not fear the Nosferatu physically, his wrath was the wrath of the Inquisition. A word in the right ear and Kreztov could condemn her as a heretic.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

After a moment, Kreztov's fetid mouth curved into a falsified smile. "Do you have it? The Phoenician Orb?" His eyes scoured her form. There was no hiding the treasure, so Eden did not try, lifting it to her shoulder and letting moonlight dance across the golden words. Kreztov's eyes widened, green-shot pupils focusing on her reflection within the metal. "So, the orb is magical, after all," the Inquisitor breathed. "Phoenician. Like so many things of ancient Phoenicia, perhaps infernal? Certainly, it must be an Antediluvian's trick, sent to sow chaos like the Greek apple of discord." Feigning nonchalance, he let his fingers uncurl toward her, like worms after the rain. "Give it to me."

She shook her head. "I am under no constraint to do so."

"Statute fourteen, Knight. *All Sabbat have the right to monitor the behavior and activities of their fellow sect members.*"

Eden sharply finished his words, "*… in order to maintain freedom and security.* Here I am, Inquisitor, both free and secure. Unless you know the orb is infernal, you have no authority to confiscate it. Do you truly wish to risk your unlife on a guess?" The Lasombra lifted her chin, eyes blazing. "My packmates, Tragaard and al-Quresh. Where are they?"

His patient demeanor soured, and the Beast flickered in annoyance behind the Nosferatu's algae-colored eyes. Kreztov's hand lowered with something between resignation and annoyance. "Fighting. In fact, I believe they may be facing their Final Deaths." As the shock registered, Kreztov continued, "I discovered that the Anarchs were going to attack during your attempt to steal the Phoenician Orb, and I enlightened your packmates as to their location. Of course, I may have underestimated the Anarchs' numbers…by a factor of three to one."

A monstrous fury rose up in Eden's spirit, threatening to overwhelm her thoughts. Her veins turned to fire, and despite her efforts to calm it, her Beast roared to the surface. She held strong vinculums with her packmates, and their passions were nearly overwhelming, as was the Beast's demand for blood and pain. "Where?" she managed to growl through clenched teeth.

"I'll gladly tell you where…if you give up the orb. Here, and now."

Eden's mind raced, seeking any possible breach that would allow her to shred his face and spit on his ashes — but she found none. The Inquisitor's actions were deplorable, but acceptable under the Code. She had the power to crush the little Nosferatu into pulp — but politics and the Code of Milan forbade her from using it. She must choose between her pack and her prize.

The vinculum won.

"Done," Eden growled, face red with anger. "You have my word."

With a wide, victorious grin, Inquisitor Kreztov gave her an address and held out his hand.

Eden marked the location in her memory. She gazed down at the orb once more, meeting the eyes within the mirrored surface. Perhaps it was for the best. Keeping this miraculous gift seemed almost a blasphemy, a childish attempt to evade the punishments the Dark Father placed upon his offspring. Was the orb a trick played by some ancient Antediluvian? A temptation, wrought to turn one's faith from Caine? Certainly, Eden could stare forever into those eyes…*her* eyes….

Her body rigid, her will as taut as a steel girder in her effort to hold back the onslaught of the Beast, Eden spun on her heel. She hefted the orb into the darkness in a single motion, placing the full brunt of her supernatural strength into the throw. Kreztov cried out in wordless protest. His hand fell, and the Nosferatu's smile crumpled into a toothy gape. As the twinkling silver mote tumbled like a comet into the night, Eden murmured darkly, "I have fulfilled my word as a Knight of Honorable Accord, Inquisitor, as my path demands. I have given up the Phoenician Orb…" She smiled, and the expression was tight and humorless.

"…but not to you."

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Ten: The Sabbat

"Come, brothers and sisters, join together in sacred ritae.
Speak His words, share His blood, and ensure that the Dark Father's commands are never forgotten..."

— Temoch the Jackal, Regent of the Sabbat

Long ago, the vampiric world was plunged into rebellion. Young Cainites rose up against their elders and demanded to be free from the chains of blood. Within the still-burning ashes of that revolution, a weapon of hatred and defiance was forged: a sect of vampires now called the Sabbat.

Some know the Sabbat as the Sword of Caine: an army created to fight and defeat the Antediluvians, ancient vampires who will awaken during the final nights of the world. Others know the sect as the Church of the Dark Father: a religion based on embracing vampirism, reveling in dark purpose, and revering the most ancient vampire, the legendary Caine. In truth, the sect is both.

The Sabbat was founded on bold ideals: freedom and unity, faith and free will. Its members are the reverent flock of the first vampire, celebrating their undead nature and inhuman condition. At its heart, the Sabbat is a cult. Members are taught to believe the End Times are nigh, and that Gehenna will bring the return of Caine and a reward to their labors in his name. Until then, the Sabbat fights a war of freedom and survival against the Camarilla, who are considered slaves of the Antediluvians, while struggling to balance personal freedom and the necessary bonds of alliance.

Founded by the Lasombra and the Tzimisce clans, who make up a majority of the sect, the Sabbat harbors all manner of unusual vampires. From the *antitribu* of the major clans to a smattering of rare bloodlines, the church opens its doors to all vampires who follow in the footsteps of Caine. Sabbat spend their nights among small, loyal packs, sharing vitae in dark rituals and bloody rites. Religious clergy vie for authority against militant ducti, while the zealots of the Black Hand fight a cold war with the agents of the Sabbat Inquisition. The Sword of Caine is beset by ideological rifts, infernal agents, and mortal hunters, consumed by strife both inside and out. Yet the sect stands unyielding, refusing to surrender or be enslaved.

Victory will take strength. It will take cunning. It will take faith.

Welcome to the Sabbat.

On a Pale Horse — History of the Sabbat

Rise of the Sword

"In nomine Caine; et Patris, et Gladius, et Sanguis Sancti…"

Since ancient nights, powerful vampire lineages have warred against one another for control of the mortal world. Elders Embraced carefully selected broods, forcing childer to work ceaselessly for the glory of their sires. Plagues infested Europe, thinning the available herds of mortal blood and forcing vampires to eradicate one another simply to survive. To enforce their will, elders used the blood bond, replacing a

childe's instinct for self-preservation with the false emotions of vitae addiction. Childer were pawns, sacrificed at the whim of the ancients. In time, these savage battles drew the attention of mortals, notably the Catholic Church. Pope Gregory IX founded the mortal Inquisition, which hunted Cainites and slaughtered them with faith and fire.

At the turn of the 1400s, a faction of young vampires managed to rebel. Using a magical ritual created by Tzimisce koldun, they broke their blood bonds and struck back at their elders, diablerizing many of their sires. This revolution, known as the Anarch Revolt, was a bloody, vicious battle that raged for nearly a century. The revolution culminated in two unthinkable blows: the rebellious childer of the Lasombra and Tzimisce clans defeated and diablerized their Antediluvians, the very founders of those clans. Meanwhile, the mortal Inquisition preyed upon all vampires, taking advantage of the chaos to target and destroy undead across Europe and northern Africa.

In a desperate attempt to stop the Anarch Revolt and escape the Inquisition, a coterie of Toreador and Ventrue elders and their allies gathered in a small chapel outside the English town of Silchester in the year 1493. There, they founded the Camarilla and forced the Anarchs to sign the Treaty of Thorns, ending the revolution. (For more information on the Treaty of Thorns, see **Chapter Eleven: The Anarch Movement, page 462**.)

But not all Anarchs wanted peace. In defiance, these extremists burned the town of Silchester and rejected the Camarilla's terms of surrender. They declared themselves "Sabbat," a religious term denoting their adherence to the spiritual tenets of Caine. Sabbat vampires descended from the Camarilla's founding clans proudly called themselves "*antitribu*," or "enemies of the clan." Following the lead of the Lasombra and Tzimisce clans, who rejected the Camarilla's offer nearly as a whole, the newly formed Sabbat burned the village of Silchester and made a bold statement: we will never be slaves.

The Church of the Dark Father

"Destroying a man is nothing.
Destroy everything he has created and watch him crumble before your eyes. This is what I have done for Prague.
This is what I will do… to you."

— Vaclav Bili, Tzimisce Voivode

In the wake of the Anarch Revolt, the Sabbat spread rapidly, converting many vampires to the reverence of Caine. They developed a doctrine based on the tales of Gehenna, which foretold that the progenitors of the clans will rise and feast upon their vampiric childer during the End Times. These progenitors, the Antediluvians, are the rebellious grandchildren of Caine. According to a sacred text known as the Book of Nod, the Antediluvians disobeyed Caine's wisdom, causing the first vampire to rouse from his slumber and place a curse on them and their offspring. The Sabbat believes that by destroying the Antediluvians, it is serving Caine's interests and doing as he would command.

Shaped by the powerful and charismatic Lasombra clan, the Sabbat mirrors many aspects of the mortal church, patterning its practices on religious culture and hierarchy. Further, the Sabbat also developed powerful blood magic based on the faith of Caine. These mass rituals, known as *ritae*, are a cornerstone of the sect.

During the Anarch Revolt, small groups of weak-generation vampires worked together and were able to defeat more powerful elders acting alone. The Sabbat continued this strategy, and the pack became a critical part of the sect's structure. Packs have two leaders, a Priest and a Ductus: one to tend to their spiritual needs, and the other to lead them in battle. These cellular packs are directed by a single overall leader who has been ordained in formal ritae. That leader is titled the *Regent of Caine*.

Still, not all Sabbat vampires are fanatically religious. An internal order called the *Black Hand* rose to prominence on its military excellence, becoming the special operations force of the Sabbat. As infiltrators, assassins, and covert agents, the Black Hand dedicates itself to the most dangerous missions. A second order, known as the *Sabbat Inquisition*, focuses on purging heresy and destroying infestations of infernalism, which plague the Sword of Caine.

In the 1600s, discord within the sect sparked great controversy and reformation. The First Sabbat Civil War was fought between the Lasombra and Tzimisce clans, primarily focusing on resources, territory, and the right to rule the sect. As part of this conflict, Cardinals refused to share knowledge of the ritae, attempting to control these magical rituals in order to maintain authority and rulership. The violence divided the Sabbat into two ideological factions: Ultra Conservatives, who wanted to establish a firmer hierarchy; and Loyalists, who wished greater freedom. The famous Lasombra, Gratiano de Veronese, diablerist of that clan's Antediluvian, advised the third Regent to call together a quorum of Priests, Cardinals, and Prisci and hold the first ecumenical council of the Sabbat. This gathering, known as the Synod of Orphans, formalized the *Auctoritas* (or "High Ritae") and separated them from the *Ignoblis* ("Low" or "Pack Ritae"). There, the Sabbat set into law the fact that Auctoritas Ritae must be shared among the sect, and none could be denied this knowledge; Ignoblis Ritae could be proprietary to the pack or faction that developed it.

Despite these concessions, the political rifts within the sect continued to deepen. The Lasombra and Tzimisce clans continued their in-fighting as the sect spread into the New World. While the sect was focused on internal conflicts, the Camarilla moved in and quietly began to claim domains. By the time the Sabbat realized what was happening, it had been surrounded and its territories were seized. The sect had forfeited its dominance of North America.

The New World

Vampires of the Sword of Caine are survivors and, despite the obstacles, the sect managed to unify enough to maintain a few powerful strongholds in Canada and Mexico. This retention was largely due to the actions of the Black Hand, which began to claim a much larger scope of authority. Taking advantage of the rift in leadership during the Sabbat Civil War, the Hand appointed its own internal hierarchy, declared an independent mandate for itself, and chose or rejected "contracts" rather than following orders given by the hierarchy of the Sabbat. Worse, in their pride, the leadership of the Black Hand allowed themselves to be manipulated by outside forces, secretly serving vampires who were not part of the sect. In 1919, at the height of this hypocrisy, a legion of Black Hand operatives fought and destroyed a majority of the members of the Sabbat Inquisition, claiming the Inquisition had allowed political goals to overcome the order's duty to the sect. The Inquisition was reformed some years later, but the two factions remained bitter enemies. These battles were only part of the continued internal strife that continued to plague the sect.

The first attempt to create sect law in the Sabbat was codified in a document titled the Purchase Pact. That treaty was signed in 1803, but its text stated that a sect member could be declared a traitor by "a duly recognized Bishop, Archbishop, or elder of the sect." It was this terminology that set off the Second Sabbat Civil War. Cainites saw the Purchase Pact as an attempt to reverse Sabbat doctrine and restore the tyranny of elders, the very source of the Anarch Revolt.

In 1933, the Sabbat convened another synod, this time in New York (a city the sect had managed to hold against the best efforts of the Camarilla). There, the Sabbat rededicated itself to freedom, unity, and the religion of Caine. Adherents to the Path of Honorable Accord within the sect had long espoused a return to code and law, championing their internal doctrine, a three-book text from the 11th century known as the Code of Milan. During the end of his tenure, Regent Gorchrist selected several of the most important tenets of that ancient code and updated them, using them as a basis for a formal document of law for the Sabbat. Although Gorchrist met Final Death before he saw the fruition of this labor, the laws he envisioned were formally signed in the city of New York in 1933. The text of this new Code of Milan negated the Purchase Pact and rendered authority to a more neutral designation: "leaders." Even so, a Third Civil War broke out in 1957 — though, truly, this conflict was more of a failed coup. A powerful Brujah *antitribu* attempted to seize the Regent's throne in order to revoke the Code of Milan. He failed, and the code was adopted throughout the sect.

Year of Fire

For a brief period in July 1999, a Red Star shone in the sky, signaling a series of changes that became known as the Week of Nightmares. According to rumors that spread rapidly among the Sabbat, the Ravnos Antediluvian awakened in Bangladesh and was immediately destroyed by unknown agencies in a devastating battle that spanned three days and nights. The Sabbat saw the event as a holy revelation and the Red Star as a sign of Caine's imminent return. the Regent announced a Crusade, and the Sabbat Embraced massive quantities of mortals, driving them toward its Camarilla enemies in savage waves. Whether or not the Red Star was a grand revelation of the End Times, it became a convenient catalyst for hungry Cainites to justify an all-out Crusade after decades of cold conflict.

Rioting with enthusiasm, Sabbat forces conquered Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington, D.C. Detroit, always a stronghold

Elders are for Eating

The Sabbat does not acknowledge superiority based on generation, age, or lineage, and it is vicious to those who claim to be "elders." In common parlance, "elder" equates to "enemy," and "a member of a lineage" equates to "enslaved by my sire." A vampire who claims that she is an "elder of the Sabbat" is asking to be diablerized and is openly revealing herself to be ignorant of the sect's very premise. This stance is clear hypocrisy; it is well-known that both the Tzimisce and the Lasombra clans have internal hierarchies and offer respect from childe to sire. Those clans simply keep such internal structures a private affair, and the body of the sect is assuaged.

of the sect, rose in prominence, preparing for what seemed the imminent arrival of Caine. Still, there were setbacks. A powerful curse swept through the sect, destroying nearly all Tremere *antitribu*, and, in an act of ultimate betrayal, the Assamite *antitribu* abandoned the Sabbat en masse when their Eldest called them to return to the mountain of Alamut.

Throwing away all vestiges of caution, the Sabbat rose up and prepared for Gehenna. The time had come for Caine to return.

Then…nothing happened.

No other Antediluvians seemed to awaken. The Red Star faded, and glory did not come. This slow realization was followed by a sharp, devastating backlash among the sect. Packs blamed one another for breaches of faith or lack of military strength: any offense that might have lost Caine's favor. Political factions imploded. Fanatics engaged in mass suicide, and internal violence threw the sect into pandemonium. Then, a massive blow struck the fractured sect, and the Nights of Turmoil began.

In January 2001, every vampire in the Sabbat-controlled city of Savannah was eradicated in a single night. Exceptionally coordinated and well-informed societies of mortal hunters, working together, took advantage of the chaos within the sect. These operatives descended on Sabbat strongholds and eradicated pack after pack of Sabbat. Vampires who had been conspicuous in celebrating the "end of the world" were quickly destroyed, and the Sword of Caine was slaughtered throughout the East Coast.

The agents of the Black Hand attempted to hold the sect together by marshaling its forces. However, the defection of the Assamite *antitribu* divided the Black Hand's leadership and corroded the order's prominence within the Sabbat. Vengeful over past rivalries, the Inquisition levied its considerable political power to further damage the Black Hand's reputation. Using their authority, Inquisitors discovered and revealed the Hand's ties to outside agencies. Those ties were severed, and several established agents of the Hand were destroyed on charges of treason. By 2005, the scattered remnants of the Black Hand were on the verge of crumbling into insignificance.

In the end, it was the tenaciousness of the new Regent, Temoch the Jackal that saved the Church of Caine from destruction. Temoch gathered the remaining Black Hand agents and negated the order's self-proclaimed independent mandate. He called on the Coyotes of the sect, his own bloodline, and asked them to join the ranks of the weakened Hand. With their aid, Temoch rededicated the order to its original purpose as elite defenders of the Sabbat, and he used the Black Hand to locate and extract desperate packs in war-torn areas, regrouping the broken remnants of the Sword of Caine in Mexico City.

Modern Nights

Many scholars and powerful Sabbat leaders were destroyed during the Nights of Turmoil. The Sabbat has grown weak. Its numbers are drastically reduced, and it is still the primary target of mortal hunters. The war against the Antediluvians and the Camarilla, while important, must come second to the sect's survival. Desperate for hope, many packs search for lost myths of Enoch, alternate prophecies of Caine's return, or revelations in lost pages of the Book of Nod.

Although the Sabbat once practiced unrestrained mass-Embraces, that tactic has been significantly curtailed and is now practiced only as part of an official Crusade. In an age where street-corner security cameras feed directly to the internet, Embracing large numbers of mortals would reveal the sect's whereabouts in an instant. Further, such vampires are weak, thin-blooded, and untrained; random fast-food workers will never replace a lost army. The sacred gift of Caine's Embrace must be treated with respect.

Once, the battle between the Camarilla and the Sabbat reflected the mortal Cold War. Now, it has become an echo of modern guerrilla warfare. Battles are smaller; combatants use hit-and-run operations, sabotage, arson, and raids rather than standing their ground or calling in waves of

Did Gehenna Happen?

There are many dissenting views as to whether or not the Red Star was truly a sign of the End Times. Some vampires within the Sabbat believe Caine did not rise because the sect failed to properly (fanatically) honor his commandments. Others believe the Red Star was only the first sign of Gehenna, and the fruition of the End Times may take decades or even centuries. Perhaps the Antediluvians are awake, but not yet apparent. Then again, perhaps the Red Star was not a sign of Gehenna, and the End Times are yet to come. All of these views (and many others) are argued among the packs of the Sabbat.

packs from outside the diocese. The sect is unequipped for open war. Make no mistake, there is no love lost between Camarilla and the Sabbat. Old grudges burn, revenge-minded vampires still wait for opportunities to strike, and nothing has been forgotten. The undead simply practice war more cautiously. Deliberately breaching the Masquerade in Camarilla territory is still a popular gambit, as are single-target attacks on prominent individuals, but outright Crusade is rare. The Sabbat makes greater use of ghoul-like revenants, directed by the Order of St. Blaise, to protect the Silence of the Blood and keep the sect's territories hidden.

The independent clans (primarily the Giovanni, Assamites, and Setites) are clearly enemies of the Sword of Caine. These three clans openly serve their founders, and their alliances do not match the strength of the Camarilla. They are hunted and destroyed without prejudice or negotiation.

The Anarchs are of interest to the sect in a different manner. Subjugated by the Camarilla, struggling for their own freedom, Anarch gatherings provide fertile ground for recruitment into the Dark Church.

In some locations, the sect is still moderately strong. The Sabbat jealously contests domains in Mexico, North Africa, and Eastern Europe. The Sword of Caine tends to maintain power in areas where technology is less prevalent, or where violent mortal tyranny is supported by Sabbat control. The Sabbat continues its dominance in St. Louis, throughout western Ohio, and the Great Lakes area, as well as its traditional strongholds in Mexico and South America. Still, most of the U.S. Eastern Seaboard is strongly Camarilla-controlled. New York remains a contested zone. To the far south, Miami has become a multi-cultural hive of villainy, unclaimed by any sect: a veritable no-man's-zone of mixed alliances and spotty allegiances.

Betrayal

During the Nights of Turmoil, a Toreador lineage, led by Baron Philippe Volgirre, defected from the Sabbat. Dissatisfied with the sect's new religious revival and blamed for drawing hunter attention with their decadent and inhumane art, the Volgirre chose to leave. The lineage altered their faces and forms with Vicissitude and broke their vinculums to the sect by using a Thaumaturgical ritual stolen from the Inquisition: a ritual known as the Severed Hand. The Sabbat has sworn vengeance against these traitors — but until they are tracked down and destroyed, the sect turns its anger toward ensuring that the remaining Toreador *antitribu*, like the Assamite *antitribu*, are fully aware of the Sword's displeasure.

Return of the Tremere Antitribu

Prior to the Red Star's return, the Tremere created a potent ritual to destroy the *antitribu* of their clan. The ritual succeeded, but a small group of Tremere *antitribu* survived; specifically those who did not descend from the notable elder, Goratrix, whose blood was used as a sympathetic link for the ritual. The majority of Tremere *antitribu* remaining are members of the Telyav bloodline: sorcerers with a focus on pagan blood rituals rather than hermetic spells. Only a handful of the Tremere *antitribu* are pure-blooded Tremere who had the good fortune of descending from elders other than Goratrix. All are eager to enact vengeance against those who performed the curse.

Revival

"Monsters? No.
We are only 'monsters' in as much as any
fallen angel could be called so."

— Yitzhak, Toreador *antitribu*,
Cardinal of Montreal

After the Nights of Turmoil, the Sabbat renewed its dedication to the faith of Caine. The ritae have become more important than ever. However, to some vampires, the sect's increased focus on faith is a difficulty. Those who were not raised in a deeply religious culture find fanatic adherence to ecclesiastical practices uncomfortable. Younger members of the Sword of Caine, particularly those who are non-Christian, agnostic, or atheistic, can become discomfited by the sect's

The Silence of the Blood

After the slaughter of packs in Savannah, the Sabbat realized that it is foolhardy to ignore the dangers of the mortal world. In an age of cellphones, micro-cameras, and satellite surveillance, the Silence of the Blood has been extended. Members of the Sabbat are not to draw the attention of mortal hunters, nor endanger their packs or fellow sect members by allowing the mortal world to locate Sabbat gatherings or identify the powers of Caine.

fervent devotional doctrine and parochial attitudes. It is difficult to ignore the tangible benefits of the ritae, but seeing magic at work doesn't prove the existence of God or Caine.

Members of the Sabbat hold differing views about vampirism, Caine, and religion. Not every member of the sect is a religious fanatic. So long as a vampire does not actively proselytize against sect doctrine, deny the existence of Caine, or refuse to participate in Auctoritas Ritae, she achieves the minimum participation necessary to be considered a proper member of the church.

Vampires of the Sabbat prize belief, as they concretely see its power through the various ritae. Sabbat sires often look for the capacity for faith in a potential childer. Individuals who hold strong ideals – whether the conviction is in religion, science, or some other ideal – make excellent Sabbat. So long as the person has a strong will and a believer's mind, genuine faith in the Dark Church will come in time.

As a sect, the Sabbat does not make alliances with vampires outside the Sword of Caine. Such creatures are weak and misguided, slavishly serving their elders and defying Caine. On occasion, individual Sabbat (or a single pack) might interact with independents and Anarchs, primarily to convert those vampires or manipulate them against more dangerous enemies. Interacting with vampires outside the sect is dangerous; the Inquisition quickly brings charges of heresy against any sect member found to be spending time with outsiders. Those who claim to be "converting" had best be able to provide a list of supplicants they have brought into the Dark Church.

If an individual is targeted for conversion, but does not join the church within a few months, she is condemned as a willing heretic. It is assumed that, in order to convert a vampire, she must have been told information about the practices and beliefs of the Sabbat — and it is forbidden to share such knowledge with an individual who has no plans to join the sect. If the supplicant does not convert rapidly, she will be hunted down with dedication and diablerized to strengthen the Sword of Caine. The Sabbat member who failed to successfully ensure the conversion is punished as well; individuals who reveal sect secrets to non-Sabbat are subject to the Auctoritas Ritae of the Wild Hunt, and their existence is forfeit. In all ways, dealing with those outside the sect is a dangerous matter.

This has often been a point of hypocrisy within the sect. Sabbat members who predate the Treaty of Thorns often have history with vampires outside of the Sabbat. A Loyalist pack might make under-the-table deals with non-sect members or temporarily ally with a member of the independent clans against the Camarilla, as a matter of local survival. These circumstances are understandable — but still punishable. If such "exceptions" are publically brought to the attention of the clergy, the Black Hand, or the Inquisition, no leniency will be shown.

Elysium

Younger Sabbat openly mock and defy the custom of Elysium. However, many older members of the Sabbat have ingrained superstitions about Elysia, and they tend to respect such places out of prudent caution. While the sect has no law against such assaults, the Sabbat popularly considers attacking Elysium to be cowardly, as well as dangerous.

Even younger members realize that an attack on Elysium grounds brings swift, immediate, and targeted vengeance: an anger both the Camarilla and the independent clans share. Killing a vampire potentially earns the enmity of that vampire's lineage, allies, or clan. However, an Elysium violation creates far more enemies. Individuals with personal rivalries will often see the breach of a sacred location as a reason to put aside their differences, unifying multiple lineages, clans, and even sects, in a targeted attack against the Sabbat. Further, such a show of cowardice uselessly earns the hatred of individuals that might otherwise have been converts to the Sword of Caine.

Elysium violations are done as a final *coup d'état*, and never without absolute assurance of victory.

The Hierarchy of the Sabbat

"When I want your opinion, I will divine it from your entrails."

— Jack A. Prufrock,
prominent Toreador *antitribu*

The Sabbat observes an internal hierarchy, although it sometimes seems more like organized disorder. Effectively, there are two distinct chains of command. Each Sabbat pack contains a Ductus and a Priest, whose duties are to jointly safeguard and direct the vampires in that pack. Outside the pack structure, ordained leaders known as *clergy* have jurisdiction over physical territories, holding authority within a formal structure: Bishop, Archbishop, Cardinal, and Regent. Some few other individuals, known as Prisci, advise the sect but are not technically part of either chain of command.

In theory, advancement within the sect is based on merit and achievement rather than age or generation. In truth, most of the Sabbat's leaders gained authority through political maneuvering, the exchange of favors, or underhanded hypocrisy. Leaders reward their allies and foist blame onto their rivals, ensuring that superiors never hear the full tale. Blame-shifting is the rule, and without allies, a Sabbat vampire will find herself the scapegoat for every failure.

— The Code of Milan —

By the solemn word of Regent Gorchist, this is the one true Code of Milan, revised from the original manuscript, this night, December 21, 1933.

Out of the ashes of our great war may this peace reign everlasting.

An oath of allegiance has been sworn by the Regent and the consistory in the presence of all faction leaders and 50 other witnesses to faithfully follow all regulations imposed by this code in leading the Sabbat. This revised Code of Milan is agreed upon by all Sabbat factions, including those of Cardinal Huroff, Bruce de Guy, Agnes, Charles VI, and Archbishops Beatrice, Una, Tecumseh, Giangaleazzo, Toth, Aeron, Marsilio, Rebecca, Julian, and Salluccio. All other factions must pledge themselves in support of this revised Code of Milan or claim separation from the Sabbat.

These are the statutes that comprise the Code of Milan:

I. The Sabbat shall remain united in its support of the sect's Regent. If necessary, a new Regent shall be elected. The Regent shall support relief from tyranny, granting all Sabbat freedom.

II. All Sabbat shall do their best to serve their leaders as long as said leaders serve the will of the Regent.

III. All Sabbat shall faithfully observe all the Auctoritus Ritae.

IV. All Sabbat shall keep their word of honor to one another.

V. All Sabbat shall treat their peers fairly and equally, upholding the strength and unity of the Sabbat. If necessary, they shall provide for the needs of their brethren.

VI. All Sabbat must put the good of the sect and the race of Cainites before their own personal needs, despite all costs.

VII. Those who are not honorable under the code will be considered less than equal and therefore unworthy of assistance.

VIII. As it has always been, so shall it always be. The Lextalionis shall be the model for undying justice by which all Sabbat shall abide.

IX. All Sabbat shall protect one another from the enemies of the sect. Personal enemies shall remain a personal responsibility, unless they undermine sect security.

X. All sect members shall protect Sabbat territory from all the other powers.

XI. The spirit of freedom shall be the fundamental principle of the Sect. All Sabbat shall expect and demand freedom from their leaders.

XII. The Ritus of Monomacy shall be used to settle disputes among all Sabbat.

XIII. All Sabbat shall support the Black Hand.

— Addenda to the Code of Milan —

Observed by all witnessing parties present on this night, December 21, 1933, and hereafter upheld.

I. All Sabbat have the right to monitor the behavior and activities of their fellow sect members in order to maintain freedom and security.

II. All Sabbat possess the right to call a council of their peers and immediate leaders.

III. All Sabbat shall act against sect members who use the powers and authority the Sabbat has given them for personal gain at the expense of the Sabbat. Action shall be taken only through accepted means, approved by a quorum of Prisci.

Vampire: The Black Dossier (2021)

There are also political factions and militant orders within the Sword of Caine. The Black Hand and the Sabbat Inquisition have internal chains of command that report directly to the Regent. Factions such as the Ultra Conservatives and the Order of St. Blaise have internal leaders, as well. The leaders of the various sect factions are known as Vicars. These Vicars are not part of sect hierarchy, and wield only the authority granted to them by their political caucus.

The Clergy

"Duty, brothers and sisters.
Remember that we are all bound to the ritae, and to each other.
Only through duty can we be free."

— Juan Carlos de la Bourbon,
Bishop of Spirituality

The Regent of Caine

The Regent is the absolute theocratic leader of the Sabbat. He shepherds the faith and doctrine of the Church of the Dark Father. The Regent is the commander of the Sword of Caine in its war against the Antediluvians and their pawns, the Camarilla. Supported by the *Consistory* (an advisory body made up of the Cardinals and Prisci), the Regent is empowered to issue commands in the name of the Dark Father. He is the final authority for the Black Hand and the Inquisition: both orders obey the Regent's dictates. The Regent cannot be uninitiated. The post of Regent can only be removed through a successful challenge of Monomacy, during which the only acceptable result for the loser is death. For more information on the Monomacy, see **page 430**.

The Regent can appoint or remove any member of the clergy. He can appoint or remove a Seraph of the Black Hand and the Grand Inquisitor of the Sabbat Inquisition, investing them with authority or withdrawing the same. The Regent recommends appointments to the Prisci Council and confirms new Prisci via ritae, if the other Prisci approve that appointment.

The Regent's authority includes, but is not limited to:

- Calling a synod of the sect
- Removing or imposing individual status bans
- Uninitiating any member of the Sabbat
- Performing Wild Hunts and Blood Feasts throughout the Sabbat
- Issuing letters patent to ratify the findings of a synod
- Holding immunity from prosecution from any lesser sect office
- Ordering any member of the Sabbat to undergo a Rite of Contrition
- Ordaining (through the Blood Bath) any clergy post in the sect
- Confirming a Prisci who has been appointed by the Prisci Council
- Removing any member of the clergy from her position
- Appointing or removing the Seraph and Grand Inquisitor posts
- Appointing up to five Templars into his service
- Declaring a full Crusade; the Regent is the sole title holder capable of this act
- Summoning any member of the Black Hand or the Inquisition and issuing commands to her
- Holding global status jurisdiction

The Regent's power is both spiritual and political, but the position is only as strong as the holder, and wields as much authority as he commands respect. The current Regent, a Coyote Gangrel named Temoch, earned the loyalty of the sect through decisive action during the Nights of Turmoil. He is a leader who many respect, though some fear the fanaticism he brings to the post.

The Regent gains the abiding status traits *Authority*, *Commander*, *Ominous*, and *Sacrosanct* during his tenure in office. *Ominous* is an NPC-only abiding status trait granting the highest level of command; nearly everything allowable falls within its capacity. When the Regent expends status to give an offending Cainite the negative status *Disgraced* or *Forsaken*, this negative status can only be removed by himself or through a joint effort of the Prisci Council. The Regent can remove the acceptance of *Initiated* from any individual within the Sabbat, without expending a status trait.

Cardinal

Cardinals have the authority to administrate large geographical territories known as a Holy See. Cardinals are always members of founded packs within the territory they control. Cardinals report directly to the Regent. A Cardinal is expected to serve on the Consistory and coordinate Archbishops within her territory. To ascend to the rank of Cardinal, a sect member must be extremely knowledgeable in the Auctoritas Ritae and be able to perform the Blood Bath.

Past Regents of the Sabbat

- Markel de Vasquez Itzal (Lasombra, 5th generation) — Ordained as the first Regent on October, 1493. Resigned to 'attend to his studies' on the 100th anniversary of that ascension. Markel de Vasquez Itzal is the only Regent who has survived the act of retirement.
- Marozia d'Oscura (Lasombra, 4th generation) — In life, she was called "The Senatrix of Rome;" as a vampire, d'Oscura was a prodigious and ruthless diablerist, gaining her final generation by feasting on the soul of a True Brujah named Belit-Sheri. Marozia d'Oscura died under mysterious circumstances in 1625.
- Niklas Berthraben von Weiss (Lasombra, 5th generation) — Called for the sect's first synod. Destroyed in Monomacy, 1768. Argument over the righteousness of his defeat sparked the First Sabbat Civil War.
- Gorchist (Tzimisce, 5th generation) — Signed the Purchase Pact in 1803 and drafted the Code of Milan (which was revised and finalized in 1933, after his death). Assassinated, 1860, during the Second Sabbat Civil War.
- Melinda Galbraith (Toreador *antitribu*, 5th generation) — The Third Sabbat Civil war occurred during her term, in 1957. Galbraith was slain in 2000 by unknown parties amid suspicion she had become a servant of the infernal. After Galbraith's death, a Tzimisce named Zachary Sikorsky impersonated her and held the Regency briefly, but his "tenure" was never validated with a ritus.
- Temoch the Jackal (Gangrel Coyote, 6th generation) —The current Regent's tenure marks a distinct shift in sect leadership from Old Europe to the New World. Embraced during the war for Mexico's independence, Temoch is a devoutly faithful creature and a dedicated member of the Orthodox political faction, merging bloody Aztec practices with the ritual traditions of Catholicism. Temoch has created a political détente between the Lasombra and Tzimisce clans (both fear his removal will allow the other clan to seize the regency). His name is pronounced /TEE-mock/, but young Sabbat call him simply "the Jackal." His pack is named Nuestra Muerte.

Cardinals are frightening authorities, with broad powers constrained only by the limit of their territory and the authority of the Regent himself. Most members of the Sabbat never meet a Cardinal, but hear only rumors and whispers about them, tales that would turn a mortal's hair white.

A Cardinal's authority includes:

- Ordaining (through the Blood Bath) Archbishops and Bishops within her jurisdiction
- Performing Wild Hunts and Blood Feasts within her Holy See
- Assisting and advising the Regent
- Ordering any member of her Holy See to undergo a Rite of Contrition
- Appointing up to three Templars into her service
- Calling an ecumenical council of the Holy See
- Issuing letters patent to ratify the findings of an ecumenical council
- Removing any Archbishop or Bishop within her jurisdiction.
- Exiling a member of the Sabbat from her Holy See (permanently or otherwise)
- Summoning a lesser member of the Black Hand or the Inquisition (but cannot command them)
- Holding regional status jurisdiction within her Holy See (or over nomads)

A Cardinal gains the abiding status traits *Authority*, *Glorious*, and *Sacrosanct* during her tenure in office.

Notable Cardinals

The Sabbat boasts many Cardinals, from the Holy See of Central America to various territories in Europe, the

Caribbean, North America, South America, and Africa. These individuals are simply the most well-regarded – or at least, outspoken – members of the Consistory.

Canada:

- **Yitzhak** (Toreador *antitribu*, 8th generation) — Cardinal of Montreal. Pack: Shepherds of Caine, located in Montreal, Canada. Path of Nocturnal Redemption. Orthodox.
- **Kyle Strathcona** (Ventrue *antitribu*, 8th generation) — Cardinal of Calgary. Pack: The Risen, located in Calgary, Canada. Humanity. Moderate.

North America:

- **Bruce De Guy** (Ventrue *antitribu*, 8th generation) — Cardinal of the West. Pack: Ojos del Dio, located in Tijuana, Mexico. Humanity. Ultra Conservative.
- **Francisco Domingo de Polonia** (Lasombra, 7th generation) — Cardinal of the East. Pack: Pro Tempore. Nomadic in the east until New York can be reclaimed. Path of Power and the Inner Voice. Ultra Conservative.
- **Miranda the Baptizer** (Salubri *antitribu*, 9th generation) — Cardinal of the Midwest. Pack: Murder of Angels, located in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Path of Caine. Orthodox.
- **Dazhdbog** (Tzimisce, 11th generation) — Cardinal of the South. Pack: Knights of the Red Legion, located in Jackson, Mississippi. Path of Honorable Accord. Ultra Conservative.
- **Vanice St. Benedict** (Brujah *antitribu*, 9th generation) — Cardinal of Nomads, North America (United States and Canada). Pack: Aces and Eights, nomadic. Humanity. Moderate.

Europe:

- **Eleiser de Polnaco** (Lasombra, 7th generation) — Cardinal of the Central Church (Spain). Pack: Puño de Caine, located in Madrid. Path of Power and the Inner Voice. Ultra Conservative.
- **Radu Bistri** (Tzimisce, 7th generation) — Cardinal of Nomads, Europe. Pack: Bone Chalice, nomadic. Path of Honorable Accord. Moderate.

South America:

- **Legba** (Serpent of the Light, 9th generation) — Cardinal of Brazil. Pack: El Cristo Negro, located in São Paulo, Brazil. Path of Cathari. Moderate.

Archbishop

Archbishops have the authority to administrate specific cities or small territories known as a diocese. Archbishops are always members of founded packs within the area they control. Archbishops report to the Cardinal of the Holy See of which their diocese is a part. Archbishops coordinate military strategy for their diocese and perform Auctoritas Ritae at major esbats (gatherings). To become an Archbishop, a vampire is required to have an in-depth knowledge of sect ritae.

Where a Camarilla Prince is a domineering and tyrannical authority, a Sabbat Archbishop must be more cunning and subtle. The Sabbat, unconcerned with enforcing the Traditions, instead wages a holy war. Thus, an Archbishop is part spiritual leader and part warlord. Some vampires fail to understand the necessary compromises demanded of an Archbishop's position, and this can cause them to lose faith in their leadership. The education of ignorance may be an Archbishop's greatest challenge to overcome.

A vampire becomes Archbishop by competing for the position, typically through Monomacy. Once she has claimed the title, she must seek ordination by the Cardinal of the Holy See.

An Archbishop's authority includes:

- Awarding or removing fleeting or negative status to those within her diocese
- Calling an esbat within her diocese
- Assisting and advising the Cardinal of the surrounding Holy See
- Appointing or removing up to five Bishops for her diocese
- Performing the Blood Bath on her Bishops
- Authorizing Wild Hunts within her diocese
- Appointing up to two Templars
- Ordering any member of her diocese to undergo a Rite of Contrition
- Exiling a member of the Sabbat from her diocese (permanently or otherwise)
- Administering physical punishments to members of her diocese
- Summoning a lesser member of the Black Hand or the Inquisition (but cannot command them)
- Holding status jurisdiction over her physical domain

An Archbishop gains the abiding status traits *Authority*, *Glorious*, and *Ordained* during her tenure in office.

Examples of Punishment

Punishing an individual can be difficult in the Sabbat. Loyalists often reject the clergy's right to punish them, arguing freedom over unity and personal power over hierarchy. To make any punishment occur, the leader is required to have evidence of a crime. Peer pressure and proof (or at least well-fabricated circumstance), rather than tyrannical command, brings about enforcement. Punishments may be authorized by members of the clergy (Archbishops and higher), by an individual's Ductus, or by her pack Priest.

Severe Offenses: Treason against the sect, murdering a sect member, revealing sect secrets to outsiders, associating with outsider (Camarilla) vampires, and refusing to take part in an Auctoritas Ritae.

Severe Punishment: Torture and dismemberment, destruction, diablerie at the hands of the victim's pack, and Wild Hunt. These crimes are severe enough that criminals are not usually offered the option of Contrition.

Moderate Offenses: Disobedience, failure, deceiving Sabbat leaders, endangering the sect, breaking one's word of honor, cowardice, and associating with outsider (but non-Camarilla) vampires.

Moderate Punishment: Flaying, removal of a limb through burning (usually with a set duration before one can re-grow the limb), branding, mutilation, and exile. These crimes may usually be redeemed through a Rite of Contrition (rather than direct punishment).

Minor Offenses: Errors that harm the sect, missing a significant ritae for good reason, and risking sect security (but not compromising it).

Minor Punishment: Humiliation, flogging, staking for a period of time, and censure. These crimes are typically too small for a Rite of Contrition, though one may be ordered if someone feels particularly aggrieved.

Bishop

As a smaller position, a Bishop's authority comes via an ordained Archbishop or Cardinal. So long as that authority formally announces the Bishop, it is not necessary that she be ordained by a Blood Bath. Still, some are given a full Auctoritas ceremony, particularly Bishops who are ordained in very orthodox dioceses. On occasion, a less populous diocese may be governed by a council of Bishops, rather than a full Archbishop.

A diocese may have three to five Bishops, each tasked by the Archbishop (or Cardinal, where there is no Archbishop) to manage one aspect of that city's administration. Such posts may include a Bishop of War, a Bishop of Security, a Bishop of Spirituality, a Bishop of Resources, and a Bishop of Information, but Bishops may be styled and tasked in any way the Archbishop prefers. A Bishop cannot appoint Templars, but can call on her Archbishop's Templars when she is in need.

Typically, a Bishop of Security maintains the diocese's communal haven. A Bishop of War trains local packs in combat and strategy, and coordinates military activity. A Bishop of Spirituality instructs packs in the Auctoritas Ritae, and oversees Monomacy challenges within the diocese. A Bishop of Information acts as a spymaster, keeping tabs on founded packs, nomadic visitors, and non-Sabbat vampires in the area. A Bishop of Resources maintains control over the influences and peons of the mortal world.

If an Archbishop is compromised, a full quorum of the diocese's Bishops may declare the Archbishop position open for challengers. The challengers compete (typically through Monomacy), and the one who claims the title must seek ordination by the Cardinal of the Holy See.

A Bishop's authority includes:

- Carrying out the Archbishop's will within the domain
- Performing ritae when the Archbishop authorizes it
- Fulfilling her specialization or administrative task
- Holding status jurisdiction in her Archbishop's physical domain

A Bishop gains the either the abiding status trait *Blessed* or *Enforcer* (chosen at the beginning of each night), during her tenure in office. If the Bishop was given a Blood Bath upon taking office, she temporarily gains the abiding status *Ordained* when at her local gathering, if the Archbishop is not in attendance at the game.

Templars and Paladins

Being appointed a Templar is a great honor. It conveys the obvious favor of a sect leader and endorses a vampire's fighting skills. Receiving the position of Templar is also seen as a formal declaration of support for that sect leader from the Templar's entire pack. Templars perform a variety of duties, usually related to combat or to the protection of the clergy member they serve. A Templar can disobey a command given by an officer who is lower in rank than the one who appointed her, so long as she is directly following an order from the person she serves.

The term Paladin was once interchangeable with the title of Templar, until the line blurred between clergy guardians and Inquisition Paladins. Since then, the term for a clergy's guardian has preferentially become Templar, and the term Paladin is reserved for Inquisition agents alone.

A Templar (or Paladin) gains the abiding status trait of *Enforcer* during her tenure in office.

The Prisci

The 13 Prisci serve the populace of the Sabbat as sages and chamberlains, and are not part of the hierarchy of the clergy. A new Prisci is appointed or removed by a majority vote of the Prisci Council. Typically, a Prisci is an older member of the sect, vested with centuries of wisdom and influence. Her duty is to advise the Regent and offer wisdom to the Sword of Caine. On occasion, younger Prisci may be chosen, provided their knowledge is of critical importance to the Sword of Caine.

Prisci serve on the Consistory, and they are often given secondary titles to indicate their area of expertise (Prisci of Ritae, Prisci of Doctrine, Prisci of Tactics, and so forth). The Regent often uses the Prisci as heralds, or as mediators for inter-sect issues and rivalries, trusting the Prisci to find reasonable solutions. When the Sabbat meet at a synod or ecumenical council to discuss articles of faith, they present those decisions to the Prisci at the end of the gathering. The Prisci then ratify each item, codifying the decisions of the sect into ecumenical law (or overruling them).

With a unanimous vote, the Prisci Council can overrule the Regent's decree on any issue except Crusade. This ability is rarely used, as an annoyed Regent is a powerful enemy. In unusual circumstances, a group of three Prisci may, by acting together, remove the ordination of a Cardinal, Archbishop, or Bishop. The Regent can, of course, reinstate that individual (and punish the offending Prisci) if he disagrees.

A Priscus is empowered to:

- Uninitiate any vampire proven to be ignorant or dangerous to the Sabbat
- Order any member of the sect to undergo a Rite of Contrition
- Order the Regent, via a full majority vote of the Prisci Council, to undergo Contrition if they feel he has committed an offense
- As a group, the Prisci perform the Blood Bath to ordain the Regent

A Priscus gains the abiding status traits of *Infamous*, *Prominent*, and *Sacrosanct* during her tenure in office. A Priscus can remove the acceptance of *Initiated* from any individual who proves significant ignorance of sect doctrine or the Code of Milan, or who is proven to be dangerous to the security of the Sabbat, without expending a status trait.

The Prisci Council

Prisci have a significant amount of power, if they understand how to use it. They hold no territory and do not lead armies, but they can ruin a member of the sect with a word. Traditionally there are 13 Prisci in the Sabbat, but as the sect has grown and changed, that number (and the gamut of clans represented) has been known to change. As Prisci are not part of the clergy hierarchy, and their post is as an advisor instead of exercising authority over the sect, members of the Loyalist faction can and do take these positions.

These are currently the most well-regarded – or at least, outspoken – members of the Prisci Council:

- **Sascha Vykos** (Tzimisce, 6th generation) No pack. — Path of Death and the Soul. Political faction unknown.
- **Charles Delmare** (Lasombra, 8th generation) — Pack: Virtud. Path of Power and the Inner Voice. Ultra Conservative.
- **Joseph Pander** (Pander, 9th generation) — Pack: Uprising. Humanity. Pander.
- **Leila Monroe** (Lasombra, 10th generation) — Pack: Dressed to Kill. Path of Power and the Inner Voice. Ultra Conservative.
- **Adonai** (Salubri *antitribu*, 7th generation) — Pack: Deny Defeat. Path of Honorable Accord. Ultra Conservative.
- **Dorotea Black** (Tremere *antitribu* [Telyav], 8th generation) — Pack: Dux Bellorum. Humanity.
- **Gustav Mallenhous** (Ventrue *antitribu*, 7th generation) — Pack: Fides Vincit Omnia. Path of Power and the Inner Voice. Orthodoxy.
- **Dominique Touraine** (Ventrue *antitribu*, 8th generation) — Pack: Freedom's Bell. Humanity. Moderate.
- **Venere Carboni** (Toreador *antitribu*, 7th generation) — Pack: El Dorado. Path of Cathari. Orthodoxy.
- **Nox et Nod** (Malkavian *antitribu*, 10th generation) — Pack: See No Evil. Humanity. Moderate.

The Pack

Sabbat exist in packs: small groups of three to seven (but never more than 10) Cainites. Every Sabbat belongs to a pack, from the Regent to the humblest new initiate. Packs tend to be unchanging; their members are deeply loyal, bound together through the ritual of Vaulderie. Packs have an internal structure including a Priest and a Ductus, positions that are not part of the clergy hierarchy.

When the sect began, leadership consisted of one Regent and many pack Priests. Shortly thereafter, a second pack position was established, that of Ductus, to supervise combat matters for each Sabbat cell. The balance between Ductus and Priest is different within each pack. Some packs consider their Ductus as the primary leader, while others consider it to be their Priest. Still others divide leadership equally between the two.

There are two types of packs: nomadic and founded. Nomadic packs (called "horsemen") roam the countryside, some scouting, others just wandering. Founded packs (called "covens") choose a specific city and maintain a permanent pack haven there.

No outside force can directly demand, order, or alter pack positions – not even the Regent – as they are sacrosanct to the pack. Of course, an uninitiated member cannot serve as Ductus or Priest, which is one way authorities of the sect get around this provision. This is a dangerous tactic, as such obvious abuse of power never sits well with the Sword, especially when it undermines the very fabric of the sect.

Ductus

Ducti attend to the operational, day-to-day activities of the pack and serve as warleaders. They are responsible for the combat training and functionality of the pack, as well as its safety and security. In most packs, the Ductus is the primary authority. However, in packs with a more religious bent, the Priest may hold primary authority, so long as the pack is not actively preparing for, or engaging in, combat. A Ductus may administer physical punishment to any member of her pack. For more information on sect punishments, see the list on **page 419**.

A Ductus gains the abiding status trait *Blessed* during her tenure. A Ductus holds status jurisdiction over the members of her pack.

Priest

The Priest is responsible for the spiritual growth of her packmates. The Priest conducts ritae and is responsible for offering advice and council to her packmates on Paths of Enlightenment, whether through direct guidance or by ensuring the packmate finds proper mentorship. Despite the title, Priests do not report to, nor gain authority from, the clergy hierarchy. Priests must learn three Auctoritas Ritae (the Creation Rites, the Vaulderie, and the Monomacy). A Priest may order any member of her pack to undergo a Rite of Contrition.

A Priest gains the abiding status trait *Ordained* during her tenure in office. When a character fulfills the requirements of the fleeting status trait *Scholar*, it may be awarded by that character's Priest, by expending her *Ordained* status. A Priest holds status jurisdiction over the members of her pack.

Abbot

The position of Abbot is typically found only in founded packs (though there are stories of nomadic packs whose Abbot maintains their vehicle). An Abbot is charged with the maintenance of a pack's communal haven.

The Abbot does not gain abiding status for her tenure in office.

Sacred Texts

Several ancient texts comprise the canon of the Church of the Dark Father. The *Book of Nod* is the most sacred tome, known at least in passing by all upstanding members. True scholars also study more obscure scriptures, including the *Erciyes Fragments,* the *Ubar Chronicles,* the *Gospels of Irad & Adah,* the *Codex of the Damned,* and the vedic poem *Wounds of the Night's Sword.* Particularly daring vampires may even research heretical texts such as the *Revelations of the Dark Mother,* or the *Canticle of Japheth* (which states that Caine is dead). Add to this the hundreds of prophecies and visions recorded over the centuries, and it is easy to see why few vampires consider themselves an authority on the complete esoterica.

True and False Sabbat

"You dare to judge my worth? Every night,
I walk among vampires who have sworn to eradicate my clan.
Survival is victory, wouldn't you agree?"

— Dorotea Black,
Tremere *antitribu* and Priscus

True Sabbat have undergone the formal Auctoritas Ritae of the Creation Rites. This means the vampire has been branded, and she has taken the Oath of the Sabbat on at least one occasion. All Sabbat gain *Initiated* upon completing their Creation Rites. For more information on the Creation Rites, see **page 429**.

False Sabbat

Members of the sect must endure a period of testing (usually several months to a year) before they are allowed to undergo the Creation Rites. Uninitiated, or False Sabbat, are possessions, wholly owned by an adoptive pack. They have no rights and may not participate in ritae other than the Vaulderie (even then, only to drink, not to contribute). The pack that adopts a fledgling is responsible for her behavior and can be punished if its toy causes trouble.

Any True Sabbat may abuse or command an uninitiated vampire, though only her Ductus may permanently maim or destroy her, and only her pack Priest may initiate her. False Sabbat can have no status.

Members of the sect who have become uninitiated become False Sabbat until that initiation is restored through another Creation Rite. A Priest has the authority to uninitiate any member of her pack. Only the Regent, the Prisci, and the Grand Inquisitor can uninitiate outside of their pack — and then only under specific circumstances.

- The Grand Inquisitor can uninitiate a True Sabbat convicted of heresy.
- A quorum of three Prisci can uninitiate a True Sabbat who proves herself ignorant or endangers the sect.
- The Regent can uninitiate any member of the Sabbat, at his will.

Being uninitiated means simply that a vampire is once more considered "False Sabbat," and she must be formally reeducated before again receiving the Creation Rites. Uninitiating a vampire strips her of all status and rank, erasing all previous deeds. Titles and status stripped through uninitiation do not return when the vampire again undergoes Creation Rites. An uninitiated Sabbat is still a member of the sect and is owned by her pack. That pack has the right to extract a heavy toll on anyone who harms its property without consent. Once a vampire has been uninitiated, she cannot be reinitiated for a year and a day, unless the specific *Authority* who punished her relents and allows reinitiation, or unless the Regent publically pardons the vampire's transgression.

Militant Orders

The Black Hand

"Though ravaged and betrayed,
the Hand shall rise up once more.
We will write our tale of vengeance in letters of fire."

— Jalan-Aajav

The Black Hand is an elite order of soldiers, whose membership consists of the finest and most dangerous combatants in the sect. These special operatives take on the most dangerous tasks, often sacrificing their lives in service to the Sword of Caine. Some members of the Hand refer to themselves as the "Lost Tribe," in reference to a passage in Book of Nod that describes Caine's most faithful descendants.

Originally, the Black Hand was a militia, mustered specifically to lead assaults against Camarilla-held cities or to enforce order in times of crisis. In its early nights, the Black Hand did not retain its mandate between missions, but instead was marshaled when needed, then disbanded when a threat was no longer imminent. As the order's power grew within the sect, membership became more permanent,

Share the Cool

The Black Hand comprises the elite task force of the Sabbat, but a Storyteller must take care that Hand players aren't the only ones who get to do the fun stuff. The entire sect is an army, and there should be plenty of battles for all. Having a Black Hand player invoke Statute XIII can help a Storyteller integrate a majority of players into the critical and dangerous missions of the Black Hand.

with an established internal chain of command. It won numerous victories over enemies outside the sect, even as it defended the sect from within, destroying a majority of the Inquisition when it determined that order was using its authority to harm the sect. Although the Inquisition was rechartered and reformed, the rivalry between the two factions continues, bordering on abject hatred.

Though it gained power and prestige for its many victories, over the centuries the Black Hand was infiltrated by a death cult known as the *Tal'Mahe'Ra*. As these outside forces gained control of the order, they began to alter its function to serve their own needs. Rather than obeying the warrant of the sect, the Black Hand began to insist on internal secrecy bordering on paranoia. Further, an abundance of Assamite *antitribu* gravitated to the order. These leaders began to take contracts in the fashion of Alamut, rather than truly serving the sect. The Black Hand became feared, but also reviled.

When the Red Star rose, the Eldest of Alamut called the Assamite clan home. In horror, the Sword of Caine discovered that a majority of the Assamite *antitribu* (including the leadership of the Black Hand) were still loyal to their clan's founder, as the sect's Assamites answered the Eldest's call. As a majority of its membership defected, the Black Hand began to crumble. Old grievances surfaced, and vendettas claimed more than a few of the members who remained. Agents of the Sabbat Inquisition, quick to take advantage of the Black Hand's difficulties, discovered the Tal'Mahe'Ra infiltrators within the Hand, although the Inquisition did not fully understand the nature of the creatures it had unearthed. The servants of the death cult were rooted out as heretics wherever they were found. The sect considered this a victory (particularly to the vengeful Inquisition), but it was nearly a death-blow to the already-devastated Black Hand.

During the Nights of Turmoil, the Regent Temoch called the last of the Black Hand to Mexico City. Refusing to allow the Hand's destruction, he ordered his own Templars to join the Hand, swelling the order's ranks with powerful Gangrel and Nosferatu — the Regent's childer, among others. The Black Hand now serves the Regent, obeying his orders and placing its trust in his command. He is its highest authority.

Black Hand Missions

Typical Black Hand missions include:

- **Kidnapping:** When the Sabbat needs information, or in order to blackmail a more powerful opponent into capitulation, the Black Hand will occasionally kidnap a non-Sabbat vampire. When it is done, the target has a choice: forced conversion or death by diablerie.
- **Assassination:** Typically, if a specific enemy needs to be destroyed, the Sabbat simply sends a well-trained pack to do the deed. However, on occasion (usually to sow division among enemies), a Black Hand member may be tasked to perform an assassination in order to frame a secondary source. Such operations can be suicide missions; it is more important that the enemy be ignorant of the Sabbat's involvement than it is for the agent to return.
- **Espionage:** Only members of the Black Hand (for large-scale infiltration) or Bishops of Information (for local infiltration) are trusted to infiltrate enemy organizations, and even then, only for a matter of months. Considering the effectiveness of vampiric powers of investigation, it is often better to cycle a number of short-term infiltrations than to attempt deeper infiltration.

Membership

The Black Hand has never possessed many members, but its current ranks are deliberately small, to prevent a recurrence of the past infiltration. Less than 30 Cainites now serve in the order. Where the majority of the sect is composed of grunts and ground-pounders, agents of the Black Hand are specialists: elite operatives given specific, nearly impossible tasks — tasks they accomplish with vicious ruthlessness.

The Black Hand is officially neutral in sect politics. Members cannot take sect positions, including clergy titles and pack responsibilities. Further, a pack can never have more than one Black Hand member. Considering the order's unfortunate history, it has become even more important to ensure that packs never consist solely of Black Hand members.

A member of the Black Hand has the same rights and authority as any other soldier of the sect, save when she is tasked with a mission to complete. At that time, operatives may call on Statute XIII of the Code of Milan, which states all Sabbat shall support the Black Hand. This statute allows an operative to commandeer local packs and sect members when the Hand requires backup or needs access to specific skills. However, given the recent history and the revelations about the infiltration by outsiders, the sect regards the Black Hand with some suspicion. Always reclusive and close-lipped, their brethren in the Sword of Caine have little reason to trust them. Although Statute XIII authorizes it to demand aid, the order has far to go if it wishes to regain the respect it has lost.

The Black Hand tends to be comprised of Gangrel (primarily of the Coyote bloodline), Nosferatu, Brujah *antitribu*, and Pander. The order does not accept unusual bloodlines;

given the Hand's history with the death cult, this is perfectly understandable. The Black Hand prefers to recruit vampires of traditional clans and thinks of bloodlines as tools in the crusade, to be used and discarded as necessary. Many Hand members are on the Path of Caine, the Path of Orion, or the Path of Honorable Accord, but a path is not absolutely necessary for recruitment. Black Hand members do not publicly claim any political faction, as the Hand is expected to be neutral within the sect.

There are three ranks within the Black Hand: Seraph, Dominion, and Agent.

- **Seraph:** The highest authority of the Black Hand. Four Seraphim are known to exist, reporting directly to the Regent. If there are more, the Regent has not seen fit to reveal their presence to the rest of the sect. Seraphim are responsible for coordinating the order on an international scale.
  - **Katherine Stoddard** (Ventrue *antitribu* [Crusader], 9th generation) — Pack: Murder.Net.
  - **Jalan-Aajav** (Gangrel *antitribu*, 5th generation) — Pack: Warcry. Path of Feral Heart.
  - **Wah Chun-Yen** (Brujah *antitribu*, 9th generation) — Pack: Zhishi. Path of Honorable Accord.
  - **Banjoko** (Lasombra, 7th generation) — Pack: Destruction's Chariot. Path of Caine. Also known as Francisco Ruiz.
- **Dominion:** Commanders with regional authority. These are the Hand's primary battlefield tacticians and large-scale powerhouses.
- **Agent:** Acting as soldiers, commandos, and operatives, Agents comprise the main body of Black Hand membership. There are many types of Agent, each performing specific duties as required by the Hand.

The Crescent Brand

Those who join the Black Hand are branded with a distinguishing mark: a permanent, mystical black crescent moon on the palm of their right hand. It is said that the Seraphim can use the brand as a sympathetic link for rituals: warning agents in the field, destroying an operative who has been compromised, or summoning an agent to report. Operatives of the Hand are forbidden from concealing this brand while among other members of the Sword of Caine, but do hide the mark when it might be seen by a vampire of another sect.

Once a vampire has joined the order, there is no retirement, and there is no resignation. The only way to leave the Black Hand is through Final Death.

To play a member of the Black Hand, a character must purchase the merit Black Hand Membership. For more information on this merit, see **page 452**.

The Inquisition

"No fire burns more brightly than the flame of truth. One way, or the other…you will burn."

— Maria Sandoza,
Grand Inquisitor of the Sabbat

The Sabbat Inquisition was founded in 1804 to stamp out infernalism, which had risen among the sect. Vampires are creatures with a lust for power, and the Sabbat's practices are dark and sadistic enough that the leap from sect ritae to demonic rites is not a large one. Over the years, the order's authority expanded into the murky realm of religious purity: determining heresy within the Sword of Caine.

The order began when a Ventrue *antitribu* Priscus named Gustav Mallenhous barely escaped an encounter with infernalists. With support from a fanatically faithful group of Lasombra, a cabal of Noddists, and a Montreal-based pack known as the Shepherds of Caine, he founded the Inquisition. By the turn of the 20th century, the Inquisition's

Reliquaries

An Inquisitor's iron reliquary is a weapon that serves as her badge of office. Each one is given to the Inquisitor directly by the Regent. This practice allows for any member of the sect to use Auspex on the item and see its clear connection to the Regent, thus assuring her of the Inquisitor's authority. Reliquaries also serve as a holy symbol on which Inquisitors and subjects swear to the truth (though it has no capacity to enforce such an oath). Physically, a reliquary is a stylized version of the Sabbat symbol, forged of iron. It can be held and wielded like a dagger or sword, and often it incorporates sharp spikes or cutting surfaces.

leadership was corrupt, abusing their power to condemn heretics as a political tool. As a response, in 1919, the Black Hand annihilated Inquisition agents in a battle outside Philadelphia, and thereafter, the Inquisition was violently reformed. In part due to this history, the order has an intense and vicious rivalry with the Black Hand.

The membership of the Inquisition is relatively few; approximately 30 Cainites hold posts within the order. Inquisitors routinely travel to all Sabbat-held territories, often presiding over Rites of Contrition or assisting with sect punishments. Inquisitors are usually members of nomadic packs, and such packs are formed primarily of Inquisition members. A typical team consists of five packmates: three Judge Inquisitors and two Knight Inquisitors, led by the most senior Judge.

In 2004, the Inquisition burned a path through most of Ohio, searching for a particularly potent Baali infernalist and destroying any and all members of the Sabbat who had made contact – however unknowingly – with that individual. The event stands as a notable portrayal of the Inquisition's power — and a representation of the concrete fear the sect has toward those touched by true demonic corruption.

The Inquisition has acquired a reputation for cruelty, no mean feat among those who willingly label themselves monsters. In the past, members of the Inquisition could be identified by their red robes and their iron reliquaries of office. In modern nights, Inquisitors still bear reliquaries (each one given personally by the Regent), but their robes are often replaced with more appropriate clothing — though even their street clothes are often scarlet in tone. Each reliquary is unique, and slain Inquisitors' reliquaries are destroyed by the Inquisition.

Membership

The current Grand Inquisitor is a Lasombra named Maria Sandoza. She administrates the order from a secret bunker known as Santo Oficio, or "Holy Office," located in northern Mexico. As with the Black Hand, the Inquisition is officially neutral in sect politics; its members cannot take any other sect positions (including clergy positions, pack Ductus, or pack Priest).

It is difficult to manipulate members of the Inquisition, due to the membership's fanatical adherence to the faith of the Dark Father, Caine. Crusaders of the Ventrue *antitribu* line are the most common members, and they tend to gravitate toward positions of power (the current Grand Inquisitor's second-in-command, Cornwall, is a Crusader). The rest of the order is overwhelmingly comprised of Lasombra, Tzimisce, and Toreador *antitribu*. Unusually, there are even Harbingers of Skulls within the Inquisition. These recruits are particularly fanatic, utilizing ancient methods of torment to discover infernal corruption within the ranks. The order's membership tends to follow the Path of Redemption, the Path of Righteous Night, or the Path of Honorable Accord, with a smattering of members on Caine or Cathari.

Formal ranks in the Inquisition include:

- **Grand Inquisitor:** The highest authority within the Inquisition. The Grand Inquisitor reports directly to the Regent. The current Grand Inquisitor is Maria Sandoza.
  - **Maria Sandoza** (Lasombra, 7th generation) — Pack: Scions of the Unknown. Path of Honorable Accord. Ultra Conservative. Childe of the famous Archbishop Ambrosio Luis Monçada.
- **Watcher:** Support staff who operate from safe houses or from the Santo Oficio. Watchers tend to be retired field operatives, members with high Auspex for far-sensing, or those members with a technological specialization.
- **Judge Inquisitor:** The main body of Inquisition membership falls into this category. These members comprise the active field operatives of the Inquisition.
- **Knight Inquisitor:** Also known as Paladins, these are the warriors and combat operatives of the order.

Inquisition Trials

The Inquisition has unprecedented power to accuse, interrogate, and judge on cases of heresy and suspected dealings with the infernal. An Inquisitor can accuse any other member of the Sabbat, save the Regent, of heresy or infernalism and can take such an individual into custody. Resistance or flight is proof of guilt.

The individual's Priest must be present to witness interrogation, trial, and destruction, and may advocate on her packmate's behalf. The Inquisition prefers to do most of its trials in public, to better educate the rest of the sect and encourage fear of the Inquisition. All executions are reviewed by the Regent, and if the conclusions of heresy or infernalism are found to be in error or unsupported, the Inquisition member can be destroyed in turn.

An individual who has been investigated and determined to be free of infernal taint or heresy is given a writ of innocence known as the *ad cautelum*. This writ lasts for three months, during which time the individual is expected to be particularly penitent and atone for any sins she has committed against the faith of Caine. Once the *ad cautelum* has expired, this individual may be investigated again if new evidence surfaces.

A sect member found guilty is always tortured and executed. Heretics are killed by various gruesome means, while the sentence for infernalism is always death by fire. Individuals condemned for heresy or infernalism are never diablerized, as the stain on her soul would be transferred to the vampire who consumes her. An individual found to have diablerized a heretic or infernalist must be destroyed immediately under the same charge as the individual she consumed, lest the corruption spread.

Heresy

The Sabbat is rife with heretical doctrines. Unlike infernal thralls, it is difficult to tell if someone is corrupted by heretical belief. The Sabbat's ethic of freedom and the diversity of its membership means ignorant individuals often espouse slanted beliefs. This is one reason the Inquisition is so cruel; it would rather put a sect member to the sword for an ill-chosen sermon than allow a heretic to go unpunished.

In a nutshell, beliefs that revere the Antediluvians, enslave others, interact with the infernal, encourage blood bonding, forsake the ritae, or preach against Caine are heretical. Over the last century and more, the Inquisition has declared the following paths to be heretical: the Path of Evil Revelations, Path of Typhon, Path of Sutekh, Path of Lilith, and Path of Blood. Even the Lasombra clan's Path of Night balances on the edge of being declared heresy. Only the Path of Righteous Night has given the Inquisition any reason to hesitate about purging the sect of all patrons of this form of Morality. Occasionally, adherents are given the opportunity to convert to a more acceptable path and perform a Rite of Contrition for their sins against the faith, but typically, they are simply destroyed.

Certain rarely known, aberrant texts from the dark ages are considered heretical. The most notable of these texts are the gnostic writings of the Cainite Heresy, in particular the *Book of Shining Blood* (also known as the *Euagetaematikon*) and the *Gospel of Laodice*, favored by those on the various Paths of Heaven. Lastly, anyone found to possess knowledge or information regarding Golconda (a blasphemy against the vampiric state) is heretical.

Condemned heretics are always destroyed, usually by fire.

To play a member of the Inquisition, a character must purchase the merit Inquisition Membership. For more information on this merit, see Setting-Specific Merits, **page 453**.

The Auctoritas Ritae

"Vampires are the apotheosis of sin,
the incarnation of raped and ruined virtue.
By this, you show your worth."

— Cardinal Francisco Domingo de Polonia

A common paean among the Sword is "By Caine, the Regent, and the Ritae." Those three things are the heart of the Sabbat, even as Jesus, the Pope, and the Sacraments are integral to the Catholic Church. Through the ritae, the sect reveres Caine and fosters loyalty. The ritae are proof of Caine's messianic nature, celebrations of the vampiric state, and weapons in the war against the Antediluvians. The ritae remind the sect of common goals, reward its members for successes, and punish them for failures.

The Church of the Dark Father practice 13 sacred "High" or Auctoritas Ritae and a large number of "Low" or Ignoblis Ritae. The 13 modern Auctoritas were confirmed at the Synod of Hounds in 2009. These are the Binding, the Blood Bath, the Blood Feast, the Creation Rites, the Fire Dance, Games of Instinct, the High Holidays, the Monomacy, the Rite of Contrition, the Sermons of Caine, the Vaulderie, the War Party, and the Wild Hunt.

The ritae are a unique form of vampiric magic, powered both with blood and faith. The Auctoritas draw their power from faith in Caine. Pack Ignoblis draw power from individual loyalty, while Faction Ignoblis draw their power from the participant's faith in certain political ideals. If a disbeliever participates in a ritae, so long as she respects the ritual and does her part, the faith possessed by other practitioners can make up the difference and allow the ritual to succeed. Of course, doubt becomes more troublesome in groups where one participant is a larger percentage of the whole. Small Faction and Ignoblis are more likely to fail if there are disbelievers, whereas an Auctoritas of a hundred vampires might still succeed.

Respect the Players

The hypocrisy of the Sabbat is an integral part of the sect, but Storytellers should remember that a player's faith should never be mocked or degraded. Although Sabbat ritae are often modeled on Catholic rituals, the game should be played with out-of-character respect toward real life spirituality of all kinds.

All ritae require at least three participants, and the individual performing the rite must possess the Rituals background (and know the specific ritus to be performed). Ritae are not Thaumaturgy, but they are blood magic, and thus affected by powers and effects that resist or counter blood magic. Further, when an individual is empowered by an active ritae, that creature's aura shows clear signs of enchantment, manifesting as a bloody wash over the spirit.

System: Performing any ritus (Auctoritas, Faction, or Ignoblis) requires at least three members of the Sabbat and takes a minimum of five minutes, and may take longer if the Priest wishes to impart additional information, include a large number of participants, or add non-standard flourishes. The primary ritualist must be faithful to the rite's precepts, possess the correct abiding status to perform the ritus, and know the specific ritus via the Rituals background. For more information on Sabbat-specific status, see **page 446**. For more information on the Rituals background, see **page 452**.

Once the participants have gathered, casting a ritus proceeds as follows:

- If all characters participating in the ritus are truly faithful (to Caine for an Auctoritas, to the political ideals for a Faction ritual, or to the pack or the stated goals of an Ignoblis), the ritus is automatically successful.
- If one or more participating individuals do not have faith in the precepts of that ritus, the invocation may fail. Such individuals should make themselves known to the Storyteller prior to the start of the ritus. The Storyteller will inform the presiding ritualist only that there are unfaithful among the assembled, providing no further information. The individual performing the ritus must make a static challenge using her Mental attribute + her level of the Rituals background versus a difficulty rating of 25. A character cannot retest this challenge with Willpower, but may retest by expending the *Devout* fleeting status trait. Other characters who have the Rituals background and know the specific ritus may offer to assist the primary ritualist. For each such individual, the primary caster gains a +1 bonus. If the primary ritualist is successful in the static challenge, the ritus succeeds. Whether the ritual is successful or not, the ritualist and her assistants are aware that the ritus was in jeopardy due to doubt.
- If more than 25 percent of a rite's participants are unfaithful, the ritual automatically fails. Again, the Storyteller tells the primary ritualist and any assistants only that the ritual failed due to doubt, and provides no further information.

Whether a participant is faithful to a rite's precepts or not, if the ritual is successful, all participants (including disbelievers) receive the beneficial effects of the ritual.

Players are encouraged to be honest about their character's feelings and intentions toward Caine, the Sabbat, or the other basis of ritae. Storytellers are encouraged to collect this information privately; without the use of specific powers or skills, vampires cannot obviously ascertain whose presence caused the ritual to fail.

The Binding

"Of my own free will and accord, I, (name),
son/daughter of Caine, reject the Antediluvians
and dedicate myself to their destruction.
I swear my soul to the Sabbat,
and damn all those who stand against us.
Hear me, brothers and sisters! Your enemies are my enemies.
Your victories, my victories. Your blood, my blood.
So shall it be, until the end of all things."

— The Oath of the Sabbat

Held each year on Winter Solstice, this rite constitutes a formal renewal of a vampire's oath of allegiance to the Sabbat. All True Sabbat are expected to attend this holiday, reaffirming their dedication in a public rite of loyalty. As part of the ritual, the local clergy must hear all grievances brought before them. Grievances addressed during the night of Binding are traditionally forgiven, though vampires are petty creatures, more than capable of lying through their sharpened teeth.

System: For a month following the Binding, vampires who participate are able to resist the temptation to frenzy when in the company of other individuals who participated in the Binding at the same time and place. Such vampires are treated as though they have 1 less Beast trait when testing for frenzy.

The Blood Bath

Solemn and erotic, the Blood Bath is the ritus to formally ordain a vampire, elevating her to a clergy position within the hierarchy of the sect. Typically, the vampire being ordained stands in a pool of blood, and she is approached by each member of the Sabbat participating in the ritual. As that participant places some of her blood into the pool, she may offer a piece of advice or ask a question of the vampire to be ordained. Most Sabbat members will not acknowledge a leader of Archbishop rank or higher until she is ordained with a formal Blood Bath, as that clergy member has not received the blessing of Caine.

The Blood Feast

The Blood Feast is a ritual feast of humans, representing the transubstantiation of Caine into the first vampire. It is one of the most difficult ritae to enact, and it requires a significant number of victims, thus potentially drawing attention from mortal hunters and the agents of the Camarilla. Because of this concern, only Cardinals, Prisci, and the Regent are sanctioned to practice this ritus.

System: Each point of Blood consumed during a Blood Feast has the mystic potential of 2. Therefore, a vampire can hold twice as much Blood when that Blood is consumed in a Blood Feast. Note that the amount of Blood per turn a vampire can spend does not increase, only her maximum Blood pool. This effect lasts for three nights, or until all the blood consumed at the Feast has been utilized (whichever comes first).

You must have the Sabbat status *Sacrosanct* to initiate this ritus.

Contrition

The newest of the Auctoritas, this ritus allows a humiliated or failed sect member to atone for her actions. An insincere Rite of Contrition may succeed, but if discovered, such a vampire will almost certainly not be given a second chance to atone. Performing a Rite of Contrition is a semi-voluntary act. Evidence of wrongdoing is brought to a superior (typically either a member of the clergy or the individual's Priest). If the evidence is compelling, the penitent vampire can request the rite in order to clear her name, or she may be ordered to perform the Rite of Contrition. If a vampire is ordered to perform a Rite of Contrition by an *Authority*, her only options are to agree and perform the rite or to challenge her accuser to Monomacy.

The penitent gathers in a public location along with her Priest, the aggrieved, and the aggrieved's Priest. If the individual's actions have harmed the sect rather than an individual, the ranking member of the clergy in attendance stands as aggrieved on behalf of the sect. No apology must be tendered, but the penitent must state the deed for which she intends to make amends. Thereafter, the penitent's Priest will assign an appropriate task, to be fulfilled within three nights (and the task must be reasonably possible within that time). The aggrieved may then add a caveat to this task, usually magnifying the difficulty based on whether or not she feels the penitent is truly remorseful. This caveat cannot be an entirely new task, but can be something like "…and you must do so using only a pistol," or "…which must be retrieved from the local Prince of the Camarilla."

After the task of contrition has been established, the penitent can choose a willing second (typically a member of her pack) to aid her in the task, and the two Priests complete the first phase of the ritual. That second is bound by the same caveats of the task, and the penitent can have no other assistance. If the penitent does not succeed in the task within three nights, or if she accepts assistance from any other member of the Sabbat, the ritual fails, and both Priests immediately become aware of the failure.

System: If a vampire performs the Rite of Contrition and succeeds, she is forgiven her failures and grievances, and all negative status she possesses is removed. She cannot be given negative status for that issue again, and according to custom, no further argument, vengeance, or persecution may occur about this issue. Though vampires do not forget grudges so easily, the aggrieved must maintain an appearance of dropping the issue. If a vampire attempts a Rite of Contrition and fails, she is stripped of all status, forced to step down from any positions, and cannot gain status for three months or six games thereafter.

Example:

Miranda the Malkavian has pranked Archbishop Leon de la Vega's pack one too many times, and the Lasombra insists she perform a Rite of Contrition. Miranda reluctantly agrees.

Leon and his Priest meet with Miranda and her Priest at a Sabbat gathering. Miranda makes a passionate speech, trying to justify

Blood Feast

The ritae of the Blood Feast was originally obtained from a group of mortal Knights Templar, and was modified by Tremere *antitribu* for practice among the Sabbat. The ritual specifically transforms the blood within the vessel into a mystical substance, called "the Blood of Faith" or "the Blood of the Sabbat." The specific words of the ceremony suggest that the Sabbat are angel-like beings risen by their own action from the herd of mere mankind, and it obviates the role of Caine entirely. Those who participate in the Blood Feast too often are certain to draw the unpleasant consequence of Inquisition attention.

her actions. Her Priest then assigns the task, "You must kill the Setite ghoul who has been troubling the sect." Leon and his Priest confer, and decide that this task is too easy. They choose to add the caveat, "…without using powers of Obfuscate." Now, that's a tough challenge! Leon might have added instead, "…with your bare hands," or even, "…and make those outside of the sect believe the Prince of the Camarilla did it."

Miranda may now choose a second individual to assist her with this task. After a moment of thought, she chooses her packmate Chesef, a Serpent of the Light. While he also cannot use Obfuscate, Chesef knows a great deal about Setites and is likely to know things that will help her track the ghoul down. Assuming the two of them can complete this goal within three nights without any further assistance, Miranda will be forgiven and Leon cannot seek further (public) retribution for these past actions. If she fails, she will be stripped of all status, forced to step down from any positions she holds, and disallowed from gaining any status for three months or six games.

The Creation Rite

"Eternal, not immutable. If you don't learn how to change, then you're already deader than those fucks in the ground."

— Gumborrash Giorgi, Clan Tzimisce,
Pack Priest

Not to be confused with the amusement of hitting victims with a shovel or the raw satisfaction of the Embrace, the Creation Rite is a formal and sacred ritual performed after a fledgling vampire has proven herself to the sect, has been educated, and is ready to be *Initiated*. As part of this ritual, the priest consecrates a flaming brand and presses it to a supplicant's forehead while she recites her first oath of allegiance to the sect (see The Binding, above, for the wording of the Sabbat oath). All pack Priests are required to learn this ritus.

The Fire Dance

The Sabbat believe that vampires should revel in their undead nature, proving their courage against the vampiric bane of fire. This ritus requires a participant to leap through a massive blaze, and it is therefore a test of courage as well as a test of faith. The Fire Dance takes quite some time to cast and works vampires into a state of near-frenzy, driving their Beasts to the limit as they leap again and again through a massive bonfire.

System: Characters who participate in a Fire Dance are fortified against fear frenzy for three nights following the ritus. All fear frenzy tests are treated as though the participant has 1 less Beast trait. Vampires who refuse to participate in the ritual receive the negative status trait *Cowardly*. For more information on the *Cowardly* trait, see Sabbat Status, **page 448**.

Games of Instinct

Games of Instinct can take many different forms, but each is designed to strengthen and hone a vampire's skills. These games are often dangerous, and can be deadly for the participants, but are considered no less sacred than other ritae.

System: A vampire who successfully completes a Game of Instinct receives an additional Physical attribute focus that lingers for the next three nights. After the bonus from this ritae expires, you cannot benefit from a Game of Instinct or from other ritae that grant additional focuses for two game sessions or one month (whichever is greater). You cannot be under the effects of more than one ritae that grants an additional focus at a time.

High Holidays

This ritual is used during the celebration of several formal holidays integral to the worship of Caine. Although the Sabbat currently recognizes two official High Holidays, the Palla Grande and the Festivo Dello Estinto, it has in the past and occasionally still celebrates the older holidays of Walpurgisnacht, the Sacrificial Revel, and the Eides of Caine.

A High Holiday ritus occurs within another, more specialized celebration dedicated to the holiday in question. During the Festivo Dello Estinto, there may be ritual sacrifice, bacchanalian indulgence, or gorging, while the Palla Grande is a more restrained vampiric ball with political overtones. Holidays are prominent events and religious celebrations. Unlike Camarilla balls or social salons, High Holidays are bloody, monstrous gatherings. They allow members of the sect to revel in their vampiric nature and educate one another on tactics, Paths of Enlightenment, and the lore and doctrine of Caine. This is not to say there are no politics at the High Holiday gatherings, but they are distinctly more subtle and more brutal than those of the Camarilla.

- **Palla Grande:** The largest and most revered of the High Holidays, the Palla Grande occurs on All Hallows Eve. It is a time to celebrate the history of Caine and re-enact small plays or pageants comprised of parables from the Book of Nod. It is a dark masquerade ball with political overtones, and it usually hosts the sect's yearly ecumenical council.
- **Festivo Dello Estinto:** The "Festival of the Dead" occurs during the entire second week of March. The purpose is to revel in being a vampire, provoking one's vampiric nature, and celebrating immortality by laughing in the face of death.

- **Walpurgisnacht:** This festival is held on April 30, half the year away from the Palla Grande. Walpurgisnacht is a festival to celebrate the sect's founding and to tell the tales of ancient days, the Anarch Revolt, and the sect's initial defiance of the Camarilla. It is also the holiday wherein mortals are chosen to become new childer. According to tradition, a sire drags her captive mortal before the sect and Embraces her in a public and ritualistic fashion.

- **The Sacrificial Revel:** The Sacrificial Revel, traditionally held in February, is a dark and thoughtful holiday. Sabbat celebrate their freedom, tell tales of sacrifices made for the sect in the previous year, and remember those who died for the cause over the centuries.

- **The Eides of Caine:** The central theme of this High Holiday is that of the murder of Abel and Caine's resulting exile from Eden. It is celebrated in late August, during the time of the first harvests, and is often celebrated by unveiling works of dark beauty, elegantly flesh-crafted masterpieces, or performances of vampiric art in Caine's honor.

System: Vampires who participate in a High Holiday ritus receive 1 additional Willpower over their natural capacity. This extra Willpower is kept until spent or until one month has passed (whichever occurs first). A character can have only 1 bonus Willpower granted by this ritae at any time. The additional Willpower granted by this ritual is always the first Willpower spent.

The Monomacy

"XII. The Ritus of Monomacy shall be used to settle disputes among all Sabbat."

One of the earliest ritus devised by the sect, Monomacy has been critical to the continuance of the Sabbat. Its strictures have changed from time to time, adjusted by the sect's needs. The Code of Milan states that Monomacy must be used to settle all disputes. The old definition of "dispute" comes from Old French *desputer*, "to contend," and has a physical connotation. A dispute must be founded on irreconcilable differences that cannot be solved in another manner. Ignoblis symbels can be used to settle minor disagreements, and Contrition can punish transgressions. Monomacy is a solemn, permanent resolution between brothers and sisters of the sect.

If Monomacy is profaned, indulged in too frequently, or manipulated too obviously by a Cainite, the perpetrators may be accused of breaking Statute III of the Code of Milan: "All Sabbat shall faithfully observe all of the Auctoritas Ritae," or breaking Statute XVI: "[using] the powers and authority the Sabbat has given them for personal gain at the expense of the Sabbat." An individual who attempts to profiteer via Monomacy may be certainly be termed "unworthy of assistance" (Statute VII) or subject to retribution by "accepted means," as determined by the Prisci (Statute XVI).

Different paths and political factions within the Sabbat see the Monomacy differently and treat the ritae with different levels of seriousness. Some refuse to accept any alterations to the default competition. Others feel that negotiating an arbitration and adding minor alterations is an important part of the Monomacy ritual; it is a mental competition, to balance the physical competition that occurs within the ritual circle. Typically, one competitor will suggest an alteration to the Monomacy format, only to be countered by a second alteration from her competitor. If both sides agree, the two changes are made. If the competitors disagree on these alterations, the arbiter is the final determiner, and the default competition is always the fallback for the execution of this ritae.

System: Once the ritual has been cast, both of the primary competitors (the challenger and the challenged) receive one free Monomacy retest. This retest can be used only when losing the challenge would cause the competitor to lose the ritus. You can use this retest in addition to a normal Willpower retest; this is an exception to the rule that allows only one retest per challenge. Once expended, the Monomacy retest is gone and cannot be used again. You receive only one Monomacy retest per ritual, and this retest is automatically expended at the end of the ritual if it is not expended during the ritual.

An individual who is the victor in three Monomacy challenges in a row gains the status *Triumphant*.

Undertaking the Monomacy

At the most recent synod, the Priests of the sect codified Monomacy more thoroughly. Their goal was to keep the ritus consistent with its past use, while ensuring that abuses and confusion were minimized. As such, the following defaults were agreed upon for the ritual's execution:

1. **Challenge**

   A clear challenge must be delivered to the challenged party and her pack Priest. Only True Sabbat (those who have gone through the Creation Rites) can challenge or be challenged. If the challenged has no pack Priest, or is not in a pack, she is at a significant disadvantage, and has only three nights to choose appropriate counsel — or it will be chosen for her by the closest Bishop or Archbishop.

2. **Choosing the Arbiter**

   Next, an arbiter must be chosen to preside over the dispute. The arbiter is ostensibly a neutral party (though this vampire may not actually be neutral, given

Sabbat hypocrisy) who determines if the issue is weighty enough to justify the possible death of a member of the sect and determines whether all other means of resolving the dispute have failed.

3. **Acceptance**

If the challenge is approved as legitimate, then at this point, the challenged party may choose to decline. If accepted, the ritus must occur within one month of acceptance. The challenged individual may expend 5 status traits in order to decline the Monomacy with no disgrace. An individual who declines a Monomacy without expending 5 traits gains the negative status trait *Cowardly*. Once this event has occurred, the individual cannot be challenged in Monomacy on that topic (or by that individual) for a period of two games or one month. For more information on the *Cowardly* trait, see **Sabbat Negative Status Traits, page 448**.

4. **Deciding Terms**

Once a challenge is accepted, the competitors must decide the terms of the Monomacy. By default, Monomacy is a direct, one-on-one fight within a clearly defined, 30-foot diameter circle. It takes place at midnight on the evening of the first new moon following acceptance of the challenge. The terms of a default Monomacy are as follows:

› The challenger (aggressor) selects the location. The challenged (defender) chooses the weapons, which must be ceremonial melee weapons. The specific weapons are provided by the arbiter and must be utterly mundane. The challenged may instead choose that both participants fight unarmed. Either party may choose to fight without the weapons provided, if they wish, but cannot use any other weapons.

› The participants cannot have any powers active when the Monomacy begins (though passive powers that do not require activation, such as Fortitude, are acceptable). Note that both the challenger and the challenged's vinculi are fully effective during Monomacy.

› The challenged and the challenger face off within the Monomacy circle. No one, including the competitors, their packmates, other participants, or the arbiter herself may interfere, collaborate, or use any powers on the competitors (for aid or bane) before or during the Monomacy. This stricture is closely observed.

› After the Monomacy begins, the challenger and the challenged may use any powers they possess, targeting themselves or their opponent.

› A victor is determined when one vampire either torpors her opponent within the Monomacy circle, or drives her opponent fully out of the circle.

5. **Altering the Terms**

Once the Monomacy is accepted, the default terms of Monomacy may be altered, if the challenger, the challenged, and the arbiter agree. If any of these individuals disagree about the alteration, the Monomacy cannot be altered and the default ritae is followed.

› Small scale alterations might include: a pack-on-pack fight, rather than one-on-one; multiple weapons scattered about the arena, rather than one weapon per competitor; specific exclusions such as, "no Presence and no Obfuscate;" or individual inclusions, such as "only Thaumaturgy will be allowed."

How to Select an Arbiter

If the individuals are in the same pack, the arbiter is their Priest. If the challenge is cross-pack, the arbiter is the Bishop nearest to the challenged by proximity (or Archbishop, if the challenged is a Bishop, and so on). The Priest of a third pack, or a Priscus, may serve as arbiter instead, if the individual is acceptable to both parties. If the appropriate arbiter cannot attend to the Monomacy within a reasonable timeframe, she may decline the position, in which case the position reverts to the next most acceptable arbiter under the same terms. Once an arbiter has been determined, she has a period of one month to decide the appropriateness of the Monomacy. It is her duty to perform a final mediation of the issue, and within her authority to claim that one side is clearly at fault and should instead perform a Rite of Contrition. If the arbiter denies the appropriateness of the challenge, then the Monomacy is ended and the target may not be re-challenged on that issue without further proof of a transgression.

› Large-scale alterations might include: expanding the circle to a five-mile radius, causing the Monomacy to become a test of urban tracking and survival; or fighting while falling through the air after leaping out of a helicopter, and declaring the first one who is beaten to torpor or who flees by changing form before they strike the ground is the loser.

Lastly, the arbiter can add ritual trappings to the ritus. These could include: requiring a specific number of witnesses or delaying the challenge for up to a month for spiritual reasons, so long as all parties agree. In no case can the arbiter's requirements delay the Monomacy for more than a month.

6. **Outcome**

After a victor has been determined, she selects the outcome. There are three outcomes to a Monomacy: death (including diablerie of one participant by the other), exile from a specific territory, or loss of sect position.

› **Death:** Death must occur within the circle, by the victor's own hands or powers. If a competitor is ousted from the circle through the use of powers or by other means, the Monomacy ends without death, and the victor must choose that her opponent suffer either exile or loss of sect position. If the winner kills her opponent in this manner, the victor cannot choose a replacement for any sect positions the loser held. All possessions of slain losers must be given to the winner. If the loser is allowed to survive, either by condition of the outcome or through the victor's mercy, she retains her possessions.

› **Exile:** If the victor chooses exile, the defeated vampire must never again come within the city (or local diocese). The defeated cannot return to the area for a period of five years or until the victor relents, whichever is sooner. If the victor dies during this period, she cannot relent, and the defeated vampire must serve the full time in exile. If this exile causes the loser to resign a local sect position, the victor cannot choose a replacement for that office.

› **Loss of Position:** If the victor chooses loss of sect position, the loser is neither killed nor exiled. However, she must resign the office in contention, and the victor chooses a replacement for that position. The victor is allowed to choose someone other than herself, provided the replacement agrees to accept the post. This victory condition may be chosen even if the Monomacy was not caused by a dispute related to a position, but over some other point of philosophy.

Additionally, only the arbiter can declare a Monomacy null and void; she may do so either during the Monomacy or after the ritae has occurred. Such a shocking pronouncement usually means someone cheated during the ritus, or that someone outside the ritus interfered.

Templars and Monomacy

Templars don't accept challenges or fight in their liege's place in a Monomacy. Leaders in the Sabbat are expected to be capable in combat as well as religious fields. Capable does not mean that every Sabbat leader must be a master of physical battle; a vampire may utilize cunning application of her disciplines to force their enemies out of the Monomacy circle and never need to raise a hand in her own defense. Combined with the protection of vinculi and a maze of bureaucracy to keep challengers away, this can keep a non-combat character in power long enough to develop the physical competence she needs to remain a leader in Caine's army. Some leaders use their Templars as offensive weapons, with such a Templar usually contriving an excuse to challenge an enemy of her liege and nominating her liege or one of her liege's pawns to any resulting vacant position.

The Sermons of Caine

The Sermons of Caine preserve the lessons of the Book of Nod and are used to teach prominent portions of vampire history or Sabbat theology. These are complex theological arguments, based on the ideology of the Church of the Dark Father. They are intended to celebrate, teach, and persuade their listeners to accept the sect's doctrine. During this

Fight Club

Extreme alterations to a Monomacy ritual may cause other Sabbat to be suspicious of the results of a Monomacy. Tales of Monomacies performed through cozy games of chess or riddles are likely apocryphal; those are dubious claims in light of the Sect's ferocity and the vampiric Beast. Such stories likely refer to Ignoblis Symbels (see page 437) rather than a formal Monomacy ritus.

Auctoritas, a vampire must adhere to the approved doctrine of the Church of Caine. All Priests are required to learn this ritual. Sermons of Caine are usually followed by a Vaulderie.

System: A vampire who participates in the Sermons of Caine (by giving a sermon or engaging in a theological debate) receives an additional Mental attribute focus, which lingers for the next three nights. After the bonus from this ritae expires, you cannot benefit from a Sermon of Caine or from other ritae that grant additional focuses for two game sessions or one month (whichever is greater). You cannot be under the effects of more than one ritae that grants an additional focus at a time.

To perform a Sermon of Caine involving non-faithful participants, the difficulty is 15 instead of the standard 25. A Sermon of Caine does not automatically fail unless more than 50% of the participants are not faithful to the precept of the ritual. Participants who are not faithful or disagree may still benefit from this ritual as long as they listen, contribute, and are respectful.

The Vaulderie

The Vaulderie is the foremost ritual of the Sword of Caine. It ensures freedom from the blood bond, as well as promoting unity between bickering political factions. The Vaulderie gives vampires a simulated emotional connection to their comrades known as *vinculum*. Unlike the blood bond, which can be one-way from regnant to thrall, a vinculum affects how you feel toward multiple people — and ensures how they feel about you. Like them or not, you have an affinity towards those with those with whom you Vaulderie. Your packmate may be a monster, but she is *your* monster — and you are hers.

As Paths of Enlightenment grow popular among members of the sect (who revel in anything that throws off the shackles of Humanity), the Vaulderie has become even more critical. Vampires on paths are fanatic about their enlightenment, to the detriment of sect allegiance, faith, and even survival.

Vaulderies are small affairs, not 50-person blood orgies. Individual Vaulderies are typically comprised of 10 to 15 members. When the sect gathers en masse, its members perform many small Vaulderies between packs, along clan lines, within factions, or among those with similar personal ethics. It is a matter of politic at a gathering as to who you Vaulderie with first, or whom you avoid. Cunning vampires can learn a great deal by watching the ebb and flow of Vaulderie circles over the course of a night.

Performing the Vaulderie

To begin the Vaulderie, the Priest or clergy member officiating the ritus gathers the participants into a circle. She then brings forth a vessel and a weapon: usually a chalice and a consecrated knife. Standing in the center of the circle, surrounded by kneeling assistants, the priest initiates the ritual. This may involve a Sermon of Caine or simply a short, inspirational speech.

The officiant then chants the ceremonial words of the Vaulderie, *"My blood springs from Caine, and is gladly spilled in his service."* Thereafter, she cuts her wrist and bleeds into the cup. The officiant (or one of her ritual assistants) then carries the chalice around the circle, so that each vampire in the ritus can speak the same blessing and add her blood to the mix. Traditionally, the officiant takes chalice to the most prestigious vampire participating in the ritual and then proceeds to the left from that point.

Once everyone in the circle has contributed, the officiant stands in the center of the circle once more and lifts the cup toward the heavens. She speaks the second ceremonial invocation of the Vaulderie, *"Praise Caine! May the bonds be broken."* The blood within the cup is transubstantiated and purified by the ritual. This act removes the taint of disease or drugs, and negates powers that leave lingering harmful effects in the blood (such as Acid Blood).

The officiant then drinks from the chalice, thanking Caine for his blessing. She (or one of her assistants) carries the chalice around the circle again, beginning with the most prestigious and then moving to the left of that individual. Each repeats the second invocation and drinks from the chalice, until the final vampire in the ritual drains the chalice dry. The rite is now complete.

Remember that the Vaulderie is a pretend pageant, and that Vampire: The Masquerade is a game. Don't carry the roleplay too far, and don't make anyone uncomfortable. Remember that real bloodletting in entirely inappropriate, and should not be allowed at any point in the game.

Vinculum Ratings

Vinculum is very similar to the blood bond, but there are several key differences between the two. Most importantly, vinculum is always mutual; someone cannot have a vinculum without the other individual feeling the same vinculum in return. Once a character has participated in a Vaulderie with another individual, she always has a vinculum rating of 1 toward that individual. This rating is permanent. A vinculum rating between two characters is based on how often those characters participate in the Vaulderie together.

Although this system is somewhat different from the one used in tabletop games, the intent is to keep the feel and restrictions of the Vaulderie, while still utilizing a flexible and simple system appropriate for live-action games.

System: Successfully participating in a Vaulderie requires a basic belief in Caine and in the doctrine of the Sabbat. Only willing individuals can participate in the Vaulderie. A character cannot be forced to take part, or the ritual will fail.

When two characters first participate in a Vaulderie ritual together, they gain a vinculum of 1 to each other. Vinculums between two individuals cannot be raised more than once in a single night, no matter how many Vaulderies the two individuals participate in during that night.

Thereafter, whenever you meet that other player in-game, you must determine the current vinculum rating between your two characters. To do that, answer the following questions:

- Have you participated in a Vaulderie with this individual every few days for the last three months? **If so, you have a rating of 5.** Vinculum ratings of 5 are uncommon and short-lived: the better to protect against a tie that feels too much like the blood bond. You are completely infatuated with the other person, believing anything she says and instinctively aiding her whenever possible (even to your own detriment). To work against her best interest, you must spend 2 Willpower per scene; to attack her, you must spend 2 points of Willpower each round. You are incapable of killing the subject or knowingly allowing her to be killed.

- Have you participated in a Vaulderie with this individual approximately every week for the past three months? **If so, you have a rating of 4.** You might have missed a few weeks during those three months, but you cannot miss more than two weeks in a row. You feel as though the other person is an integral part of your life: a lover or a trusted companion. You will instinctively aid the other individual, and you always give her the benefit of the doubt. To work against the subject's best interest, you must spend a Willpower per scene; to attack the subject, you must spend a point of Willpower each round. You must also spend a Willpower to kill her or to knowingly allow her to be killed.

- Have you participated in a Vaulderie with this individual more than 10 times in the last year? **If so, you have a rating of 3.** You feel a close connection and deep friendship with that individual, as though you had been friends for a very long time. A character must spend a point of Willpower to attack a person with whom she has a vinculum rating of 3. If you spend a Willpower, you can attack her for the rest of the scene. You do not need to spend this Willpower during Ignoblis games, training sessions, or other non-murderous fights. You can disagree with her or cause her troubles, but you actively do not wish to cause her harm.

- Have you participated in a Vaulderie with this individual more than once in the past year? **If so, you have a rating of 2.** You feel a sense of empathy towards the other vampire, as though she is your friend. A character must spend a point of Willpower to kill a person with whom she has a vinculum rating of 2. You may plot against her, harm her, or cause her embarrassment, but ending her life is not something you want to do.

- The first time you participate in a Vaulderie with someone, **you gain a rating of 1.** This rating is permanent, no matter how long it has been since you participated in the Vaulderie together. You feel a sense of kinship and are neutral-to-friendly with the subject. There is no mechanical effect.

Example One: A Typical Vaulderie

Genese has joined Midas's pack. She has no vinculum rating with him at this time.

Genese and Midas (with the rest of the pack) then participate in their first Vaulderie together. If it is successful, they establish a vinculum rating of 1. If they never Vaulderie again, their vinculum will remain at 1 forever.

The next night, Genese, Midas, and the pack perform the Vaulderie together for a second time. Because they have now Vaulderied more than twice in the last year, they establish a vinculum rating of 2. If they never Vaulderie again, the vinculum will return to 1 after a year.

"Most Prestigious"

Priests often disagree on the definition of "most prestigious" vampire. Some officiants always defer to their Ductus, where another might choose the highest-ranking clergy in the group. Some Priests might consider the victor of the night's Ignoblis to be the most prestigious among them, while others prefer to allow a Lasombra or Tzimisce (as representative of the founders of the sect) to go first. The choice of "most prestigious" within a vaulderie can cause another vampire to take insult, bringing sect politics into the rituals of the Sabbat.

The next night, the pack performs the Vaulderie together for a third time. Genese and Midas have now Vaulderied three times, but they have not met the requirements for a vinculum rating of 3. They must routinely Vaulderie several more times (once a week for three months), to reach a vinculum of 3. Performing the ritus tonight, however, does reset the date on which their vinculum rating of 2 will fade.

After 12 weeks of performing the Vaulderie consistently once a week, Genese, Midas, and the pack have established a vinculum rating of 3. This rating will last for a year, if they do not Vaulderie again.

A vinculum rating of 3 is the point at which most packs become comfortable with their new member, and Vaulderies are performed approximately once a week thereafter.

Example Two: A Shared Connection

Genese goes to a big convention game, where she meets a new player. The two players decide that their Sabbat characters have a background tie: they used to be in the same pack. The players discuss for a moment, and decide that their characters used to Vaulderie weekly. Long ago, they had a rating of 4 with one another. However, they haven't seen each other in three months, and therefore, their vinculum has slipped to 3. If they Vaulderie tonight, it will remain a 3; they will have to perform the Vaulderie every week for a month to reestablish a rating of 4.

The War Party

This powerful ritual confers Caine's blessing upon multiple packs for the purpose of hunting a specific, named enemy of the sect, with the intention of drinking her soul and strengthening the Sabbat. If the War Party does not bring death to that enemy, those involved will suffer great shame. If they are successful, the rewards include sect status, diablerie, and the benefits of infamy.

The effects of a War Party last until the next sunrise. Once the War Party ritus has been successfully performed, the packs cannot turn from their purpose, even if they cannot find their target or there is no hope of victory. In such cases, the packs will literally drive themselves to death, throwing away their lives in increasingly desperate attempts to reach their victim or succeed against impossible odds.

The vampire who successfully kills the War Party's target (whether or not she diablerizes the victim) gains the fleeting status trait *Triumphant*.

This ritual cannot be used against True Sabbat.

System: A Priest can cast War Party on up to 15 vampires, and she cannot perform this ritus more than once per night. During the War Party, those participating in the ritual can choose to gain 1 Beast trait in order to receive a +1 wild card bonus for any challenge that actively pursues or attacks the specific target of the War Party. A character may make this exchange up to five times during the War Party. There is no degeneration test for this gain of Beast traits, and a character cannot avoid the gain through any means. All other aspects of Morality loss apply.

When used on a challenge, each +1 bonus is expended and cannot be regained. You may use more than one +1 bonus on a single challenge, but the bonus must be declared before the test is attempted. For example, you may choose to use the +1 bonus in five separate challenges, all five +1 bonuses in a single challenge, or any combination between, so long as you do not expend more wild card bonuses than were granted by the ritual. As the evening goes by, the vampire's Beast grows stronger, pushing her to more and more rash acts in its desperation to reach the quarry. Storytellers should encourage players to portray this, and act more and more reckless as sunrise draws near.

The Wild Hunt

Like the War Party, this ritual confers Caine's blessing upon multiple packs for the purpose of hunting a specific, named individual: in this case, a traitor to the sect. This rite cannot be used to target someone who is not a member of the Sabbat, and it can only be performed against someone who has betrayed the sect in a tangible manner.

Although any *Initiated* member of the sect may participate in a Wild Hunt, the ritus can only be performed by an Archbishop, Cardinal, or the Regent. By the dictates of the ritus, the clergy must light 13 black candles and publically announce the Banns of the Hunt (a complete list of charges against the accused) and a location. The accused individual has three nights to face her accuser and answer the charges; during each night, the 13 black candles are lit again, continuing the opening practices of this ritus.

If the rebuttal is sufficient, the accuser must commute the Wild Hunt into an appropriate Rite of Contrition (or no punishment, if the accused is innocent). If the rebuttal is inadequate, then the accused has the final option of challenging her accuser to Monomacy. If she does not, or if the accused does not come to answer the charges within three nights, then the accuser blows out each of the black candles and casts the remainder of the Wild Hunt ritus.

To be very clear, there is a big difference between "False Sabbat" (which implies the possibility of redemption) and "traitor" (which doesn't). A vampire who fails a Rite of Contrition, fails in her duty, or performs some other minor crime, might be uninitiated and refused the Creation Rites

for a year and a day. A vampire who betrays the Sword of Caine, reveals sect secrets (even to revenants or ghouls), or flees the Sabbat for another sect is a traitor, and she will be hunted and destroyed with extreme prejudice.

System: An individual who has been Wild Hunted gains a mystical, ever-bleeding scar upon her flesh, which identifies her as a traitor to the Sword of Caine. The mark may appear on the target's forehead, chest, the back of the neck, or the palm of a hand at the Storyteller's discretion. The vampire will bear this wound until her Final Death or until she is pardoned — an act which can only be done by the Regent of the sect. At the moment this rite is formally completed (only after all evidence has been presented and treason is confirmed, or after three nights if the accused does not present herself), the target loses all status and position in the sect, cannot benefit from any Sabbat ritae, and all vinculums to her are immediately broken — although vinculums she has toward others still remain.

You must have the Sabbat status *Sacrosanct* or *Glorious* to initiate this ritual.

The Ignoblis Ritae

The Ignoblis Ritae are less powerful, less structured, and less reliable than the Auctoritas Ritae. These ritae substitute individual loyalty for religious fervency, allowing a tightly-knit pack to perform successful Ignoblis even if its members' belief in Caine is not particularly strong.

Many Ignoblis Ritae are taken from shamanic practices, rather than Catholic ones. Sabbat packs spent time among the native peoples of the New World during the 1600s and gained a deep respect for their customs. These appealed to the Tzimisce koldun, in particular, who saw an earth-based reverence parallel to their own. Therefore, many Ignoblis reflect tenets of animism, primitivism, and shamanic spirituality. Transformation through the acquisition of knowledge is a common theme.

An Ignoblis Ritae may be performed at any time the Priest of a pack (or a member of the clergy) believes that such ritae is appropriate. Although each pack has its own Ignoblis (and performs even common ones according to its own custom), there are some minor ritae that are popular and often practiced by the Sabbat as a whole.

Common Ignoblis Ritae

The common Ignoblis Ritae include:

- **Acceptance:** This ritus inducts a True Sabbat into a preexisting pack, making that individual a full member of the coven. Typically, an Acceptance ritus is a game or individual challenge for all members of the pack, establishing the new hierarchy of dominance. If the individual does well, she is respected as an equal. If she does poorly, she may not be allowed to join the pack at all. This ritual is also performed to celebrate the sect's acceptance of new True Sabbat when they are given *Initiation* through the Creation Rites.
- **Danse Macabre (also called the Farewell Ritus):** This Ignoblis is more somber than others, and packs use it to bid farewell to the spirits and memories of fellow Sabbat after they have been destroyed. The farewell rites usually involve each person in attendance offering a sacrifice to go with the departed. When this ritual is performed on a nomadic pack leaving an area, these sacrifices are often gifts given to help that pack survive its travels.
- **Running the Gauntlet:** This ritus includes physical games and challenges involving direct combat between two or more participants, always performed in some public manner, so that the rest of the Sabbat can watch and learn from the battle.
- **Sacrificial Rites:** This ritual involves the sacrifice of a human, werewolf, or vampire. Typically, the first half of this ritus is a challenge to acquire an appropriate sacrifice (alive and not significantly harmed). Such a sacrifice is usually defined at the start of the ritus, and then the vampires are sent to perform the task. If they succeed, the sacrifice is performed in the bloodiest method possible, and its remains are left behind so that the enemies of the Sabbat can see, and fear, the power of the Sword of Caine.
- **Stealth:** The Ignoblis Ritae of stealth come in many varieties, from vowing silence and cutting out tongues, to see who can remain silent the longest, to physical tests of silence, such as moving through a Camarilla-controlled area without gaining the attention of the enemy.
- **Sun Dance:** The Sun Dance ritus is held from sunset to sunrise without pause. Pack members usually dress in masks or paint, depicting their greatest battles or most significant points of pride. The Sun Dance is a test of endurance; no wounds may be healed from the moment the ritus begins to the moment the sun rises on the next morning. The ritus involves chanting, dancing, counting coup upon other sect members (through a single strike) and praising one's pack accomplishments.
- **Vision Quest:** In some packs, if an individual wishes to become leader or seeks guidance from Caine, she goes on a vision quest. The Sabbat member's vision quest involves meditation, starvation (no feeding for at least

a week before the ritus), and a pageant play by her pack and associates. The topic of the pageant is always a relevant story of Caine or of vampiric myth and history, related to the individual's questions and concerns. The individual seeking enlightenment watches this pageant (along with any other audience, often at an esbat). If her faith is stalwart enough, she is said to receive a vision of a course of action, though doubters say this may simply be hunger and the will of the Beast rising within her psyche.

System

Participating in an Ignoblis Ritae provides a +1 wild card bonus to one challenge performed within the next three nights. Once this bonus is used, it is lost until you participate in another Ignoblis Ritae. This bonus must benefit an action that parallels the specific Ignoblis performed. For example, if your pack creates a ritae that involves dodging burning coals as they are hurled at you, you might use the +1 bonus of the Ignoblis to Dodge, or to resist a frenzy brought on by fire, but you cannot use it to shoot a pistol or attempt to use a Dominate power. A character cannot possess a bonus from more than one Ignoblis Ritae at a time.

Ignoblis Symbels

On occasion, members of the Sabbat will participate in social duels: *symbels*. These symbels are Ignoblis Ritae, and they tend to be darker and bloodier than the archaic practice might suggest. The Sabbat is comprised of vampires who relish their undead nature, and they enjoy the act of frenzy and the release it provides, allowing their Beast to show dominance. Symbel duels tend to be actual fights, competitions to the first blood or some predetermined losing condition. Ordeals tend to be genuine tests of endurance, fortitude, and courage, designed to prove oneself to the sect or to humiliate the other competitors.

A member of the Sabbat thinks nothing of brutalizing her fellow members in the name of fun or to show that she is the superior predator. A symbel in the Sabbat isn't a light-hearted challenge; it is a matter of ambition and preeminence, a way to humiliate one's rivals before things escalate to Monomacy. Both the clergy hierarchy and the Vicars of the political factions pay close attention to how a Sabbat member performs in symbel challenges. Proving oneself in these bloody confrontations can break a vampire's reputation or open a door to rank or leadership in combat, elevating her personal power within the sect.

Victors of an Ignoblis symbel receive the fleeting status *Victorious*. For more information on these social competitions, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 317**.

Factions and Faction Ritae

The Sword of Caine can be a chaotic and unpredictable environment. Rebellious splinter groups and political factions rise and fall, often leaving little trace of their existence. An individual vampire may swap factions over the years, changing political alliances as her personal beliefs mature or alter.

The primary political contingents of the Sabbat are the Ultra Conservatives, the Orthodoxy, the Order of St. Blaise, and the Loyalists. Two smaller factions, the Status Quo and the Pander caucus, are less powerful but still notable. Some members of the Sabbat simply don't care about politics. Vampires not affiliated with a faction are known as Moderates, claiming no unifying cause.

The political factions underwent significant upheavals during the Nights of Turmoil. The Ultra Conservatives fared well, providing structure in the chaos and assisting the Cardinals to centralize command. A small group of Cainites began a campaign of renewed religious fervency, advocating greater use of the sacred ritae, more spirituality, and greater influence for Priests. The Orthodox faction, as they came to be called, gained a tremendous amount of support from Sabbat mystics and spiritualists. Loyalists were hardest hit in the wake of the Red Star, as they were the loudest celebrants of the End Times. Only the intervention of the Regent and his Hand saved the Loyalist faction from complete destruction. Because of Temoch's courage in rescuing their brothers and sisters, Loyalists have renewed their dedication to the Regent, even as they vehemently reject the rest of the clergy's formalized hierarchy. Only time will tell if this new assertion lasts beyond Temoch's tenure.

Faction Ritae are rites performed by gatherings of specific political groups. Like other ritae, these rites rely heavily on faith to power their magic. Vampires who do not genuinely believe in the sub-sect's principles are considered doubters in that faction's ritae, and they will likely cause a ritus to fail. Changing political factions ends all benefits of ongoing faction ritae immediately.

Ultra Conservatives

"I (name), pledge to uphold the sect, its rightful clergy, and its sacred goals, in the name of the Dark Father. Stability through discipline. Unity through constancy. Victory through relentlessness. I will prove my worth. I swear it, upon the altar of Caine."

— Oath of the Renunciation

Once composed of the eldest members of the Sabbat, Ultra Conservatives favor centralization and authoritarianism.

From the Ultra Conservative viewpoint, true freedom will come only after the Sabbat win the war. Until then, the Sword of Caine must be an army, and it must be prepared to fight as an army. Others see the Ultra Conservatives as stodgy, inflexible, and usually archaic vampires who never fully abandoned the hierarchy of lineage and rank. However, as other groups floundered, the Ultra Conservatives seized many positions of authority, centralizing command and providing critical coordination for Sabbat troops. Although this faction does tend to contain the most hidebound individuals in the Sabbat, it also boasts a number of younger, more militant members of the Sword of Caine.

Ultra Conservatives favor bold leaders and insist upon intensive combat training, ensuring that every member of the sect has the capacity to be useful in war. Ultra Conservatives work to consolidate the strength of the Sabbat through strict and efficient hierarchical structures. They recommend the Vaulderie between all packs of a diocese; with enough ties of blood, they hope pack cells will become unnecessary, and all Sabbat will join together as a unified nation.

Faction Ritae: Irad's Wall

Irad's Wall is an ancient ritus, but the Ultra Conservatives jealously guard its secrets. To cast it, petitioners must consecrate an area no larger than a single room of 100 square feet with incense and salt.

System: When this ritus is performed, it sanctifies a building or small area for a single night, preventing spirits, wraiths, or psychic forms from entering the location. Such entities can attempt to spy on the protected area from outside Irad's Wall, but they cannot cross the barrier. If a body whose spirit is elsewhere crosses this barrier, the spirit instantly returns to its body — immediately ending powers like Possession, Psychic Projection, or Soul Stealing. Characters who leave their bodies while inside of an area secured by Irad's Wall are unable to leave that area until their body crosses the barrier. Irad's Wall ends when the sun rises.

Orthodox

The Orthodox faction is waging a campaign of renewed religious fervor within the Sabbat. It focuses on the ritae, the worship of Caine, and the mystic nature of vampirism. This faction insists upon spiritual dedication, and it believes that the Sabbat's leadership should be comprised of the most devout and faithful Priests. As membership swelled, they gained a tremendous amount of support and dedicated themselves to the Dark Church under a new name: Orthodox.

Orthodox Sabbat advocate a greater use of ritae, more authority for Priests, and more fanatic adherence to the doctrine of the sect. They tend to work well with the Inquisition, and they actively support the creation of new ritae and the use of Thaumaturgy within the sect.

Faction Ritae: Atra Sacramentum

Members of the Roman Catholic Church consider its sacraments necessary for a mortal's salvation. So, too, do Orthodox members of the Church of Caine consider the Atra Sacramentum integral to a vampire's unlife. When the Atra Sacramentum is performed, all vampires involved in the ritus must sacrifice some of their own flesh, offering reparation to the Dark Father in penance for the sins of their forefathers, the Antediluvians. Typically, vampires perform the Atra Sacramentum in front of an altar-fire, into which they each slice a finger, or some other small portion of their flesh, while offering a prayer for the blessing of Caine.

A Double-Sided Coin

For some clans, such as the Nosferatu or the Harbingers of Skulls, the Atra Sacramentum is a significant blessing. Beyond the detriments other clans suffer, these vampires suffer the stigma and agony of a twisted form that cannot be cured with blood or even the use of Vicissitude. Even so, the effects of the Atra Sacramentum can only go so far. Clans with a significant physical alteration as part of their clan weakness find that alteration lessened – Nosferatu are no longer hideous, Kiasyd could pass as human – but they also lose all benefits granted by their vampiric alteration. A Nosferatu affected by this ritual does not gain any additional Social attribute focuses, but looks like a normal person (depending on her Humanity rating), and her appearance does not endanger the Silence of the Blood. Mechanics which specifically call upon these physical alterations (such as the various physical-form Nosferatu clan merits) do not function while this ritual is in effect.

System: The vampire receives 2 points of unpreventable aggravated damage when performing this ritual. Healing these wounds ends all effects of the Atra Sacramentum. ritus. Until the next sunset, a vampire who participated in the Atra Sacramentum does not suffer the effects of her clan's weakness. A vampire can only receive the benefits of the Atra Sacramentum once per lunar month.

Loyalists

One of the largest political factions in the Sabbat, Loyalists comprise perhaps 50% of the sect. This might provide the Loyalists a tremendous amount of power, if they were not so focused on freedom and self-determination. Although Loyalists believe in the sect and obey the Regent, they have no intent to sacrifice their free will or recognize sect hierarchy. Unlike the Camarilla's Anarchs, who rebel against any authority, Loyalists view themselves as an integral part of the Sabbat. They believe in the pack structure, the bonds of vinculum, and the right of an individual sect member to respect Caine as that vampire sees fit.

Though they can be contrary, refusing orders simply to prove a point, most Loyalists genuinely believe in the sect's cause. They advocate an extremely limited hierarchy, wherein the Regent is the sole authority above pack officers. Loyalists believe clergy positions degrade the sect's freedom and will not accept such posts. Nor will a Loyalist serve as a Templar to clergy positions, as that would support the tyranny of the structure. Loyalists do listen to the judgment and guidance of the Prisci, but they only give that respect if individually earned. In this case, a Loyalist is not accepting the authority of the Prisci, so much as asking advice from someone the Loyalist acknowledges as a superior vampire.

Loyalist Cainites cannot hold clergy positions (Cardinal, Archbishop, or Bishop), nor can they become a Templar to one of those posts. So long as a character is dedicated to this political faction, she gains the abiding status trait *Loyalist*. If she takes one of those positions, or leaves the Loyalist faction, she immediately loses this status trait.

Tower of Babel

"Faster, faster, ever faster
Blood and bone and ash and after,
Build the tower, court disaster,
Still we stand as one."

— The Chant of the Tower

The Book of Genesis details the story of a mighty city of peace and prosperity, whose heights reached into heaven and rivaled even the glory of God. The Almighty struck down that city, even as the unified Enoch was destroyed by the Deluge. So, too, do the Loyalists see absolute unity as another type of slavery, and they reject conformity. They believe in the pack, in diversity, and in free will. They created the Tower of Babel rite to strengthen the pack, encouraging and allowing secure communication even within a larger gathering. The fact that public conversations using the Tower ritual tend to frustrate those who do not understand them is just a bonus.

System: Individuals who participate in a Tower of Babel ritus (up to 10 individuals) may communicate with one another in a manner that is indecipherable to all those around them. These vampires may speak the mystic language of their tower, and that language cannot be deciphered by any means. Further, this communication does not have to be verbal. The ritual participants may communicate clearly so long as they can see, hear, touch, or otherwise distinctly sense one another, even over video cameras, cellphones, or other electronic means. The effects of this ritual last until sunrise, although the primary caster may choose to end them for one or all participants prior to that duration.

Individuals who participate in one Tower of Babel ritus cannot decipher the mystic speech of those who performed a different Tower ritual. The communication granted by this ritus is as obvious as any other discussion: just the meaning is obscured. Only members of the Loyalist faction can learn or cast this ritual. Unusually, an individual with a vinculum of 3 or greater with the primary caster is not considered unfaithful for the purpose of determining this ritual's success.

Order of St. Blaise

Vampires in the Order of St. Blaise lead dangerous existences. Once, they served the sect as spies and saboteurs within the Roman Catholic Church, but in modern times, the Order of St. Blaise has widened its scope. Now it works to gain and control influence over all aspects of human society. It uses these contacts and leverage to hide Sabbat activity, maintain the Silence of the Blood, and protect packs and communal havens from sect enemies. Through careful manipulation of resources, the sub-sect has gained both temporal power and prestige within the Sabbat. Many members of the Order of St. Blaise work with or own Revenants, utilizing the day-walkers to facilitate their control over the mortal world.

In general, members of the Sabbat disdain Humanity and mortal life. This leads to friction between the Order of St. Blaise and other factions, as the Order's primary purpose requires its members to typically maintain their Humanity and to interact with mortals far more than other vampires in the Sabbat. However, the order's contributions to the

Sword of Caine are unparalleled and have been extremely useful. In these modern nights of cellphone cameras and constant mortal surveillance, the Order of St. Blaise has become unquestionably integral to the survival of the sect. Still, as much as it is useful and utilized, many members of the Sabbat continue to disdain the Order of St. Blaise, claiming that the vampires of this faction are a little too willing to play with their food.

The Blessing of Saint Blaise

Drawing upon Saint Blaise in his capacity as the patron saint of throat ailments, the order uses this ritus to guard against maladies that pass through the throat. A Priest begins by consecrating a pair of candles and presses them in a crossed position to the recipient's neck. The Priest then recites the blessing, "Through the invocation of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr of the Sword, may Caine deliver you from ailments." The recipient is then cured of any harmful effects she is suffering as a result of ingesting something. The blessing also grants a measure of protection against the harmful effects of ingested substances for the next seven days.

System: If the target has been affected by poison, drugs, or any other ingested substance, the effects of those substances end immediately. Vampires gain this benefit whether they have been poisoned, diseased, chemically altered, or tampered with, provided the harmful substance was consumed through the throat.

Further, the ritus protects against the next single ingestion of tainted substances within a seven-day period. Note this rite does not remove the Disease Carrier flaw from a vampire with that flaw (the infection is latent within the Cainite), but could cure someone who has consumed the blood of an individual who possesses that flaw. This ritus has no effect on the blood bond or the Vaulderie.

Lesser Factions

"Although Caine was away from us,
we did feel his careful eye watching us, and we knew that he marked our movements and our ways."

— The Book of Nod

Moderates

The Moderate faction is comprised of Cainites who are too busy to choose a political faction, who prefer neutrality, or who are simply apolitical. Most Moderates are content with the Sabbat as it is. They respect the hierarchy but do not defend it, and they pay little attention to the decisions or policy-making of sect leaders. Moderates tend to support the Code of Milan, and they generally obey orders if given by a member of the clergy. They respect the Black Hand and Inquisition, but try to stay out of political arguments unless they have a personal stake in the affair. If a member of the sect declares no faction, she is considered Moderate by default.

Pander

After the Third Sabbat Civil War, the clanless members of the sect unified under the leadership of a vampire named Joseph Pander. These clanless demanded greater respect for their contributions and a greater share of glory. They fought against the staid beliefs and superstitions of archaic vampires, arguing that clan had no meaning as to a vampire's potential. In the end, they overcome many of the biases and bigotry within the sect, and earned a place for themselves as a clan. However, after earning that civil rights victory, the Pander faction lost momentum.

In modern nights, many Panders take their claim to equal prominence within the Sabbat for granted. They turn to other issues, struggling against other injustices and seeking personal power through other means. The faction's members now have a reputation as power-mongers: individuals willing to back any cause in the name of personal profit.

Internal faction struggles only heightened this disdain. Joseph Pander and others still demand credit and respect for past political victories, shifting their alliances as maximum profit demands. In modern nights, the few remaining members of the Pander faction keep a low profile, watching for another foothold to power — and always looking for the next great cause.

Status Quo

Once a prominent group within the sect, the Status Quo recently lost a great deal of its membership to the rise of the Orthodox faction. Those vampires who still claim membership in the Status Quo struggle for respect and inclusion; theirs is a faction on the decline.

The Status Quo supports the hierarchy and the Code of Milan, and seeks compromise between the other factions so as to ensure the smallest amount of change to the Sabbat's doctrine and practices. Many members of this faction are older vampires, individuals who are static and unwilling to learn new things or alter their ways. They often support an existing regime over the upheaval and uncertainty of a new one, preferring to maintain a known (if flawed) issue over any form of change.

Falling From Grace

When two members of the Sabbat have personal or ideological issues, they can choose from many methods of resolution. The sect has approved some methods, while others use more hypocritical or underhanded techniques. From the Rites of Contrition to Monomacy, sect members must navigate a complex structure in order to seek vengeance or personal dominance. When two sect members have differences, they must address those differences according to their political ideology, their Humanity (or Path of Enlightenment), and their relative positions within the sect. A character can be pulled in many directions: morality, clan, pack, political faction, and rank within the sect are only a few of the possible sources of conflict for a member of the Sabbat.

Before an issue rises to the point of Monomacy, vampires can explore other political avenues for resolution. Sect members use Ignoblis duels and symbels to settle minor issues, or call for Rites of Contrition. They swear oaths to one another in promised fulfillment of debts, and they can certainly refuse to aid one another under Statute VII of the Code of Milan. If a problem arises within a pack, the Cainites turn to their Priest to judge the matter. The Priest may administer punishment, order a Rite of Contrition, or request that the Ductus assign negative status. When an issue comes up between two members of the sect who are not packmates, the potential methods of solving those problems are more labyrinthine.

An Ultra Conservative member would likely first go to the individual's Bishop or Archbishop to make her grievance known. In a minor case, the Ultra Conservative might ask that her rival be denied the simple comforts of the sect — forbidding her use of the communal haven or refusing use of prime feeding territory, for example. If the issue is more serious, the Ultra Conservative might request the Archbishop assign the negative status *Warned* or request a Rite of Contrition. Of course, in order to speak to a territorial Bishop or Archbishop the rival must be in a founded pack, instead of a nomadic one. If a rival is a horseman, then the Ultra Conservative must potentially utilize either the clergy in a location the nomads frequently visit, or she must contact the Cardinal responsible for coordinating nomadic packs.

Members of other political factions would handle a rival in a different manner. Loyalists respect the authority of pack officers. If a Loyalist is wronged, she first attempts to address that wrong by talking to her rival's Ductus and/or Priest. A Loyalist might request pack punishment or a Rite of Contrition ordered by the Priest. Alternatively, she might challenge her rival to an Ignoblis duel or symbel in order to settle the score. Individuals of other political factions might choose any of these options, depending on which feels most appropriate to the circumstance.

Should all else fail, a Sabbat member can choose to elevate her grievance beyond the local level. In such a situation, she would first go to a Prisci and ask her to mediate the conflict. This is a useful step, as both Loyalists and Ultra Conservatives respect Prisci, and the sect is charged to call on these ordained advisors to deal with large-scale rifts or complex arguments. If the argument escalates beyond a Prisci's ability to mediate, then there are only two options: Monomacy or escalation to the Regent himself.

Apex Predators

The Sabbat is a brutal sect, more likely to kill or humiliate a failed leader than ask her to gracefully retire. Claiming that an officeholder is incompetent, cowardly, or weak will likely fail; the superior will simply tell the accusing vampire to challenge the officeholder to Monomacy and prove her claims. However, even in a sect of extreme viciousness, politics and underhanded methods can still be effective. Here are a few subtler methods of removing a leader from her post:

- Death, whether through punishment, in battle, as an "accident," or in Monomacy
- Having the officeholder's position stripped from her as an outcome of Monomacy
- If the office in question belongs to a clergy member, a superior can remove the leader from her post
- Note that the clergy does not ordain a pack's Ductus nor Priest. They are ordained and empowered by the pack alone. Such positions can be only be removed by an internal directive from the pack or through Monomacy.
- If a vampire fails a Rite of Contrition, she is stripped of all status. She is still *Initiated*, forced to step down from any positions, and cannot gain status for a year and a day thereafter.
- A leader must abandon her position if the Inquisition condemns her as a heretic (assuming that vampire is allowed to survive).
- The Regent can appoint or remove any non-pack position, including a Seraph of the Black Hand or the Grand Inquisitor, save for Prisci.
- The Prisci Council may strip a Prisci of her post by a majority vote.
- A vampire who is Wild Hunted loses all status and position.
- Lasombra and Tzimisce respect the ties of lineage and the stratification of age. Pressure from an individual's

superior in these two clans may result in forcing that individual to surrender her post. As acknowledging elders is against the doctrine of the sect, this method should be used with extreme subtlety.

- A vampire in wassail cannot hold a post and has no status.
- A clergy member who repeatedly fails when performing ritae may be stripped of her position by a unified decree of the local Priests, as a condemnation of that clergy member's lack of faith in Caine. This is a facet of Statue III of the Code of Milan: "All Sabbat shall faithfully observe all the Auctoritas Ritae."
- If an accuser can prove that an officeholder has defied the Regent's orders, she can be stripped of her position by a unified decree of three Prisci, acting under Statute II of the Code of Milan: "All Sabbat shall do their best to serve their leaders, as long as said leaders serve the will of the Regent."
- A vampire who does not fulfill her oaths is less than equal, under Statute VII of the Code of Milan: "Those who are not honorable under this code will be considered less than equal, and therefore unworthy of assistance." Sect members can ignore her completely and simply elect a new officer to the post. In this case, the vampire's superior must ordain the new officeholder.
- An uninitiated member of the sect cannot hold status or rank; uninitating a vampire strips her of both. A Sabbat member can be uninitiated under specific circumstances by her pack Priest, a Prisci, the Grand Inquisitor, or the Regent.
- Blackmail, leverage, extortion, or threats (subtle ones, of course) can cause a vampire to be cowed and surrender her post.

Black Hand and Inquisition

The Black Hand is tasked with elite missions for the sect; the Inquisition is charged with keeping the Sabbat free of heresy and infernalism. When a member of the Hand or the Inquisition acts outside the authority of her order, she may be challenged, commanded, and punished like any other sect member. When she is acting as an agent of the Hand or the Inquisition, only a superior of that order, a Prisci, or the Regent himself may judge her or administer punishment.

Murder Underground

The Sabbat makes a great show of upholding equality and freedom, but its members are vampires, complete with vengeful, barely-restrained Beasts. Murders do happen outside of proper channels, but these offenses must be covert. On-the-sly assassinations, unfortunate accidents during Games of Instinct, or deaths during battles against sect enemies are a few of the subtler means of bringing Final Death to a rival. Of course, any such activity is punishable… if caught.

Hypocrisy and deceit permeate the sect, and vampires can take matters into their own hands if they are willing to damn the consequences. Just realize that if your character is caught trying to murder another sect member outside of Monomacy, she will almost certainly be destroyed. If, however, a character manages to politic her enemy to Final Death using the sect's complex systems and laws – and the death cannot be blamed on that character – sect leaders may well take notice. The Sabbat prizes cunning and ruthlessness, after all.

Political and Social Plots

Most Sabbat plots arise from internal maneuverings. Conflict sparks between paths, clans, orders, and political factions; chronicles often thrive when they focus on heated rivalries, power-grabs, and ideological differences. The sect is fractured, and members have plenty of conflicting loyalties. Although bloody combats can be fun, and the Sabbat has many enemies to heat things up, Crusades and other battles should only be pressure-points that provide a backdrop for treason, backstabbing, and internal shifts of control. For a successful, exciting Sabbat chronicle, Storytellers should ensure as much strife as possible between internal loyalties, and use the war solely as a reason to forge unexpected alliances or wreak unexpected treachery.

Internal Conflicts

- **Clans:** Although the Sabbat publically frowns on the "chains of lineage," these vampires are still proud to be members of a clan. Clan loyalty simply ignores the hierarchy of generation and age.
  - The Lasombra and Tzimisce treat the *antitribu* clans as creatures of lesser worth: tools to be used while viciously fighting one another for sect control.
  - Despite their relative acceptance in the sect, Panders still struggle to prove themselves and overcome old superstitions. Due to current sect politics, Toreador *antitribu* and Assamite *antitribu* are looked down upon as well.
  - At the bottom of the totem pole, Tremere *antitribu* are scorned and mistrusted, often betrayed despite every show of loyalty to the sect.

- **Packs:** Nomadic versus founded, faith-based packs versus combat-based packs, ancient founded packs versus those thrown together out of necessity. Internally, a pack is held together by the thin threads of Vaulderie, but vinculum can only overcome so many differences. One bad apple can cause the destruction of a good pack. When Sabbat members have rivalries, individual issues often escalate to involve whole packs, and often, rival packs engage in Ignoblis battles to prove superiority or settle scores.

- **Paths:** The Sabbat embraces paths more often than vampires in other settings, and its members have a wide variety from which to choose. All adherents to Paths of Enlightenment are fanatic about their ethics and interests — they must be militant about those beliefs, or they will fall to the Beast. Because many paths disagree, this is prime territory for internal conflict. Those on Humanity must make a decision: join these rabid monsters or remain humane and accept the derision of their fellows.

- **Factions:** There is a wide divide between the ideals of freedom and unity, and the Loyalists and Ultra Conservatives often conflict. The Order of St. Blaise's dedication to Humanity conflicts with the sect's ideals of vampiric supremacy, while the Orthodoxy's cult-like adherence to the faith of Caine can be disconcerting. Even Moderates are brought into the contention, forced to choose one side or the other in damaging and politically explosive issues.

- **Age:** While a vampire's generation does not influence her status in the sect, seniority definitely factors in the respect her peers give her. It takes resourcefulness to survive, and vampires who have been in the sect longer (regardless of their relative generation) receive greater latitude than vampires who are new. Young vampires are eager to prove themselves — where necessary, over the ashes of the old.

- **Betrayal:** Because current events have destabilized the sect, it is rife with infiltrators, infernalists, seditionists, and saboteurs. Trusted allies may have changed loyalties after the Nights of Turmoil, and power awaits those willing to change sides. Bitterness can end in small-scale revolution. Treason waits in the hearts of individuals forcibly converted into the Sabbat, waiting only a way to break the vinculums that bind them to it. The Vaulderie is not infallible.

- **Faith:** In a sect founded on faith and reverence, there's plenty of opportunity for religious debate. Some vampires are fanatic about Caine, while others are agnostic or even atheistic. Even those who believe in Caine are divided, and there are many different perspectives on how, when, and why vampires should revere the Dark Father. Look at religious arguments in the modern world, and you can see how seemingly minor divisions can escalate into rifts.

External Conflicts

"The enemy of my enemy… gets killed second."

— Dominus Regaliev, Toreador *antitribu*

The Camarilla setting can be compared to a 1940s movie set in New York, where war exists, but is far away. Veterans deal with old war-wounds, while a glittering populace exists in practiced pleasantry, trying to ignore danger at its door. The war is meaningful, but secondary to day-to-day matters, politics, and personal affairs. Knowing that the Sabbat would gladly exterminate the Camarilla adds a certain pressure, but it isn't the central theme of the game.

The Sabbat, on the other hand, is a 1940s movie set on the warfront, where battle is near and the situation is desperate. Everyone in the venue is a soldier and knows the enemy is close. There's a sense of loss, of destruction: a ruthlessness, as the sect is wounded, splintered internally, and weary of war — but trapped on the edge of battle. Its members suffered deep losses in the last 10 years; they've lost allies, friends, leaders, and beloved packmates. Removing the feeling of war turns the chronicle into a bunch of soldiers milling around on Omaha Beach, with no meaning and no purpose. Ignore the war, and the setting falls apart.

Religion

Although the Sabbat structures itself in a manner resembling the Catholic Church, the sect itself includes vampires that originate from many different periods of history and many different religions: Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Vodoun, Santeria, Native American Shamanism, New Age methodologies, Deists, Wiccans, and uncounted more. A character whose history stems from a distinct non-Catholic religion might approach the ritae very differently or might see the hierarchy with a different attitude than is commonly presented by the sect. These differences, assumptions, and approaches can create wonderful roleplay within the setting, and they should be encouraged.

However, keeping the war front-and-center can actively harm the game. Crusade after Crusade, diocese on princedom, causes the game to become nothing more than a statistician's nightmare: a board or hex-paper game, rather than a dramatic LARP. Combat is fun, but the dramatic points of the game should be where the Storyteller focuses.

When a Storyteller constantly places characters in battle or dedicates the venue to one Crusade after another, players start to see combat as a competition. This devalues horror, ends sect politics, and promotes cartoonish violence. Players spend more time out of character, making tests and explaining their PCs' actions, than they spend in roleplay. The chronicle quickly goes downhill.

After the Nights of Turmoil, direct conflict with the Camarilla has cooled. Rather than direct attacks or Crusades, the Sabbat's weakened packs must focus on guerilla warfare and sabotage. They have fewer trained veterans and more open rivalry between internal factions. Turning too much effort away from reforging the sect could mean the Sabbat's destruction. Further, the Sword of Caine cannot risk alerting mortal hunters — these powerful enemies eradicated multiple trained and seasoned packs in Savannah in a single evening. Even the most vocal Noddist must admit that Caine's children (the second generation) were overcome by their lessers (the 3rd generation Antediluvians.). Vampires realize that if the Sabbat is discovered by these mortal organizations, especially in its weakened state — the sect will be destroyed.

Storytellers should downplay direct conflict with the Camarilla, encouraging their players to instead use subtle tactics, cunning, and planned small-scale assaults. A single pack can perform a daring raid against a Camarilla elder's haven. Knowledge of an Anarch rant can allow a few Sabbat vampires to plan an ambush on stragglers who remain too long after the festivities are over. Focus a majority of conflicts in the game internally, as player-on-player rivalry, Ignoblis duels, political struggles, and ideological arguments. Use the war with the Camarilla as a backdrop: a situation-turner when internal rivalries seem on the verge of finding accord. Encourage your players to focus on seizing internal power for their clans, paths, factions, or packs.

In the modern nights, the sect war is a frigid one.

Servants

Hellhounds, Szlachta, and Vohzd

On occasion, a Tzimisce (or some other individual with mastery of Vicissitude) decides to exercise her creativity on the flesh of other creatures, creating particularly unusual Retainers. The majority of these creatures fall into certain categories: *hellhounds*, *szlachta*, or *vozhd*. Simply defined, a hellhound is an animal that has been transformed, given abilities and altered physical capacity. A szlachta is a person who has undergone a similar process. The massive vozhd is a single creature created by merging many entities (animal, human, or both).

Szlachta are bestial creatures that know only how to fight and perform brute activities. They are larger than humans, twisted and frightening in a deliberate attempt to cause fear. Yet szlachta are still self-aware and capable of conscious thought. Typically blood bound, szlachta tend to be treated well by the Tzimisce (they are seen as sadistic works of art). Still, were it not for the constant blood bond keeping them controlled, the szlachta possess enough intelligence to question their purpose in life and their blind loyalty to their creators.

Vozhd, on the other hand, are nightmarish creatures: massive war ghouls shaped from many different individuals. Their minds are irrevocably broken, and they exist in a perpetual state of rage. Only the blood bond keeps them loyal, else they would happily turn on their on their masters and rip them into bloodied shreds. Vozhd are clearly inhuman. They are massive, with multiple limbs and hulking, armored bodies. Few exist into the modern nights; Tzimisce destroy them once a battle is complete, to prevent these creatures from overcoming their bonds of blood — something that happens rarely, but not rarely enough for a Tzimisce's peace of mind.

As animals, hellhounds cannot be player-characters. Further, neither szlachta nor vohzd make suitable player-characters. You must purchase the Szlachta merit in order to possess and create hellhounds or szlachta. For more information on making these creatures, see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, Tzimisce Clan Merits, page 244**.

Revenants

Members of the Sabbat rarely use ghouls. They see humanity as little more than animals, and they rarely try to hide their vampiric nature long enough to create a ghoul or effectively utilize her. As any Sabbat will tell you, the blood bond is a sick and awful thing, used by sires to enslave their childer — or ghouls to their domitors. Sabbat day-walkers are darker and far more twisted, bred over many generations for loyalty and power.

During the Dark Ages, vampires, particularly those of the Tzimisce clan, practiced the art of selective breeding. Certain elders performed long-term experiments on their mortal servants, studying the effects of regular vitae infusion and macabre sexual interaction. From these alterations they created the various lineages of revenants: ghouls who do not need the blood of vampires to survive. Most revenants serve Tzimisce masters, but some actively fight against their

innate loyalties in order to find employment with members of other clans, particularly those in the Order of St. Blaise.

For the most part, all ghoul qualities also apply to revenants, save for these differences:

- Revenants age, but do so at half the rate of a normal human.
- Revenants cannot become *Initiated*, nor can they participate in any Auctoritas, Ignoblis, or Faction Ritae, save as tools within the ritae. They also cannot hold status.
- Like ghouls, revenants have a Blood pool of 10 points, 5 of which are vampiric vitae that can be spent to heal, boost attributes, or fuel disciplines as per normal. To refill the vampiric Blood points in her pool, a revenant has two choices. She may drink vampiric vitae (as a ghoul might), risking the blood bond, or she may wait for her Blood to regenerate at the rate of 1 per day. If the revenant has lost human Blood as well as vampiric Blood, her regeneration restores the human blood loss before the vampiric vitae.
- As revenants have no domitor, they suffer from their revenant family weakness rather than a vampiric clan weakness.
- Revenants are bred to be loyal to the Tzimisce clan, and to the Sabbat (in that order). A revenant might be able to overcome these loyalties through prolonged effort and studious dedication, but her very nature calls her constantly back to serve the Sword of Caine. To disobey a direct order from a Tzimisce, a clergy member, or a Prisci, a revenant must succeed in a static challenge using her Mental attribute + Willpower against a difficulty of 15. In a case where two orders conflict, the Tzimisce's order outranks that from an officer of the sect, and an elder Tzimisce outranks a younger (neonate or ancilla) Tzimisce.

Four notable revenant families serve the Sabbat in modern nights: Bratovich, Grimaldi, Obertus, and Zantosa.

Obertus

The Obertus are a family of scholars, which originated in ancient Constantinople. They tend to congregate in small communities of Obertus, avoiding cities and urban life. Obertus hoard information, and individual family groups often accumulate libraries of occult or specialized knowledge. The obsessive search for information tends to make Obertus isolated and strange, although intensely intellectual and learned.

Revenants of the Obertus family have Auspex, Obfuscate, and Vicissitude in-clan. Their revenant family weakness is an obsessive search for information; once an Obertus has been exposed to a puzzle or trail of knowledge she does not possess, she will ignore all other responsibilities and even risk her life in desperate pursuit of that information.

Bratovich

The Bratovich are often considered one of the most disturbing revenant families, irredeemably twisted by the process that altered their flesh and blood. They raise animals for use as hellhounds, szlachta, and vozhd, and often capture humans for the same use. Bratoviches lust for victory, competing in every possible manner against enemies and rivals. Many are interested in hunting werewolves, as the challenge incites the Bratovich's interest like no other sport. Because of their rustic and primitive interests, Bratoviches do not usually use complex technologies, such as cellphones, televisions, or computers.

Revenants of the Bratovich family have Animalism, Potence, and Vicissitude in-clan. Their revenant family weakness is an incredible competitiveness, so much so that when defeated or prevented from experiencing the thrill of a particular challenge, a Bratovich is prone to violent fits of rage.

Grimaldi

Members of the Grimaldi revenant line are the most human-like of the revenant lines, fitting into mortal society with relative ease. They develop normal lives, going to colleges or universities, and occasionally holding prominent positions or jobs in mortal society. This family serves as a link between the Sabbat and the mortal world, helping to protect the sect from vampire hunters. These revenants are usually quite wealthy and rival members of the Camarilla in their ability to collect Contacts, Allies, and Influence.

Revenants of the Grimaldi family have Celerity, Dominate, and Fortitude in-clan. Their revenant family weakness is that all Grimaldi intrinsically suffer the blood bond to a vampire of their choosing; if they are not bloodbound, they will fixate on an appropriate vampire to the point of obsession. Their sanity seems to require the addiction, and the emotional support of a patron in order to survive.

Zantosa

Socialites and sensualists, the revenants of the Zantosa family are descended from human nobility, and now serve as the eyes and ears of the Sabbat within the ever-changing mortal world of fad and fashion. Today, most Zantosa are hedonists. Some are world travelers living the good life, while others

are involved in the drug industry and slavery. They have fashionable homes, throw elegant or debaucherous parties, and dabble in varieties of illegal behavior.

Revenants of the Zantosa family have Auspex, Presence, and Vicissitude in-clan. Their revenant family weakness is that all Zantosa are obsessed with pleasure and sensation, becoming easily addicted to any sort of hedonistic good time.

Creating a Revenant

If a player wishes to create a revenant as a player-character, she should begin by using the ghoul creation guide found in **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 296**.

Revenants do not have domitors, and they are not reliant on a vampire's blood to survive. When a player reaches ghoul creation step seven (Assign Initial Disciplines), she receives 7 dots to assign, rather than 5. These dots are selected from the in-clan disciplines of the revenant family chosen by the player. Revenants cannot choose any clan merits. An Embraced revenant follows the same conversion process outlined for ghouls.

Status

"These new Cainites must have their minds peeled back, layer by layer, until we discover the monsters lurking beneath their screams. It takes a very long time, but fortunately, I am very patient, and we have eternity to share…"

— The Kiaysd Oracle of Koblenz

Individuals rise through the Sabbat's ranks on merit, proving themselves physically and mentally capable of wielding power. Status traits honor their past achievements and show others what they can expect from them. The Sabbat's hierarchy tends to lead through charisma rather than rule through domination. They cannot hand down decrees with impunity; they are empowered because others respect their courageous actions or penetrating insights. Sabbat members don't respect someone because of her generation or age. They give respect based on an individual's recent deeds. Sabbat status is not a merit badge system; it is a system portraying word-of-mouth.

Status Traits

Accepted

To be *Accepted* in the Sabbat setting is known as *Initiated*.

- **Initiated:** Becoming *Initiated* by the Sabbat makes you a full member of the sect. An *Initiated* member is also referred to as a "True Sabbat." Initiation confers the right to fully participate in the Auctoritas, Ignoblis, and Faction Ritae, and confers the protections of the Code of Milan. To become *Initiated*, a character must go through a period of time (usually at least a year and a day) as a False Sabbat, and then participate in the Auctoritas Ritae of the Creation Rites. During this ritual, the vampire swears the Oath of the Sabbat and is branded; after this, she is a full member and allowed all privileges of status.

  For more information on the Oath of the Sabbat, and the Creation Rites, see **page 427** and **page 429**.

Sabbat Abiding Status Traits

Blessed (abiding)

You are responsible for guiding the Sword of Caine, offering gentle persuasion and mild condemnation. While you hold this office, you are entrusted to provide leadership.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Blessed*, you can award any individual the fleeting status *Battle-Scarred* or *Loyal* without expending this status. An individual can only hold a single status from your *Blessed* at a time, but can benefit from repeated uses of *Blessed* so long as they originate from separate sources.
- **Spent:** You can expend the status *Blessed* to assign the negative status *Cowardly* to an individual who behaves inappropriately within your jurisdiction.

Glorious (abiding)

You are a sacred figure within the Sabbat. You hold a prestigious position and are tasked with the responsibility of leading the sect in matters both religious and martial.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Glorious*, you can award an individual the fleeting status traits *Consecrated* or *Devout*, without expending the *Glorious* status. Further, you can issue orders to any member of your sect who does not possess the status *Authority* or *Sacrosanct* and expect to have those orders obeyed. Those who defy you or disobey a direct order have all fleeting status traits they possess expended without effect. Fleeting traits lost in this manner are lost temporarily and return after two games or one month. Your target cannot gain any further fleeting status while under this effect.
- **Spent:** You can expend the status *Glorious* to order someone to perform a Rite of Contrition. You may expend the status *Glorious* to assign an individual either the *Cowardly* or *Warned* negative status.

Infamous (abiding)

Offering advice to a sect of vampires is a delicate business, and those who are elevated to such station quickly become well-known throughout the Sword of Caine.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Infamous*, an individual who openly insults, threatens, or attacks you automatically receives the negative status *Warned*. Offenses made entirely in private, or which are subtle enough to be obscured, do not trigger this passive effect. Characters who currently possess the *Sacrosanct* or *Triumphant* status traits are immune to this passive effect. You can award the fleeting status *Favored* without expending this status.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Infamous* to award an individual the fleeting status *Consecrated* or *Anointed*, or the negative status *Ignorant*.

Loyalist (abiding)

As a Loyalist, you are proud of your freedom. You are capable of ignoring the commands from the clergy (but not the Regent himself), without being indirectly punished for your defiance.

- **Passive:** You are immune to the passive and spent effects of the status *Glorious*.
- **Spent:** The *Loyalist* status cannot be expended.

Ordained (abiding)

You have been consecrated with the rites of the Church of the Dark Father and taken sacred vows to serve your fellow Cainites. Your faithfulness is an inspiration to the sect.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Ordained*, you can perform the Ignoblis Ritae without expenditure. While you possess *Ordained*, you can award the fleeting status *Devout* without expending the *Ordained* status. An individual can only hold a single status from your use of *Ordained* at a time, but can benefit from repeated uses of *Ordained* so long as they originate from separate sources.
- **Spent:** Expend *Ordained* to initiate and perform all Auctoritas Ritae of the sect, except for the Blood Bath, the Blood Feast, and the Wild Hunt ritae. You can also expend *Ordained* to grant a target *Anointed* or *Battle-scarred*, to award the negative status *Ignorant* to anyone who behaves inappropriately within your jurisdiction, or to order someone to perform a Rite of Contrition.

Sacrosanct (abiding)

You are an ultimate authority within the Sabbat. Your commands are sacred, and your will is hallowed among the sect. You also have the right to perform any of the Auctoritas Ritae.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Sacrosanct*, you are immune to the powers of, and may contradict orders given by, any individual who does not also have the *Sacrosanct* status. You can, without expenditure, initiate any Ignoblis Ritae, and all Auctoritas Ritae except the Blood Feast and the Wild Hunt. Lastly, you can award an individual the fleeting status *Favored* or *Resolute* without expending *Sacrosanct*.
- **Spent:** Expend *Sacrosanct* to order someone to undergo a Rite of Contrition, to perform the Blood Feast, or to initiate the ritus of the Wild Hunt against a target. *Sacrosanct* can also be spent to issue letters patent, altering the practices of the sect within your jurisdiction. The power to issue letters patent is further defined by each position that provides *Sacrosanct*.

Sabbat Innate Status Traits

Branded (innate)

You bear the black crescent on your right palm, marking you eternally as a member of the elite order known as the Black Hand. From operative to Seraphim, all who join the Hand are branded with this symbol of loyalty to the Sabbat.

- **Passive:** While you possess the *Branded* status, any member of the Sabbat who physically attacks you or is discovered using a power on you against your will, gains the negative status *Warned*. Powers that can be justified as "monitoring your brothers" (such as Scry, Clairvoyance, or Heightened Senses) do not trigger this effect.
- **Spent:** You can expend the *Branded* status in order to command a member of the Sabbat to expend a status on your behalf, give you a piece of equipment she possesses, or utilize her powers as you direct, so long as that order does not cause her to break the Code of Milan. If she refuses to do so, she gains the status *Disgraced*.

Purified (innate)

As a member of the Sabbat Inquisition, you are charged with the duty to seek out heretics and infernalists within the sect.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Purified*, you can name someone who falls under the definition of heresy (see **page 426**) as a heretic, giving her the *Disgraced* status.
- **Spent:** You can expend the *Purified* status to remove the stigma of heretic from an individual who has been proven innocent of heresy and give her an *ad cautelum* (see **page 425**). The *ad cautelum* lasts for six games or three months, whichever is longer.

Sabbat Fleeting Status Traits

Anointed (fleeting)

Typically, the clergy and Priests of the sect are the ones with the rightful authority to initiate the Auctoritas Ritae. Under some circumstances, those who have studied the ritae but do not currently hold position (clergy or pack) are given temporary permission to lead large rituals.

- **Passive:** The *Anointed* status has no passive benefit.
- **Spent:** Expend *Anointed* to initiate and perform a specifically defined Ignoblis or Auctoritas Ritae (one your patron could cast). This action grants permission for anyone with the Rituals ability to initiate such a ritae; it does not grant levels of the Rituals background or knowledge of ritus the character does not already possess.

Battle-Scarred (fleeting)

You have often thrown yourself into battle, and the tales of your exploits have spread through the sect. You have been sanctified in a private ceremony lauding your fearlessness and valor.

- **Passive**: While you possess *Battle-Scarred,* when you reach the Incapacitated wound track for the first time in a night, you immediately heal 2 health levels.
- **Spent**: So long as you are not in the process of violating the laws of your sect, you can expend *Battle-Scarred* to use the assist attacker or assist defender mass combat tactic without spending the action that would normally be required for these tactics. This does not prevent you from initiating these tactics with your normal actions in the same round.

Consecrated (fleeting)

On occasion, those who are elevated among the Cainites of the Sabbat will recognize another vampire's intelligence and ambition, consecrating her with the blood of religious approbation.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Consecrated*, you automatically win the static challenge to awaken during the day. You must still pay all other costs of awakening, as covered in **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, Daytime, page 293**.
- **Spent**: You can expend *Consecrated* when another character would gain Beast traits for an action that someone on your Path of Enlightenment would not gain Beast traits for performing. The other character gains no Beast traits for performing this action.

Devout (fleeting)

You have been recognized for your dedication to Caine and your adherence to the doctrine of the sect.

- **Passive:** For each *Devout* status you possess, once per game you can expend a Blood point and spend five minutes praying, meditating, or studying the doctrine of Caine. When you do, you heal a point of aggravated damage.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Devout* to allow yourself or another vampire to retest when attempting to perform a ritus in danger of failure. Multiple *Devout* retests can be used during a single ritus challenge, through repeated expenditures of this status.

Resolute (fleeting)

Your bravery and endurance in combat have gained the approval of important members in the sect, and they have rewarded you for those outstanding efforts.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Resolute*, you have a +3 wild card bonus to resist fear frenzy.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Resolute* to gain a free Willpower retest when challenging to avoid any effect that would force you to leave combat. Only one *Resolute* can be spent to retest against an individual per combat scenario.

Scholar (fleeting)

Paths of Enlightenment are sacred to the Sabbat, and those who adopt such moralities are outspoken and vociferous in converting others. When you tutor another character in your Path of Enlightenment and she purchases the merit to convert to your path, your Priest can award you this status.

- **Passive**: While you possess *Scholar*, you gain 1 less Beast trait for any violation of your path, to a minimum of 0. The *Scholar* status trait lasts for four games or two months, whichever is longer.
- **Spent**: The *Scholar* status cannot be expended.

Sabbat Negative Status Traits

Cowardly (negative)

Others question your courage, and your activities in combat have been a hindrance to the Sabbat. You have been condemned by a minor rite of the sect, and you must suffer the burden of your failures. You must learn to be more resilient, less afraid, and it is the duty of others in the sect to toughen you up.

- **Censure**: The *Cowardly* status has no censure; so long as you possess *Cowardly*, you are affected by the punishment of this status. *Cowardly* remains for four games or two months, whichever is longer. Anyone who causes a *Cowardly* character injury (but not death) or defeats that character in a symbel or Monomacy gains the fleeting status trait *Praised*.
- **Punishment**: While you hold the *Cowardly* status, your maximum Willpower is reduced by 1. Once this status is removed, your Willpower returns to normal.

Ignorant (negative)

If your presence causes a ritual to fail, or if you prove your ignorance and doubt to important members of the sect, you become the object of scorn and ridicule.

- **Censure**: While you carry the *Ignorant* status, you may not actively participate in a Sermon of Caine (you may listen, but not preach), and you may not proselytize the doctrine of the sect, nor quote the Book of Nod in public. Further, you must listen and pay attention to any sermons performed, and you may not contradict anyone who is quoting doctrine or the religious philosophy of the sect.
- **Punishment**: If you disobey the censure of the *Ignorant* negative status, you cannot be positively affected by the magic of the Ignoblis or Auctoritas Ritae. You may still participate in the ritae, and negative effects still apply.

Status Bans

Status bans in the Sword of Caine reflect the sect's fundamental ideals. The most important societal structures are those of pack and of the Vaulderie. Individuals who do not respect those facets of the sect are not to be entirely trusted, and certainly shouldn't be lauded for their accomplishments. Their loyalty is in question, and it will continue to be in question until a vampire once more adheres to the cultural systems of pack and Vaulderie.

Lesser bans punish an individual's adherence to a human morality, as the Sabbat prides itself on being comprised of inhuman, vampiric monsters of the night. Also, a lesser ban is inflicted on those clans who are seen as generally untrustworthy or who have in some way failed the sect as a group.

For more information on status bans, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 313.**

Lesser Bans:

- Members of the Sabbat who are not on a Path of Enlightenment (instead adhering to the morality of Humanity).
- Members of the Assamite *antitribu* and Toreador *antitribu* clans: the Assamite and Toreador have recently gained this ban a result of their clans' various defections from of the Sword of Caine.

Greater Bans:

- Members of the Sabbat who are not in a pack
- Members of the Sabbat who have no vinculums higher than 2, or have fewer than two vinculums at all
- Members of the Tremere *antitribu*

Removing a Status Ban

Only the Regent can remove or lessen a character's status ban. He does so by proclaiming the individual's merit publically, noting her brave and loyal deeds on behalf of the Sword of Caine. He then expends the *Ominous* status and announces the individual's new standing in the sect.

Word of Honor

IV. All Sabbat shall keep their word of honor to one another.

— The Code of Milan

The custom of vampiric boons predates both sects, originating with the Followers of Set in ancient times. Boons are a staple of the Camarilla's culture, iconic enough that Sabbat members scorn the practice as somehow tied to the service of the Antediluvians.

Despite this, members of the Sabbat do trade in favors. However, they do not call these favors "boons," and they do not function like those in Camarilla society. A debt is pledged and repaid with an oath, and that oath is upheld as per Statute VII of the Code of Milan. An oath cannot be transferred, nor used like currency. An oath is the word of honor of an *Initiated* member of the sect, to be respected — and if broken, avenged.

Oaths are a critical part of existence within the Sabbat. Members swear oaths as part of various ritae, from the Auctoritas Ritae of Binding or the Creation Rites, to the Ignoblis of Acceptance or Renunciation. If a Sabbat member puts another Sabbat in debt through word or action, the indebted member makes this publically known, acknowledging

her debt with the ritual words of oaths: "On my word of honor, I owe you a debt." If the debt is an extremely large one, she may say instead, "On my word of honor, I owe you a debt of blood." The sect recognizes only debts and blood debts; there are no small favors in a sect where each member is sworn to provide for the basic needs of her bretheren.

Sabbat members who break their word of honor when an oath is called in are not likely to survive the offense. Other sect members – from soldiers of the Black Hand to the knights of Honorable Accord – will take it upon themselves to enforce the Code of Milan and ensure the member's oath.

Setting-Specific Mechanics

"It's monomacy, you stupid fuckfang.
Not mono-mancy. The first one's a sacred ritus.
The second one's magical masturbation.Get it right."

— Artemis, Malkavian *antitribu*

The Sabbat is not a sect of fanatics anxiously awaiting the next excuse to start a killing spree. Although the Sabbat is murderous, dark, and at times deeply evil, a Sabbat game is not an excuse to run around with super-powered sheets, carrying out cartoonish slaughter. It is not a competitive sport. It is intended for those who enjoy horror, can handle mature themes, and appreciate religious pageantry. Bear that in mind, and feel free to rescind invitations from any player in your game who sees the Sabbat as an opportunity to leap straight to player combat or engage in pointless violence. The Sabbat is a setting for mature, responsible individuals, and it offers roleplay on some very disturbing topics. It's your job as the Storyteller to maintain that goal and keep your chronicle focused on the things that truly make the Sabbat setting so incredibly interesting and rich.

Rarity Adjustments: Clans

The Sabbat's common clans are the Lasombra and the Tzimisce, followed by the *antitribu* members of the Brujah, Gangrel, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Toreador, and Ventrue clans. Members of those clans are respected for their clans' presence as part of the Anarch Revolt and the founding of the Sabbat. Tremere *antitribu* are not afforded this same respect.

When the Assamite Methuselah, ur-Shulgi, called the clan to return to Alamut, the Assamite *antitribu* left the Sabbat en masse. Now, there are few Assamites left within the Sabbat. Those who remain are hunted relentlessly by the Assamites of the Mountain — many of whom, just a few years ago, were their sworn brothers and sisters of the sect.

The word "Caitiff" does not exist in the Sabbat. Such vampires have banded together and formed a clan of their own: Pander.

The Salubri, who were once few, have grown strong and plentiful. On occasion, a Salubri warrior will discover that her childe is a throwback, exhibiting the powers of a healer. Such soft-hearted creatures do not usually survive the inhuman trials of the Sabbat, and they are typically diablerized by their sires — a mercy killing.

The Cappadocians are known as "Harbingers of Skulls" by the sect, which (for the most part) does not realize their origins lie with that ancient clan.

Remember that Rarity merits do count against a character's merit limit of 7 points. For example, if you purchase the Rare Clan merit, you have spent 4 points, and can only buy 3 more points of merits for that character.

Common Clans (available at no cost)

A setting's common clans are the most appropriate for play. There is no additional cost for playing a clan that is common to your chronicle's setting.

Common clans include: Brujah, Caitiff (called Panders), Followers of Set (called "Serpents of the Light"), Gangrel (Coyote), Lasombra, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Toreador, Tzimisce, and Ventrue (Crusader).

Ventrue Bloodline Alteration for the Sabbat Setting:

Ventrue in the Sabbat setting are, by default, members of the Crusader bloodline. Being a member of this bloodline requires no expenditure of merit points. If you wish to play a non-Crusader Ventrue, you can purchase the parent clan at the normal cost of the Crusader bloodline merit (2 points).

Gangrel Bloodline Alteration for the Sabbat Setting:

Gangrel in the Sabbat setting are, by default, members of the Coyote bloodline. If you wish to play a non-Coyote Gangrel, you can purchase the parent clan at the normal cost of the Coyote bloodline merit (2 points).

Uncommon Clans (2 point merit)

Your character is a member of an uncommon clan, one that is not ordinarily found in your chronicle's setting. This clan is not often found, and you may be something of an outsider. You will find few other individuals of your clan within this setting, and you may be afforded fewer benefits than those given proper members of society.

Uncommon clans include: Assamite, Cappadocian (called "Harbingers of Skulls"), Tremere (Telyav), Ravnos, and Salubri.

Tremere Bloodline Alteration for the Sabbat Setting:

Tremere in the Sabbat setting are, by default, members of the Telyav bloodline. Being a member of this bloodline requires no expenditure of merit points once one has purchased the Uncommon Clan merit to play a Tremere. If you wish to play a non-Telyavelic Tremere (though the character must still be a Tremere who is not descended from Goratrix), you can spend 5 XP to purchase the Rare Clan merit instead of purchasing the Uncommon Clan merit.

Rare Clans (5 point merit)

Your character is a member of a rare clan, one that is very infrequently found in your chronicle's setting. Such characters may be loners, outcasts, or solitary observers of society, and they may be treated poorly or shunned by the rest of the characters in play (as may be appropriate to the setting).

Rare clans include: Daughters of Cacophony and Gargoyles.

Restricted Clan (6 point merit)

Any clans and bloodlines not listed above are not appropriate for the Sabbat setting. Purchasing a clan/bloodline combination for this setting that requires a player to spend more than 7 merit points is also considered Restricted. A player wishing to do so should gain permission from her Storyteller before purchasing the combination under the Restricted Clan merit.

Bloodline Cost Modifications

The following bloodlines are not appropriate for the Sabbat Setting, and their merit costs increase by 1. This may require the player to spend more than 7 merit points to play the combination of clan and bloodline; in this case, the player should gain permission from her Storyteller and purchase the combination as the Restricted Clan merit.

- Brujah: Sages, Cappadocian: Lamia, Ravnos: Brahman, Salubri: Healer, Toreador: Volgirre, and Tzimisce: Carpathian

Rarity Adjustments: Paths of Enlightenment

The Sabbat has a well-deserved reputation for being bloody and inhuman. Many Sabbat vampires do not follow the ethics of the Camarilla, having long ago spurned Humanity in favor of their more monstrous selves. The Sabbat view of the Cainite condition rejects all ties to Humanity; however, harsh experience shows the Sabbat that vampires retain the need for some code of ethics, principles to guide and limit their behavior.

The Sabbat has a higher predominance of characters on Paths of Enlightenment than other settings. The sect disdains humans and those who cling to their Humanity — but they also realize that such vampires (and their tools) are necessary for the sect's survival. It is a delicate balance, because both Humanity and path ethics contribute to the sect, and because the ethics of the various paths can be extremely contradictory.

Progress on any Path of Enlightenment takes deliberate effort. A vampire who commits to a path sets aside many emotions, desires, and values to pursue a very limited set of goals. While there are more vampires in the Sabbat on paths than in the Camarilla, the percentage of vampires on a Path of Enlightenment in the Sword of Caine comprises less than 20% (one in five) of the total sect membership.

Common Paths of Enlightenment are 1-point merits for the Sabbat setting. The cost for all other paths remain unchanged. Note that if you take a heretical path and your character is discovered to be on such a path, the character will likely be destroyed. The Paths of Night and Lilith are not heretical paths (though there are ongoing arguments in the sect that both should be considered so), but characters on these paths should expect to be mistrusted, discriminated against, and potentially destroyed because of their choice of path.

Common Paths (1 point merit)

- Caine, Cathari, Death & the Soul, Feral Heart, Honorable Accord, and Power & the Inner Voice

Heretical Paths

Paths that revere the Antediluvians, enslave others, deal with the infernal, encourage blood bonding, forsake the ritae, or preach a faith other than Caine are considered heretical. Such paths include: Blood, Ecstasy, Evil Revelations, Paradox, and Typhon-Set, among others. You can purchase such paths in this setting, but realize your character will not survive, if discovered.

Uncommon Paths (2 point merit)

- Orion, Night, Metamorphosis, and Lilith

All other paths can be purchased at their standard costs.

Diablerie

Diablerie is an integral part of the Sabbat. Because of this, the rules for diablerie are changed in the Sabbat setting. When you diablerize another character, you can immediately spend earned XP to purchase any power or skill possessed by the victim, so long as you are eligible to learn those powers or skills. If committing diablerie results in a surplus of XP (for example, if XP you spent on techniques is refunded due to a rise in Generation) you can use this refunded XP to immediately purchase any powers or skills possessed by the victim. For example, if you diablerize a Lasombra with 4 dots of Obtenebration, you may purchase up to 4 dots of Obtenebration (assuming you have enough available XP). This effect can be used to purchase elder powers or techniques, so long as your character is the correct Generation to possess them after performing the diablerie.

If the diablerie results in another dot of Generation for your character, you can spend XP on your new Generation after buying powers and skills from your victim. If you do not have enough refunded XP to purchase your new Generation, you must spend all earned XP purchasing the background until you've paid for the new dot of Generation.

Setting-Specific Backgrounds

Rituals

The Rituals background can only be purchased by an *Initiated* member of the Sabbat (one who has undergone the Creation Rites). Purchasing this background means that your character is trained in a number of Auctoritas or Ignoblis Ritae. You know the ritae and rituals of the Sabbat, and you can enact many of them. This background is vital to being a pack Priest — without this background, you cannot cast the ritae (though you can still participate, if someone else is officiating).

System: By purchasing the first dot of Rituals, a character learns four Ritae: the Creation Rites, the Vaulderie, the Monomacy, plus one ritae of your choosing. For every dot of Rituals purchased thereafter, the character can choose to learn an additional two Auctoritas, Ignoblis, or Faction Ritae. Note that Games of Instinct covers an entire spectrum of ritae; a character does not have to purchase each game individually. Performing any ritual requires the practitioner to have faith in that ritual's innate precept.

Remember that Faction Ritae can only be learned and utilized by members of that political faction, unless otherwise noted in the description of the ritus. If a character who has learned a Faction Ritae abandons that faction, she loses the ability to cast that faction's ritae. She cannot choose another ritae in its place, and any XP she spent on the Rituals background to purchase that specific Faction Ritae is not refunded. To become a pack Priest, a character must purchase at least 1 dot of the Rituals background. A character must have the appropriate Sabbat status trait to initiate one of the Auctoritas Ritae, but any character with the Rituals background may assist in the casting of that ritae, so long as she knows the specific ritus.

For more information on casting rituals, see **Chapter Four: Disciplines, page 111**.

Setting-Specific Merits

Note that sect merits are removed without a refund if you leave the sect. If you have a background merit that cannot be removed, your character must be retired.

Black Hand Membership (2 point merit)

A character with this merit is a member of the Black Hand. Typically, a character begins as an Agent of the Hand. Players do not have to purchase any further merits to advance within this order, but it is recommended that Storytellers limit such advancement as per the bounds of their chronicles' stories. Each member of the Black Hand is branded with the mark of a black crescent moon on the palm of the right hand. The link is a sympathetic link to the Seraphim, and can be used to call an operative to duty, to warn agents in the field, or to destroy a member of the Black Hand who has been compromised.

You have a +3 bonus to resist Telepathy and other powers that directly pull information from your mind. This bonus does not apply to challenges stemming from powers that indirectly pull information from your mind, such as the various powers of Dominate or Presence. You gain the innate status *Branded* at the start of each game.

For more information regarding the Black Hand, see **page 422**.

Executioner (1 point merit)

Most members of the Sabbat are vicious monsters, but your actions are reputed to be among the most depraved, the most violent, or the most reprehensible. This reputation is well-deserved. You receive a +1 bonus to test pools involving the Intimidation or Streetwise skills. If you frenzied when someone takes more than one step directly away from you, you can make an immediate Physical attack

on that character without expending an action. You can only use this effect during an everyman round, but it may be provoked more than once during an everyman.

Fanatic (2 point merit)

Your faith in Caine is unshakable, no matter how bad things seem. When you are on the Injured wound track, you receive a +3 bonus to your initiative. When you are on the Incapacitated wound track, you gain an additional +3 bonus to initiative (+6 total).

Inquisition Membership (2 point merit)

A character with this merit is a member of the prestigious Inquisition: either a Judge or a Knight Inquisitor. Players do not have to purchase any further merits to advance within this order, but it is recommended that Storytellers limit such advancement as per the bounds of their chronicles' stories. Every member of the Inquisition possesses an iron reliquary, gained with this merit. An Inquisitor's iron reliquary is her badge of office, each one given directly by the Regent. Physically, a reliquary is a stylized version of the Sabbat symbol, forged of iron. It can be held and wielded like a dagger or sword, and it often incorporates sharp spikes or cutting surfaces. Each reliquary is unique, and reliquaries of slain Inquisitors are destroyed.

So long as you possess your iron reliquary, you have a +3 bonus to resist all infernal powers (such as Daimoinon), powers granted by demonic abilities or compacts, or effects granted by infernal-related merits. You also gain a +3 bonus to Dodge-based defensive test pools against demons and characters who possess any of the above powers, merits, or effects. You gain the innate status *Purified* at the start of each game.

For more information regarding the Inquisition, see **page 424**.

Keeper of a Sacred Text (1 point merit)

You own a copy of one of the following sacred texts of the Sabbat: *The Book of Nod*, *The Erciyes Fragments, The Ubar Chronicles, The Gospels of Irad & Adah,* or *The Codex of the Damned*. While you possess this merit, you gain a free Lore specialization, which may go above the Lore specializations you are allowed. This free specialization must be in something relevant to the text you own, such as *Sabbat Doctrine, Quotes of Caine,* or *The Cainite Heresy*. Further, you receive a +5 bonus anytime you're called upon to make a challenge using that Lore specialization. Lastly, you receive *Anointed* as an innate status at the beginning of each game.

Pack Player (3 point merit)

Your pack is the most important thing in your existence, so much so that you will do anything for its members. When you attack a character who has inflicted damage on a packmate (within the last three turns) with whom you have a vinculum rating of at least 3, you receive a +3 bonus to your Physical attack test pool. Additionally, once per turn when you are fighting alongside a member of your pack, you can use a simple action to move five steps, so long as you are moving to the side of someone in your pack with whom you have a vinculum of at least 3.

Revelator (3 point merit)

One per hour, you can use your simple action to loudly and clearly proclaim your faith in Caine and advocate the beliefs of the Dark Church. For the remainder of that turn, your maximum Blood expenditure rate is increased by 5. Your expenditure rate returns to normal at the beginning of the next turn.

Sanctified (1 point merit)

You have a certain quality of faith that inspires others. So long as she is faithful to the precepts of a ritus, this character receives a +2 to her ritae test pool as the primary initiator of that ritae. If that ritus is successful, the participants regain all spent Willpower. If she is an assistant to the primary initiator of a ritae, she lends a +2 bonus (instead of a +1) to any test required to cast the ritus.

Scholar of the Sword (1 point merit)

You have studied the various ritae of the Sabbat at great length, and you have the talent and aptitude to master them more thoroughly than most. You may choose one additional ritae (Auctoritas, Faction or Ignoblis) per dot of the Rituals background.

Volatile (1 point merit)

You are extremely savage and explosive, even for the Sabbat. While this instability may frighten others, it benefits you — and you relish the moments when you get to unleash your Beast. When you enter frenzy, you immediately regain a Willpower. You can only gain this bonus once per combat scenario.

Zealot (1 point merit)

You are consumed with dedication to Caine, the ritae, and to the sect. Yours may be a quiet fervency or a loud, constant declaration, but in either case, you have a greater belief than most, so much so that you feel you can almost sense the Dark Father's will. The failure of a ritual causes you a tangible, physical ache: an inner wound caused by someone's lack of faith. When you participate in a ritus that fails, you can make a static challenge (Mental + Occult test pool) with the Storyteller (difficulty rating 6) to determine exactly how many ritual participants suffered from a lack of faith (but not whom).

Setting-Specific Flaws

Crisis of Faith (2 point flaw)

You are not generally one of the unfaithful. You may be well educated in the ritae, and even ordained and capable of performing them for gatherings of Sabbat. But when bad things happen (the loss of a packmate, a critical defeat, or some personal setback), you must make a static challenge with your Storyteller (there is no retest, and no difficulty). If you lose or tie this test, your character becomes unfaithful for the purpose of performing or participating in any Auctoritas Ritae. This effect lasts for two games or one month (whichever is longer), as your character struggles with this crisis of faith.

Mistrusted (1 point flaw)

Because of something in your character's history, either the Hand or the Inquisition (or both) has a good reason to be suspicious of you. As part of their duty to the Sabbat, they harass you, keep track of you, and generally spread their suspicions about you to the rest of the sect, causing you no end of trouble. Your maximum fleeting status is 1 less than usual while you have this flaw. This penalty adds to that imposed by any status ban.

Soul Shard (3 point flaw)

You diablerized someone, and that spirit was strong enough to remain permanently active within your soul. It fights you constantly, and you can never be sure that its sentience isn't influencing your actions. When your body is wounded, this spirit leaps upon the weakness and fights your control. While it tears at you from the inside, you must martial your inner resources, lest the spirit forever take control. If you ever take enough damage to reach the Incapacitated wound track or beyond, you cannot spend Willpower until you are once more healed to the Injured wound track (or better).

Tenuous Loyalty (3 point flaw)

The monstrousness and inhumanity of the Sword of Caine horrifies you. The only reason you're loyal is because of the vinculum — and most people know it. Your behavior is extremely unpredictable, and your emotional state is precarious. If you do not have a 3-point vinculum with at least three other Sabbat members, you cannot utilize the standard free retest for your Archetype, and you must spend 2 Willpower the first time you spend a Willpower to retest during a game session.

Old Habits

"What the shit?"

"Fall back! Sonofa…Lorenzo! I said *FALL BACK*!"

"Fucking Sabbat! How'd they find us?"

"Does it matter?" Vincent roared. His combat shotgun kicked forcefully, shots pounding out in quick succession. He ducked behind a darkened pillar. "Sammy, I thought you said this place was *safe*," Vincent growled, reloading as the monster approached.

A boyish young man yelped in protest, "It is!…It *was*!" He crouched behind a car, clamping a faded blue baseball cap to his head with shaking hands. "I dunno how they…."

"Fuck you, Sammy." Vincent sighed. He started firing again.

The approaching monstrosity was nine feet tall, hunching as it strode through the low confines of the parking structure. Its claws were as long as Vincent's fingers, and multiple mouths gibbered along its torso, neck, and face. The thing's flesh was twisted, torn, and woven, leathery strips wrapping back and forth in ornate patterns. It may have once been a person, somewhere underneath the bulging muscles and contorted flesh, but it certainly wasn't human now.

A dark-haired man with a machete charged between two parked cars, engaging the monster head-on. "Lorenzo!" Vincent screamed, as he watched the young Toreador use the confines of the parking structure to his advantage, dodging among rows of cars. It almost worked. With a swift motion, the fleshcrafted horror grasped Lorenzo in its claws and lifted him from the ground. The fiend sank its claws into the Anarch's neck and shoulders, and with a fierce tug, it ripped Lorenzo's head from his torso. Vincent's childe was rendered into ash.

On the other side of the row of parked cars, a statuesque Brujah engaged a second Sabbat attacker, beating him with a heavy exhaust pipe. The strength of her assault slammed the man into a wall with enough force to crack mortar. Recovering, the slender, dark-skinned vampire sliced his forearm with a pair of knives, letting blood ooze onto the blades. "Oh, shit," Sammy whimpered, eyes widening. "Watch out, Fiona! That guy's an…"

Before Sammy could finish his sentence, the lithe stranger whirled into a brutal dance of knives, weaving like lightning around the taller woman. His blades left deep, poisonous-looking welts.

"…Assamite," Sammy finished mournfully.

Vincent rolled from cover, his Beast demanding vengeance. Screaming, he fired the shotgun with unearthly speed, blasting round after round into the fiend's belly. The Tzimisce swung, and Vincent blocked the clawed downswing with the haft of his weapon. A second massive blow flung the shotgun away. Vincent reacted quickly, drawing a pistol from his jacket in a fraction of a second. He focused his blood, gazing down the barrel to target a point between the Tzimisce's yellow eyes. "*Bull's Eye.*" Vincent squeezed the trigger, and a bullet exploded from the gun, lodging deep within the monster's brain. As its roar of anger echoed through the parking level, the Tzimisce crumbled to ash.

At the sight of his packmate's death, the Assamite redoubled his efforts. He spun low and slashed Fiona's Achilles tendons with two quick strikes. Fiona stumbled. Seizing the advantage, the Sabbat slammed the heel of his combat boot into her cheek, knocking Fiona flat. Leaping over the fallen Brujah, he charged toward the parked car.

Sammy shrieked in panic as the Assamite hurled a barrage of knives. Poisoned blades sunk into the side of the car, missing Sammy by inches as he scrambled away. The panicked young vampire rolled,

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only to discover the Assamite's blades slashing in from every angle. As a thick blade swung to sever his neck, Sammy looked up and pleaded, "Wait, wait! C'mon, man, let's be friends. I can get you a beta key for Elder Codex Online – full access, dev codes – I know people!" Confused, yet entranced by Sammy's charisma, the Assamite paused and drew back. "That's right, it's a good deal." The Anarch managed a shaking smile. "You put some screenshots up, and blam, you'll get, like, a hundred thousand shares. Just put the knives away, okay, buddy? We're friends."

Unfortunately, friendship meant something entirely different to the *antitribu*. Glancing around, the Assamite saw Fiona rising to her feet, her wounds healing. His eyes flickered over Vincent as the Toreador reloaded his combat shotgun with a ferocious scowl. Sheathing his knives, the Sabbat grabbed Sammy, tossed the slender kid over one shoulder, and started to run.

He didn't get far before Vincent's shotgun tore a hole in his chest. The second shot dealt enough damage to knock the Assamite sprawling, sending Sammy tumbling to the ground. From there, it only took one stern blow from Fiona's pipe to render the Assamite into ash. Gasping amid the ashen residue of their enemy, the young Caitiff pushed himself onto his elbows. "Thanks, guys."

"Anytime," Fiona grinned, offering her hand.

Vincent stood over his childe's ash, bloody tears staining his eyes. "Those Sabbat seemed damn willing to die for no reason at all," he muttered. "Do you think the Cammies did this?" He raised his voice toward the others. "Sent the Sabbat our way?"

"I dunno. Maybe?" Sammy shoved his cap back and cleared his throat. "Man, you know I'm a Caitiff," he joked awkwardly. "Nobody tells me nothing."

"We've got to move out. More Sabbat might be on the way." Fiona limped toward them, wounds seeping darkly beneath her ragged punk-rock teeshirt. Vincent said a silent goodbye to his childe and followed the others.

They slipped through the streets relatively unnoticed. Sammy played distraction, waving to a bartender as they passed a pub and pausing to exchange a few words with an early-morning magazine vendor. Fiona trudged beside Vincent, her arms crossed to hide the marks of her wounds. Vincent kept his head down. As they slogged through a dirty alley, something round and hard thudded into the earth near Vincent's feet.

Old habits die hard. *"Fire in the hole!"* Vincent yelled, diving for cover and burying his head in his arms. A long moment passed in chilling silence…but nothing happened. No explosion. The object just rolled a bit, bouncing and careening drunkenly along pavement cracks until it got wedged between a garbage can and a broken wooden pallet. It just lay there, covered in sod and muddy gunk, glinting metallic in the light of a nearby pub. Vincent raised his head and stared in confusion. Cautiously, he edged forward. The object wasn't a grenade. It was some kind of silver ball, shiny and undented by its tumble, with some kind of gold foil lettering scribbled around the middle. "The hell…?"

The others had ducked behind a dumpster at his command, and now raised their heads like staring meerkats. "That's one of the exhibits from the Elysium," Sammy gasped, recognizing it. "Oh, man. Oh man, oh man, what's *that* doing here?" The kid stepped out from behind the dumpster. He crouched near the orb, eyes wide. "That's…"

Vincent slapped Sammy's hands away. "Don't touch something you don't understand! What if the damn thing's magical? Or infernal!"

"Infernal?" Sammy choked, falling backwards onto the ground. Quickly recovering his bravado, he said, "You're just joshin' with me. Next thing, you'll be saying Caine was real, too."

Ignoring the kid's bluster, Vincent tugged off his jacket and wrapped it around the silvery orb. "Well, whatever the damn thing is, we're keeping it."

"What? Why?" Fiona stared curiously. "Didn't you just say it was dangerous?"

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"Probably. But we know the Cam wants it, and *fuck* those guys." He lifted it from the ground and wrapped the jacket around it. "Might be what those Sabbat were after, too, and *definitely* fuck those guys."

Sammy stared down at the package curiously. "If you want, I could take it to the Oracle of Koblenz and see what he'll tell me. That guy knows everything."

"Germany's a mighty long way to go just to ask a question," Fiona scoffed.

"Well, yeah, I guess. Hey, I could ask my local contacts. You know, take it around, see who knows anything? Get the metal composition tested at a lab?" Sam reached for the jacket. "I bet it's made of space-metal! Like one of those old 50s movies."

Vincent shook his head, tucking the package under his arm. "Can't risk it, Sammy. This thing was clearly stolen from that Elysium. If anybody finds out we've got it, we're done for. The Cam'll chop us up, and the Sabbat'll send more packs. We can't tell nobody, get me? I don't care what this thing is. They want it. We've got it. That's the only thing that matters." Vincent folded the sleeves of the jacket, carefully making sure the orb couldn't be seen. "The Cam's announced a big party on a boat in Long Beach…Ol' Lady Guil's the one in charge, and she's always been pretty friendly. What do you say we go cause a little trouble?" he grinned. Fiona clapped him on the shoulder, and the two Anarchs moved down the alley and out into the flickering light of the city street.

Sammy stood quietly in the alley. Irritation sketched its way across his features, lighting a faint green fire deep within his eyes. Aware that someone might be watching, Sammy pushed his thick-rimmed glasses more firmly onto his nose to better hide the brief flash from within. "I tried to keep out of it. I stayed out of the Elysium. I kept away, because I knew it was there! Isn't that worth *something?*" The wiry youth gave a frustrated sigh. He balled his fists so tightly that blood seeped beneath his fingernails. "I'm *trying* to be good."

The alley was silent; the other Anarchs were too far away to hear his whispers. "This time, you'll see." A pause. "You'll see!" he repeated defiantly, tugging down his faded Blue Devils baseball cap. "The devil doesn't own me yet."

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Chapter Eleven: The Anarch Movement

"What good is eternal life if you have to live it on someone else's terms?"
— Marguerite Foccart

The Fires of Revolution — History of the Anarchs

History teaches us that the young will rise up and rebel against the old. In Kindred society, this axiom holds true even more than among the kine. For centuries, ancient vampires sank into depravity, content to let the world pass by while they engaged in their Jyhad. To ensure loyalty, elders bound their lineages with shackles of blood. But those chains were not absolute.

The spark of revolution ignited during the Dark Ages, when a few young vampires discovered a way to shatter the control of their sires. Free of control, these violent dissidents carved a bloody swath across Europe. Their uprising culminated in all-out war nearly destroying vampiric society. In the end, the Camarilla offered the revolutionaries a treaty. Some rejected the overture of peace, fleeing into the night to found the Sabbat. Those who signed the Treaty of Thorns became known as the *Anarch Movement*. They had earned their freedom, caused the formation of three sects, and changed the vampiric world forever.

For the last 600 years, the Anarch Movement has been a part of the Camarilla, both included by and yet separate from its parent organization. This arrangement hasn't been perfect, and from time to time the Anarchs rise up again to seize territory, reject Camarilla doctrine, and upset the delicate balance of Jyhad. Still, only the most radical Anarchs espouse complete and total secession from the Ivory Tower, and most believe it is better to manipulate a structure that already exists — even if it is rotted and corrupt.

Anarchs are wild cards, passionate and uncontrollable personalities whose struggles shift the Jyhad in unpredictable, turbulent directions. They come from every walk of life, as well as every strata of society. Most of them are recently Embraced, and as such, tend to be humanists, protecting the mortal population from the ravages of other vampires. A very rare few date back to the original rebellion; elders in age, they struggle to resist the inevitable stagnation that creeps in as the years slide past.

Anarch society is united by discontent, fighting for independence, equality, and liberation — or so they claim. Some believe the cultural and philosophical advancements of the mortal world should be applied to Kindred society; others simply wish to tear the establishment down. Anarchs see violence as a philosophical tool and rebellion as a method of societal progress. The constant cycle of revolution and counter-revolution weighs heavily on the Anarchs, as they struggle to stay afloat in the rough waters of the Jyhad. Manipulated and used as scapegoats by the Camarilla and the Sabbat, their greatest advantage is their understanding of technology and the modern world. An Anarch's story is one of philosophies in conflict, of power and of pawn.

The sparks of revolution still smolder in the night.

Revolution

"You didn't found the revolution, kid. The revolution found you."

— Tyler

In ancient Carthage, the Brujah clan and its allies dared to live openly among the mortals. Legend has it that's where the seeds of the Anarch Movement were first sown. Though the city fell to treachery from the Ventrue, Malkavian, and Toreador clans, the spirit of that city survived and was passed down, generation to generation, from sire to childe.

Centuries later, a coterie led by the Ventrue and the Toreador proposed the formation of a new Kindred society — but, in truth, it was no different than the old. Elders still ruled, but instead of consolidating power within their lineages, the Camarilla gave elders massive status and position in order to ensure their authority over those of weaker blood. If anything, the proposed *Camarilla* would expand the elders' power, making slaves of the young regardless of their clan or line.

A Brujah named Galaric was the first to speak out, preaching the equality of Carthage. When the Ventrue forced him to be silent, Galaric rejected the new society and scorned its makers, defiantly marching out of the negotiations.

He was attacked before he had even left the province. A powerful Ventrue elder dispatched his childer, demanding they slaughter Galaric and prevent him from using boons to destroy the Camarilla before the sect could form. Galaric fought valiantly and destroyed many of his attackers, but the force of numbers brought him down. Unfortunately for the Camarilla, one of Galaric's childer escaped, and the tale sparked a war.

As fighting between vampiric lineages spilled over into the mortal world, fearful humans inundated the Catholic Church, desperately seeking shelter from the monsters lurking in the night. The mortal Inquisition was born. Hunters took advantage of overconfident vampires, tracking them to their lairs and destroying them, using faith, fire, and the sun to defeat their foes.

Elders reacted to this new threat by continuing the time-honored tradition of using their childer as cannon fodder, sacrificing fledglings to mortal hunters while they eluded pursuit. Between the war in the night, the growing threat of the Inquisition, and the advent of mortal diseases such as the Black Death, which destroyed their mortal herds, vampires were beleaguered and nearly eradicated. By 1300, hundreds of lineages across Europe had been destroyed.

In 1381, at the height of these conflicts, a mortal peasant named Wat Tyler led a revolt against British nobility. The revolutionaries killed the Archbishop of Canterbury and held London for a short while, forcing the king to fulfill some of their demands before Tyler was killed. When they scattered the rebels, the king's agents captured Tyler's lover, Patricia of Bolingbroke, and sentenced her to death. While Patricia was in prison, a Brujah Embraced her and set her free. Taking the last name Tyler to honor her fallen lover, Patricia continued her fight for justice and equality, gathering like-minded individuals (mortal and vampire alike) to her side.

As a vampire, Patricia saw no difference between elders enslaving and sacrificing their childer and the mortal nobles who had destroyed her family and ravaged England's peasantry. After Galaric's death, she came into detailed information about a Ventrue elder named Hardestadt: an originator of the Camarilla who was directly involved in Galaric's death. Focusing her wrath, Patricia Tyler gathered the scattered cells of neonate revolutionaries and unified them beneath a single banner. Although the revolutionaries suffered harsh casualties, Tyler and her soldiers were able to assault Hardestadt's personal haven, a castle in Spain, and defeat the incredulous elder. As word of the victory spread, young vampires seized onto the desperate hope of freedom, joining Tyler *en masse*.

Shattering the Bond

During this era, the Tzimisce of Eastern Europe engaged in a savage war against the Tremere usurpers. Having seized immortality through dark magic and diablerie, the

Diablerie

The original Anarchs were bound together by the belief that nothing short of the threat of destruction would keep the elders from their games. Neonates believed they had to strike fear into the hearts of their elders. If this meant slaughter and destruction, so be it — but the only real way to seize power was through diablerie. Drinking the heart's blood of elders makes a vampire's vitae stronger, allowing her access to new powers and a greater strength of blood, and many Anarchs committed this foul deed during the original revolt. While this strategy is no longer in use, and is reviled by modern Anarchs, rebels advocate its practice from time to time, seeking to even the playing field.

Tremere were determined to stamp out other users of sorcery and claim superiority of blood magic's mysteries. The Tzimisce elders used their childer as bait for the Tremere, drawing the usurpers into traps and sacrificing their children along the way.

Two Tzimisce neonates, Velya and Lugoj (later known as the Bloodbreaker) joined the Anarch cause. Working in tandem, the two created a koldunic ritual to break the blood bonds and free the revolutionaries from their unnatural loyalty to their sires: a ritual known as the Vaulderie. The rebellious Tzimisce and their Vaulderie ritual renewed the furor of the Anarch cause, freeing many who had been unable to join due to the chains of blood. Neonates and ancillae of every clan flocked to Tyler's banner, eagerly offering pledges of loyalty.

The rebels rose up in a bloody, vicious battle that raged across Europe. Far more than simply rampant diablerists (as they were painted by fearful elders), the furor of the Anarchs echoed the rise of the reformation out of the ashes of the Dark Ages: a passion enflamed by freedom, equality, and change. Although their initial attacks might have been motivated by anger and revenge, the Anarchs were drawn together by their commitment to creating a power structure in which young and thin-blooded vampires could be respected, even considered equal to their sires. They called the sum of their ideals *libertas*, and the word rang like a clarion call of freedom throughout the vampire world.

Despite their enthusiasm, rage, and craftiness, the Anarchs found themselves at a distinct disadvantage. Once they had lost the element of surprise, these neonates and ancillae faced a powerful and experienced enemy. As the conflict dragged on, Anarchs were cornered and outmaneuvered, forced to kill innocents and overextend themselves. Many were lost to wassail, and more to Inquisition hunters. Yet with each victory, their argument took on a life beyond the war. Vampires of all clans began to consider the fact that the Anarchs' rage might be justified.

The Call of Freedom

"It's not about where you're going, or where you've been.
It's all about the quest. What you've committed to…
and what you've left behind."

— Peter Kennedy, Ventrue, Ex-Camarilla
(Now Anarch)

Of all the elders of the Old World, those of the Lasombra clan were among the most controlling and tyrannical. Many forbade their childer from meeting other vampires or even leaving their havens without permission. But one Lasombra elder, Gratiano de Veronese, saw in the Anarchs an opportunity to accomplish his own goals. He began secretly aiding the Anarch Movement, teaching its members strategy and helping to locate targets. Most importantly, however, Gratiano traveled to the Holy Land, where he made contact with the Assamite clan on the Anarchs' behalf.

The Assamites wished to find elders to diablerize, and the Anarchs needed assistance from experienced scouts, advisors, and sorcerers. With the two groups allied, the Anarch Movement began doing serious damage to elders of many clans, freeing their childer and proving themselves a viable threat to even the most entrenched luminaries of the clans. Lineages in Italy and North Africa soon joined the fray, taking up the Anarch cause and overthrowing their elders. The tide of the revolt began to turn in the Anarchs' favor.

In the early 1400s, Gratiano led a campaign of Anarchs in an attack on the Lasombra Antediluvian's haven in Sicily. Although they suffered near-total losses, the five surviving vampires (Gratiano among them) succeeded in bringing down the Antediluvian and diablerizing the creature. In a shocking twist, rather than assuming leadership of the clan, Gratiano declared that the Lasombra clan would now choose its leaders based on merit, rather than age or generation. The Anarch cause had achieved two massive victories: one physical and one societal.

Thereafter, Lugoj Bloodbreaker and a coterie of Tzimisce Anarchs followed the Lasombra clan's example. They invaded the Tzimisce Antediluvian's haven, defeated it, and Lugoj claimed the right to personally diablerize the ancient. Unfortunately, the power gained from this act was too much for one vampire, and Lugoj sank into torpor even as the remaining elders of Clan Tzimisce rose as one against the Anarchs. The young vampires soon found that the newly incensed Tzimisce forces were too powerful to defeat, and they were forced to pull their militias out of Eastern Europe.

The Ivory Tower

Throughout the Anarch Revolt, Hardestadt's coterie continued to advocate the formation of the Camarilla, promoting it on the basis of mutual protection. As the revolt grew, the proposal of a unified sect also gained traction.

At the height of the revolt, elders of several major European clans shared resources, information, and strength, fighting back against the Anarchs and their Assamite allies. In 1486, a vampire claiming to be Hardestadt – defying the rumors of his death at Tyler's hands – convinced these leaders to take their cooperation one step further and found a sect. This sect would unite these clans in opposition to the revolt, crushing the Anarch movement forever. To assure the equality of these pillar clans, each pledged to place a representative on an Inner Circle, to set policy for the sect. Thus, the Camarilla was founded.

The Convention of Thorns

Many years have passed since the start of our current conflict, now called the Anarch Rebellion. Be it known that on this night of 23 October 1493, the Jyhad has ended. The time of conflict is over.

This concordat, bound in the Covenant of Câine by sacred vow, represents an unyielding, vigilant truce between the Kindred known unto themselves as the Anarchs, the Clan Assamite, and the freestanding Kindred bound under the title of Camarilla. Henceforth, the parties shall be recognized by faction as the Anarchs, the Assamites, and the Camarilla.

Each of these parties agrees to the responsibility of maintaining peace. Each shall lay its censures on any who breach or oppose this sacred Agreement. Accounting will be made of all parties for violations by them to either the letter or spirit of this Agreement. This document is binding under the social code of all Children of Câine by the accepted Lextalionis of all Câinites as it has passed through the ages. All Kindred are entreated to accept and gain solace from this peaceful accord.

Be it known that the Anarchs will enjoin with the Camarilla as an accepted part, making it whole. All Câinites are expected to work peacefully to achieve their own ends. Each must become defenders of all, and each shall receive full entitlement to all rights and privileges belonging to all Camarilla Kindred. All Anarchs shall be accepted back unto their elders and their formerly denounced clans without any fear of reprisal. Only the most vicious of atrocities shall not be forgiven. These shall stand written for the justicars to hear within one year, after which all allegations are no longer valid. All Anarchs shall reclaim all remaining and rightful property confiscated from them. In return, they must turn over any war gains taken during the conflict by giving them to their sires or any recognized clan elder.

Know also that if the Anarchs are further warred on, this open Jyhad invalidates their responsibility to maintain peace with their attacker. They may act freely without fear of reprisal from inactive members of the Camarilla. Anarchs are guaranteed the freedom to act as they please, short of breaching the Masquerade imposed for the protection of all Kindred from the kine.

It is also noted that any member of any other self-proclaimed sect must openly declare this before his elders and renounce this relation. Failure to do so will result in the destruction of any deemed guilty. No Kindred may be sent knowingly to his death by an elder or sire.

From this night forward, the Assamites shall henceforth no longer commit diablerie on members of other clans. The Assamites must commit themselves to this acceptance by a mark of assurance placed on them in the form of a Thaumaturgical limitation. All members of the Assamites shall become unable to drink freely of the vitae of other Kindred from now unto forever. In addition, the Assamites shall pay the Brujah elders of Spain two thousand pounds of gold, in ransom of the five Assamite elders captured committing diablerie. Also, the Assamites may no longer participate in blood hunts.

Be it also known that the Assamites are guaranteed complete independence from Camarilla demands. The Assamite fortress, Alamut, shall be free from further assaults. Assamites are also granted, out of respect for their beliefs, the freedom to commit diablerie within their own clan without restraint and the right to commit diablerie on all Kindred not recognized as holding membership within the Camarilla.

It is rendered that all parties involved and all showing allegiance to any of these parties shall be held responsible for all aspects of this Convention brought forth here, in the neutral Kingdom of England, outside the hamlet of Thorns, near the town of Silchester. May Câine hold truth and peace for us all.

The Treaty of Tyre

Whereas we, the elders and Kindred of the Clans Ventrue, Tremere, Toreador, Nosferatu, Gangrel, Brujah, and Malkavian, gathered together in Brotherhood and Mutual faith and hereinafter known as the Camarilla, being the True and Only Rightful Heirs of the estate of Caine, do desire an end to the Unlawful and Diabolistic Practices of the Rebels hereinafter known as the Clan Assamite; And whereas the said Clan Assamite does desire that the said Camarilla shall hold back its Hand from the full and Ultimate Extinction of the Clan Assamite: Therefore, be it agreed between all Parties signed and witnessed hereunto that the following Articles shall stand as binding between all Parties and their Progeny and Servitors, from this date perpetually...

The Clan Assamite shall refrain from taking the Blood of other Kindred, and as surety of this provision shall submit themselves to a ritual to be administered by the Elders of the Clan Tremere, whereby Kindred Blood shall be made poisonous to them;

The Clan Assamite shall remain peacefully in the territory ceded to them by the Camarilla, which they have historically claimed as their own. They shall seek no expansion of this territory, nor shall they permit any unrest of mortals within their territory to spread to other areas. They shall not travel, either singly or in groups, outside this territory, nor shall they have Retainers or Servitors of any kind travel outside this territory on their behalf. The Princes of the Camarilla have the perpetual right to call a Blood Hunt against any Assamite or Assamites within their fiefs, and need give no other reason for such a Blood Hunt beyond membership of the Assamite bloodline.

The defenses of the castle of Alamut shall be dismantled to the point where the castle can no longer withstand a siege or other attack by forces of the Camarilla. The Clan Assamite shall permit observers from the Camarilla to verify compliance with this provision. Further, any re-fortification of Alamut, or any attempt to establish a fortification elsewhere, shall be in breach of this treaty, and a worldwide Blood Hunt may be called against those committing the breach.

The Camarilla undertakes to cease all action against the Clan Assamite, and not to violate the borders of its agreed territory without the sanction of a full Convocation of the Camarilla. The Clans of the Camarilla agree among themselves that they shall no longer seek to employ members of the Clan Assamite as hired assassins, and that those violating this provision shall forfeit the protection of their Clans and may be subject to a Blood Hunt. The Clan Assamite undertakes to cease any and all activity of its members as assassins for hire.

The formation of this new sect removed the Anarchs' advantage. As elders started to work together, Anarchs began to lose — and lose badly. In 1493, only seven years after the formation of the Camarilla, Anarch leaders were forced to meet with Hardestadt and his coterie to discuss terms for a lasting peace. These leaders felt it was better to negotiate while they still had some power, rather than being forced to accept far less favorable terms after an impending, decisive defeat. Leaders from both sides met in the Abbey of the Sacred Crown near the small English village of Thorns, where they drafted a document that became known as the Convention of Thorns.

Under the convention, the Anarchs became part of the Camarilla, accepting the social superiority of their elders. In exchange, they were forgiven all crimes and actions taken during the revolt. As a whole, the convention was less a treaty and more a set of terms for surrender, but in the end, the agreement was accepted and signed by representatives of both sides.

The Treaty of Tyre

During the revolt, the Camarilla retaliated against the Anarch revolution's Assamite allies by calling a blood hunt against the entire clan (the first and only time so large a hunt has ever been called). The conflict might have continued indefinitely, but in 1495, a lone camarilla Nosferatu breached the incredible defenses of the Assamite mountain of Alamut. By proving that the stronghold was not impenetrable to Camarilla agents, the Camarilla forced the Assamite clan to sue for peace.

In 1496, three years after signing of the Convention of Thorns, Clan Assamite's emissaries accepted a second agreement known as the Treaty of Tyre. Their widespread spree of assault and diablerie was checked by a mighty curse cast on them by the blood sorcerers of the Tremere.

The revolt was finally over.

The Sword of Caine

While most Anarchs grudgingly agreed that the Convention of Thorns was a necessary concession, reached just before the Anarchs would have met certain defeat at the hands of their enemies, some – particularly those of the Lasombra and Tzimisce clans – vehemently dissented. The leader of the Lasombra delegation to the gathering at Thorns publicly denounced the draft and the elders who had written it, preferring eternal war. Her clan overwhelmingly agreed, and the Lasombra withdrew from the negotiations. Those who followed left the Anarch Movement forever, founding a new sect: the Sabbat. Their first act of defiance was the destruction of the nearby village of Silchester and the slaughter of its mortal inhabitants. They left the mortal town in a burning shambles, with twisted and eviscerated mortal corpses strewn in their wake.

Those Anarchs who stood up for their convictions at the Convention of Thorns quickly perverted those same ideals. The Sabbat's rigid structure and group blood-bonding defies everything true Anarchs believe, everything the revolt was founded upon, and everything their brethren fought and died to accomplish. Simply because the Sabbat is (supposedly) free of elder rule doesn't make its form of blood-slavery any more tolerable.

According to students of vampire history, later Anarch insurgencies might have been avoided if the convention was written less baldly as a surrender, if the elders were willing to share even a small amount of power. If the Camarilla had been less concerned with saving face and more concerned with creating a truly maintainable peace, the terms of the Convention of Thorns might have been more equitable. If so, the Sabbat might not exist. Instead, by sentencing the Anarchs to a powerless state, ignoring their complaints, and forcing them to surrender everything but their personal independence, the elders of the Camarilla ensured that resentment and discontent would continue through the centuries.

Rising from the Ashes

"It is not enough to free oneself.
If any member of the Kindred nation is enslaved,
we are all in chains."

– Frederick D. Nash, Ph.D.

History students sometimes consider the Anarch Revolt as a failed attempt to establish a new social order. The revolt was itself a great breakthrough, a sign that vampires working together could overcome even the most potent elders. This was a substantial revelation, as it meant that eternal servitude was preventable. Still, after the Convention of Thorns, many questioned whether the centuries of struggle and all the Final Deaths of their comrades had been in vain. The *Jus Noctis*, or "Law of the Night," still prevailed, granting a sire full and final authority over her childer. Neonates and ancillae were given no greater say in clan or sect affairs than in the past.

Although they failed to reform vampire society, the Anarchs nonetheless succeeded in transforming the vampiric world. The show of strength, while ultimately unsuccessful, opened the elders' eyes to the true potency of their childer and brought true fear into the Jyhad. Before the revolt, few elders questioned that dominance over their childer was

the natural way of vampires. Afterwards, elders grew more devious, learning to subtly maneuver their childer toward affection rather than absently trusting in the bond of blood. Elders became painfully aware that should they cross the line between forcefulness and sadism, their childer could see that they paid the price for that cruelty in blood.

Further, the ideals and ethics of the Anarch Revolt did not die when the battles ended. The philosophy of libertas continued, and sires passed on its values in the hope that a society based on those ideals could one day come to exist.

Over the next few centuries, some Anarchs fully joined the Camarilla, leaving the revolt behind and becoming part of the system. Others left the sect entirely, existing as independent *Autarkis* or joining their lost brethren in the Sabbat. The rest remained as the Treaty of Thorns had left them: in the shadow of the Camarilla, distinct, yet still considered part of the sect. Poorly treated and often ignored, these Anarchs continued to sow the seeds of change. When explorers discovered the New World, many self-identified Anarchs traveled to the American colonies to escape the sect's grasp, and by and large, elders were glad to be rid of them. In the political statements of mortal philosophers such as Adams, Jefferson, Locke, Murray, and Rousseau, as well as others who inspired them, a new generation of Anarchs witnessed a mortal resurgence — a rise in mortal belief that echoed the concepts of Anarch libertas.

The French Revolution was a period of social and political upheaval in Europe, and it became ground for Anarchs' continued struggle against the control of their parent sect. Toreador elders controlled the French elite, while the peasantry was spurred on and supported by Anarch neonates of many different clans. By supporting the mortal revolution, Anarchs gained power in France and held Paris in later years, despite the fury of their elders. Like the tales of ancient Carthage, Anarchs joined with the French revolutionaries out of a genuine sense of kinship and idealism — but this time, vampires did not reveal their nature as they fought alongside mortal kine.

Ecstatic at the successes in America and France, many Anarchs began making plans to spread the ideals of democracy and liberty to other countries, such as the British Empire and the Dutch and German colonies in Africa. Even though Napoleon Bonaparte (a pawn of the Toreador) eventually extinguished the reforms of the revolution and restored power to the elders, the Anarchs proved that despite the Convention of Thorns, the Camarilla could not keep libertas chained forever.

The world was ready for change.

The Industrial Revolution

First, the Sabbat took over the New World; then, the Camarilla came and stole it from under their noses during a period of civil war within the Sword of Caine. As before, the Camarilla elders used Anarchs as a buffer, a rabble army, manipulating the Anarchs and the Sabbat into combat and seizing territory while the others were at war. When these conflicts stabilized, the Sabbat held Mexico, the Camarilla held major cities on the East Coast, and Anarchs claimed the western frontier.

Despite the struggles all around them, the Anarchs failed to create any large-scale domains for themselves in the Americas. Neonates would settle in frontier towns, building small powerbases. As the territory became more important and better populated, those Anarchs would suddenly find their former hunting grounds occupied by a Prince and her court. The Camarilla intruders would politely explain that they now held praxis of the city, and perhaps the Anarchs should consider moving further west. If the Anarchs did not wish to go to war, they had no choice but to accede. Though slow, this process of displacement was constant and unavoidable. Sometimes, the Anarchs moved on. More often, they waged war against the Camarilla, using brutality and violence to make their point.

Primarily humanist and driven from their homelands, the Anarchs had much in common with the Native American people of the Americas, and they often found themselves allied with the indigenous population against the wave of intruders. Anarchs had a hand in many of the great battles of the western frontier; more often than not, on the side of the chiefs and the native councils.

Some Princes, who wished to seem benevolent, appointed Anarch liaisons to their praxis, allowing peaceful Anarchs to remain. Those Anarchs who could behave were allowed to openly discuss their beliefs in salons and other gatherings of polite vampire society. These socially-oriented emissaries gave rise to the term "Loyal Opposition" to describe modernistic Anarch beliefs that would benefit the Camarilla, rather than tearing down the hierarchy wholesale. In the Americas, many vampires even came to see the light of reform. Elected Princes, once unheard-of, became an occasional occurrence, and other governmental advancements were instituted in these new domains. Where Europe remained stagnant and uncompromising in its traditional practices, several domains of the New World opened themselves to these new techniques and began to work with the Anarchs in some measure.

— The Status Perfectus —

Being a Declaration of Principles for the Self-Governance of the Kindred of the Free State.

We, the Kindred of the Free State, do hereby declare that we and our progeny, and all Kindred who choose freedom over oppression and liberty over tyranny, of all clans and generations, have as an inherent part of their being the spiritual substance called *libertas*, or Free Will. We further declare that, as we have freed ourselves from the bonds of mortality, so must we free ourselves from the forces that would rob us of our libertas. Not only must we continue to struggle on our own behalf, but on behalf of our brothers and sisters who continue to be robbed of their libertas by oppression, ignorance, and fear.

The Anarch Free State is the political expression of that struggle. In choosing to free ourselves from political tyranny, we have also chosen to embrace our own libertas and that of our brother and sister Kindred everywhere.

For these reasons we, the Kindred of the Anarch Free State, meeting this night in solemn convocation, do hereby pledge ourselves to the following principles:

We declare ourselves to be free and independent, owing allegiance to no creature and no organization.

We declare our ability to rule ourselves, with no Prince, no Primogen and no ruler other than that we choose for ourselves.

We declare our kinship with oppressed Kindred everywhere and offer a home to all Kindred of all generations and clans who will agree to dwell in harmony with us.

We further accept our responsibility to our oppressed brothers and sisters everywhere and pledge to assist them at all times and in all places in their own struggle for the freedom that we declare to be the birthright of all Kindred, from now until the end of time.

We recognize our responsibility to maintain the Masquerade, and we pledge to protect and defend it.

We establish this Status Perfectus and recognize its duty to all Kindred.

The Free State

"Those who die for libertas are martyrs. Heroes. Remember their names, and count yourself honored to fight for the same cause."

– Salvador Garcia

In the early 1900s, a number of Anarchs had washed up on the American West Coast, particularly in San Francisco and a small port town with the peculiar name of *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciuncula* — better known as Los Angeles. A former Spanish *alcalde* named Don Sebastian Juan Dominguez became Prince of Los Angeles on the condition that he would "do something about the Anarchs." One of those Anarchs was a Brujah named Jeremy MacNeil. In 1944, Prince Don Sebastian decided to roust the Anarchs from his territory. He ordered Jeremy MacNeil detained and savagely beaten, believing this act would show his power and strike fear into the heart of the Anarch populace. He was wrong.

Many of the other Anarchs wanted to rebel in an immediate uprising, but MacNeil counseled patience. The Anarchs waited for six weeks, locating havens and readying their assault. Finally, on December 21, 1944, the Second Anarch Revolt began. Just before dawn, parties of heavily armed Anarchs attacked many of the city's elders in their havens. While not all the attacks were successful by any means, many elders were killed, and those Camarilla vampires who managed to escape were forced to flee the city. Don Sebastian himself was slain by Salvador Garcia, and the Prince's rancho was burned to the ground. After their initial successes in Los Angeles, the Anarchs moved south to seize San Diego and then north in the hopes of doing the same to the territories of San Francisco. There, however, they were unsuccessful, as then-prince Vannevar Thomas had the time and the means to mount a strong defense.

The Free State, as the Anarch coalition called itself, stretched from the Mexican border north to San Jose. World War II had distracted both the Camarilla and the Anarchs, and thus, the revolution did not spread as the Anarchs of California had intended. A Revolutionary Council, formed to coordinate the disparate leadership of the territory, voted on and adopted principles of self-governance that they called the "Status Perfectus," or the "Perfect State."

The Status Perfectus was a visionary document, the first to clearly and unequivocally state the Anarch dream. It promised a Kindred nation free of political oppression and prejudice, and it swore to extend that freedom to all vampires everywhere. However, the immediate aftermath of the revolt was surprising. Rather than joining together in a glorious fellowship, the vampires within the Free State broke down into cross-clan coteries and gangs, staking out geographical areas and warring over territory or small-scale rivalries. There was no balanced society, only the rule of the strong over the weak. A true society of libertas did not emerge.

This turn of events was a terrible philosophical blow to the Anarchs. Scholars of the sect argued that their inability to create a grander society was a result of the influence of the vampiric state, or perhaps it was a transitional stage toward a more egalitarian society. Where mortal trust might make communal society a peaceful state, the Beast drove vampires into ruin, demanding dominance, war, and chaos wherever it was left unrestrained. Perhaps in time, the Anarchs of the Free State could have discovered ways to overcome or restrain this driving internal urge toward bloodshed. Unfortunately, they never had the chance to find out.

Despite its chaotic nature, the Free State was remarkably resilient, surviving a direct attack by the Sabbat in 1965 and an enormous internal conflict in 1992, but ultimately, it was dismantled in 1998 by an extraordinary enemy: the *Cathayans*.

Invasion of the Kindred of the East

The Cathayans, or the Kindred of the East, are the undead of Asia. According to their legends, their progenitor betrayed the mandate of Heaven and was cursed to live on blood and shun sunlight — very much like the children of Caine. However, the powers, politics, and capacities of the Cathayans are extremely different from those of the European and African vampire clans. The creatures that came to San Francisco allied with the Anarchs and established a colony on the American West Coast, but the arrangement was doomed to failure. In February 2010, an unknown and disastrous event occurred in the Cathayan homelands, forcing them to withdraw from the United States. The only justification the foreigners offered was the term "Devil-Tiger," a wholly unexplained superstition. In California, the Anarchs, led by Marguerite Foccart (in the name of Jeremy MacNeil) seized the now-empty territories. They continue to hold those lands primarily through her dominance of several scattered, disorganized Anarch gangs.

Strange, powerful vampires from the East immigrated to California, determining that it was ripe for an invasion. After scattered fighting, the Cathayan leaders concluded that it was not economically feasible to take the Free State by force, nor would a wide-scale treaty be honored by the fragmented Anarch territories. They offered peaceable terms and an equal partnership to the Anarchs of San Francisco, and the Anarchs accepted. The Free State crumbled and fell to dust.

Nights of Turmoil

For a brief period in July 1999, a Red Star shone in the sky, signaling a series of changes that became known as the Week of Nightmares. The Ravnos Antediluvian awakened in Bangladesh and was immediately destroyed by unknown agencies in a devastating battle that spanned three days and nights. For most Anarchs…it was just another Thursday.

Ravnos were never very common among the Anarchs. The sect is also disinterested in the legends and lore of the Antediluvians; most Anarchs have never heard the word, much less read excerpts from the Book of Nod. Anarchs are modernists, and by and large, their studies rarely extend into ancient vampire myth. However, even the most newly Embraced Anarch noted the changes that evinced in vampire society after the star appeared: the permeable fear and staunch lockdown that swept through the Camarilla, and the fanatic revivals and excesses of a celebratory Sabbat.

The Anarchs were the first to recognize the danger from mortal hunters, tapping communication lines to hear that both government-based organizations and free agents had been alerted by the constant breaches of the Masquerade. First, they assaulted small targets: havens, chantries, or nomadic packs. Then, with information gathered from those sources and a wide variety of weaponry, hunters descended upon Savannah in January 2001. Realizing the danger first, the Savannah Anarchs quickly withdrew, leaving Camarilla and Sabbat vampires to be destroyed. Hunters eradicated every vampire remaining in the city.

These attacks continued for nearly 10 years. Vampires throughout North and South America were hunted down and killed, and the mortal hunters gained more and more ground. From the chaos of the East Coast to the barely-controlled territories of the Free State, Anarchs maintained watch on the mortals, evading most of the assaults. Where the Camarilla and Sabbat were entrenched, the Anarch tendency to remain mobile was a blessing, and their losses were significantly lighter. Those who died tended to be older Anarchs, mostly the few elders of the sect and the most static gangs.

Where the Anarchs did hold territory, they survived primarily because of their capacity to use technology — far greater than that of either the Camarilla or the Sabbat. Social media, rapid messaging, and up-to-the-second information feeds gave them an advantage against hunters who wrongly thought all vampires were archaic.

Modern Nights

"Keep your head down, you stupid lick!
You tryin' to catch bullets in your teeth?"
— "Nines" Rodriguez, Los Angeles

Although the Free State of California is no more, Anarchs have fanned out across North America and back into the Old World of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, spreading the message of libertas to vampires everywhere. The Nights of Turmoil caused significantly more damage to Sabbat and Camarilla holdings than to Anarch domains, primarily because Anarch domains are few, and they make significantly greater use of modern security and technology. During the hunter attacks, the Anarchs were able to keep up with mortal agencies, tapping into their signal feeds to gain enough information to avoid the sweeps and assaults.

In many ways, the Anarchs were cunning and cutthroat — they rarely shared their information with other groups, allowing the mortal threat to eradicate Sabbat domains and bedevil Camarilla courts. Some condemned this tactic, as each mortal attack further stretched the already-strained Masquerade. Others lauded the move as a method of allowing one enemy to eradicate another, at no risk to the Anarchs.

When the threat settled down and the mortal hunters were once again pacified, the Movement found itself in a relatively powerful position. It controlled a nominal amount of territory in the Americas and Canada, and even a few important domains in the Old World, including the entire city of Berlin. In comparison, the Sabbat is badly weakened, and even Camarilla strongholds are not as powerful as they once were. The Camarilla would survive, but if it wanted to keep its attention focused on both mortal hunters and Sabbat saboteurs, it couldn't afford to fight the Anarchs, too.

The Edict of Succession

In 2007, five Justicars issued a new edict: one which was designed to pacify the Anarchs by giving them an appeasement, while also fulfilling the Camarilla's needs. This pronouncement was called the Edict of Succession.

The Edict of Succession ensures that members of the Camarilla will treat Anarch territories as they would treat Camarilla domains. This means that they must respect any laws the local Anarchs have put into place, and they must respect the leader of the territory as a lawful Camarilla

Anastasz Di Zagreb, Tremere Justicar

It is well-known that Di Zagreb hates the Anarchs. So why did he write the Edict of Succession? And what does the Camarilla get out of the deal? The edict reminds Princes that their authority allows them to destroy unruly Anarchs within their domains; if Anarchs accept they have authority over Camarilla citizens in their domains, they must accept reciprocal application of that power in Camarilla domains. Some Anarchs theorize that the edict is an attempt to cause a schism within the Anarchs, between those who accept and utilize the edict and those who reject it. Others say that the Camarilla's pogrom against Caitiff has pushed it to a point where a more solid alliance with the Anarchs is a lesser evil. Whatever the reason, Di Zagreb certainly doesn't act out of altruistic intent.

authority. Over the course of history (particularly during the American frontier), greedy elders made a practice of seizing Anarch domains. Prior to the Edict of Succession, any Camarilla citizen could declare herself Prince over a previous Anarch territory, as the Justicars did not recognize Anarch positions of authority. If the Anarchs tried to retaliate or regain their lands, the Prince would be well within the authority of the Sixth Tradition to declare those Anarchs blood hunted for rising up against a lawful Prince and put them to the sword. So long as the Camarilla had the allies, boons, and personal power to enforce its will, the Anarchs had no political recourse against such blatant power grabs.

The edict prohibits such land grabs. Further, it acknowledges that Anarchs have the right to perform some of the functions that the Prince performs within the Camarilla. Though an Anarch leader does not have Camarilla status, and can neither speak nor vote at a gathering of Princes, she now has the right to attend conclaves if she so chooses. Further, an Anarch ruler now has the right to protect her domain from praxis seizures. If a Camarilla citizen comes into Anarch lands and kills someone, or attempts to seize control, the ruler of that territory can condemn, punish, and even destroy the Camarilla member for her crimes. The Edict of Succession ensures there will be no public retaliation from the Justicars or their Archons, so long as the death is politically justified — as it would be in any Princedom. For many Anarchs, this announcement is a long-sought victory.

There is an American adage that states, "Those who sacrifice some part of their liberty for security deserve neither." True to form, not all Anarch domains accepted the edict. Many reject it entirely. The edict demands that Anarchs limit their Embraces, and in exchange, their domains will receive recognition from the Camarilla hierarchy. Despite the advantages, the modern mind rebels at the idea of a governmental estate controlling reproductive rights. Canny Anarchs note that the Embrace could happen anywhere, and the edict's limitation can't possibly be practically applied when you can simply take a potential childe outside city limits. What's the problem with claiming to conform to the edict, if it offers some protection?

Still, Anarchs aren't ignorant of the dangers caused by reckless overpopulation. Caitiff pose a real quandary; many elders seek their deaths, and regardless of the superstitious legends of the End Times, thin-blooded vampires are an embarrassment and a risk to the Masquerade. Further, the last line of the edict states that "*Their Graces shall support a return of those domains to a more responsible praxis*" — something politically astute individuals claim is a thinly veiled threat.

Anarch domains are fractious, usually chaotic places, and no two are the same. Some establish a tribal government, others command mafias or gangs, still others institute no hierarchy at all, and anarchy is the rule of law. Most Anarch domains use some form of voting and create councils to organize their domains. This has worked so far, as mortal hunters maintain pressure on Camarilla courts. Once the Camarilla no longer fears the hunters, the edict can be revoked as easily as it was announced, and the Movement will be back at square one. For now, the Anarchs scramble to take advantage where they can and to prove that their ideals can survive a taste of the equality they have so often demanded.

(See **Chapter Nine: The Camarilla, page 366**, for the full text of the Edict of Succession.)

Agents of Change

"Rebellion doesn't start in the mind.
It starts in the heart, and better a heart that's been broken.
Seeds grow best in ravaged soil."

— Mercury, of the Coven Anarchs

Anarchs tend to be younger vampires, far more capable of using and adapting to modern technology than vampires of other sects. From the most adolescent, modernist Anarch to the soft-spoken, eloquent idealist, from the committed student of libertas to the self-serving revolutionary, Anarchs

are fiercely individualistic. Although most Anarchs have things in common, few see eye-to-eye on every issue.

Most Anarchs are recently Embraced (within the last 50-60 years), and grew up with technology as an integral part of everyday life. This modernistic viewpoint, acceptance of technology, and a general attitude of defiance keeps the Anarchs relatively unified. In the Anarch mindset, you're either one of "us," or one of "them."

The Anarch Movement exists, technically, as a sub-sect of the Camarilla. From the day the Convention of Thorns was signed, the Anarchs were forced to accept a role within Camarilla society and adhere to at least one of the Traditions (the Masquerade). Although they rebel, they must also acknowledge that the Camarilla is powerful and organized. The Camarilla sees the Anarch Movement as a release valve for young vampires to sow their wild oats, working out any rebelliousness before settling down as proper Camarilla citizens. Elders admit that this release is necessary to keep the young from impulsively joining the Sabbat in a moment of anger or political frustration.

Most Anarchs rail against the Camarilla. As an institution, it is stagnant, clinging to outdated customs and modes of thought. Unlike mortal governments, generations don't pass in vampire sects, and outdated philosophies aren't naturally replaced with newer ideas. Some Princes have ruled for centuries without altering their outlook or their laws. This only exacerbates the stagnation, provoking the Anarchs to rebel. In an Anarch domain, law can be transitory. Governments rise and fall, and a charismatic leader with loyal followers can be more powerful than one who rules solely through personal strength. Anarchs resist anything that looks like elder oppression, which means they are suspicious of organization, hierarchy, or political maneuvering. Instituting a structure of power and authority often causes the whole thing to fall apart from the inside.

Anarch domains range from urban hell, dystopia, and shadow-shrouded city streets to highly advanced areas of technology with every upgrade imaginable — and a few that mortals couldn't have imagined. Out of pragmatism, most Anarchs keep the Masquerade (even those otherwise at odds with the Camarilla) to keep mortal hunters and Sabbat packs from discovering their havens.

Most Anarchs exist in gangs, where experienced and charismatic leaders gather like-minded individuals together toward a common cause. At least in the rhetoric, the Anarchs of a domain work as one, though the truth is that Anarchs have plenty of internal divisions, and they can violently overthrow a leader who is weak or unsure. A few Anarchs operate independently, refusing anything that resembles organization, but those isolated individuals are generally tough enough to survive alone.

Ideology

As a social phenomenon, Anarchs are committed more to the ideal of change than to any particular manner of making it happen. They desire redistribution of power and an organizational structure that doesn't place one individual above another without just cause, and they dislike authority based on age, inherited privilege, or strength of vitae.

The Anarchs often couch their cause in anarchistic rhetoric, communist propaganda, democratic dialogue, grassroots politics, or other social philosophy, and it speaks to a young and idealistic audience. The writings of mortal anarchists such as Kropotkin, Goldman, Bakunin, and Proudhon are particularly popular. Anarchs bandy political treatises about, studying each generation of mortal philosophers and bringing their philosophies into the vampiric world. They share a commitment to freedom and libertas, even if their experiments in social governance fail. Many point to the Movement's continued existence as proof of the power of stubborn conviction. Kinder elders say the Anarch Movement's dedication to mortals helps strengthen their respect in Humanitas. Certainly, for all the hardships they have suffered, Anarchs are the most humane group of Kindred.

Vampires who manage to join the Movement do so out of a sense that the Anarchs, for all their failings, are fundamentally correct about the injustice of vampire society. Both the Camarilla and the Sabbat foster abuse, enslaving their members to shadowy goals through adherence to the societal hierarchy or through the unnatural magic of the ritae.

Libertas

The greatest figures in history are those who broke from convention and established a reasoned outline of principles. John Locke proposed that reason must be the basis for any society. "Libertas" does not equate to "libertine," nor to "libertarian." The fundamental philosophy of the Anarch Movement is a rational concept: the ideal of libertas, or metaphysical free will. Its members reject the precept that one individual is more important than another simply due to an accident of birth — or Embrace. Even as the Embrace freed a fledgling vampire from the institutions of mortal society, she must now become free of the constraints of lineage, sect, and blood.

Free will, rational thought, and equal part in governance are pillars of Anarch belief. Some focus on individual freedom, while others seek to create new forms of governance.

Libertas posits that both are important. Without the ability to exercise personal free will, the group will fall to tyranny and corruption. Without the group to give her perspective, an individual's freedom becomes all-consuming, driving her toward cruelty in the name of self-fulfillment.

Libertas posits that each individual has a unique perspective on the world. The less a person is aware of her restrictions and capacities, the easier it is for others to manipulate that individual. The wider a person's perspective, the more complete her understanding of herself and the world. With a greater perception, one can genuinely begin to contribute to the betterment of the world, both for herself and those around her.

If an individual is shackled by ignorance or stasis, she cannot be free. She has given up her libertas, hiding herself from addressing the troubles of the world either through ignorance or behind unchanging walls. A vampire has a right and a responsibility to express her libertas and fulfill her place in the world. Where an Anarch sees ignorance, she wants to bring truth. Where she finds willful blindness, she shines a light. Knowledge is not good, nor bad; it is simply *necessary* in order to live an enlightened and rational existence.

Philosophical Camps

Within the Anarch Movement, there are many ideological camps, each addressing the methods by which an individual should exist and express her libertas. The *Constructionist* camp fights to build a better system, whether based on an existing style of governance or through determining a new model. Its members want the betterment of vampire society, and they work dedicatedly toward educating and reconstructing Kindred ideals. Ideally, they wish independence from the Camarilla so that they can create something distinct and egalitarian on their own.

An opposing philosophy known as *Nihilism* has caused a major split in the Anarch Movement. Nihilists fight to tear the current structure down — and have no interest in replacing it. Nihilists don't care what comes next, so long as any form of oppression is destroyed. Most Nihilists resist any movement toward building a system of governance, claiming any such new organization would be (or eventually become) just as restrictive. They hate every idea and resist every attempt at leadership or organization. They will turn against their Anarch brothers and sisters when such "power-mongering" becomes too oppressive for their tastes.

The third camp, the *Revisionists*, are closely connected to the Camarilla. They hope to shape that organization into a more progressive sect, changing its rules rather than creating something new. The Revisionists walk a fine line between loyalty to the Movement and friendship with the Camarilla. If they could alter the Camarilla's hierarchy, bringing in modern methods and alleviating inequalities, they would likely give up membership in the Anarch Movement and become full citizens of their parent sect.

The camp of *Scholars* consists of individuals who research and study anthropology, social sciences, philosophy, and the vampiric condition. Some few even study Noddist doctrine, though they are rare and not particularly respected by other Anarchs, as obsessing over old stories does little to promote modernist beliefs. These individuals are the intellectual elite of the Anarch Movement. They offer new theories and philosophies, adapting mortal societal advancements to Kindred life. Likely, if left to the Scholars, the Movement would be nothing more than theories and intellectual exercises.

Lastly, there are the *Revolutionaries*; these Anarchs want to destroy the system — but don't particularly care what happens after that. They flit from one political ideal to another, first obsessing about the virtues of communism, then suddenly becoming excited about geniocracy, rulership of the most learned. After that, a Revolutionary may latch onto the ideals of a meritocracy, preaching about a defined system of deeds-to-authority, only to read a treatise by Socrates and plunge into the concept of rulership by property owners. These are young, newly Embraced vampires (or at least new to the Anarch Movement), still enthusiastic about the future. They are impressed by their new supernatural powers and are usually ablaze with bright-eyed ideals.

The Failings of Age

The tremendous majority of Anarchs are neonates. A minority are ancillae, and an almost unheard-of few are of elder age and blood. This has always been the case.

As vampires age, their beliefs become more static. The world moves too fast for them to maintain a relevant understanding of mortal society. This often causes individuals who once considered themselves Anarchs to become outdated, and their opinions are ignored — partly because their ideals *are* antiquated; they are no longer relevant to the modern world. These ancillae-turned-elders often retire from life as an Anarch, turning into hermits and Autarkis. More often, they join the Camarilla in full, wooed by the promise of status and station after decades of deprival. The Camarilla's stasis gives them a reassuring sense of stability in increasingly confusing nights.

The Nights of Turmoil further cemented this age disparity. Anarch domains were fractious, and Anarchs needed to remain constantly on the move in order to avoid the organized assaults by government agencies and other mortal hunters. Elders have a great deal of difficulty with this sort

of night-to-night instability and risk. Several were hunted down by Sabbat packs, eager to reclaim their blood and seize the opportunity presented by an elder travelling openly. Others gave in and fully joined the Camarilla, pressured by their lineages and drawn to the relative steadfastness of their domains. Keeping up with the technological advancements necessary to remain safe and to respond instantly to ever-increasing threats was simply too much for those of potent blood. While some members of the Anarch Movement argued to allow those elders to return after the dangers were past, too many prominent young Anarchs felt that their departures were a betrayal. The elders will not be welcomed back to the Movement, regardless of their history.

Elders also have a doctrinal problem with modern Anarchs. For the most part, these young vampires dispute the legends about Caine and Gehenna, and openly mock adherence to the parables of the Book of Nod. This causes a significant amount of discomfort for ancient vampires who may well have once met their Antediluvian great-grandsire and for those who were raised in deeply religious times. The Anarch Movement has always been a safe haven for Caitiff, which is another facet in the growing discomfort of these elder vampires.

Hierarchy

Anarchs aren't usually fans of large government or of authority stepping in when things are moving smoothly. In many places, the Anarch Movement only governs when there is a dispute. Typically, contesting parties stand before a council of three to five of their peers — other Anarchs who are respected for their wisdom, experience, charisma, or personal power. Both parties have an opportunity to explain their side and bring witnesses. After everyone has spoken, the council votes on the outcome, and the majority vote carries. This system does not always work; most Anarchs resolve disputes by combat before any council is convened.

When two Anarchs have personal or ideological issues, there are methods of resolving those issues — some approved by the sect, while others are hypocritical or underhanded. Unlike the Camarilla or the Sabbat, Anarchs do not have a complex structure of personal dominance. They do not engage in Monomacy, and they do not have Harpies to scandalize poor behavior. In an Anarch world, personal resolution often boils down to "I'd better do unto her, before she does unto me."

When two sect members have a dispute, they must address their differences according to their political ideology, their Humanity (or Path of Enlightenment), and their relative personal power. However, most Anarchs are out for themselves and will often resolve an issue through payment in boons, mortal fortunes, influence, or other assets.

Titles

Anarchs use several semi-formal titles. Some date back to the founding of the Anarch Movement in the 1400s, while others are relatively modern. As with all things Anarch, some domains use entirely different titles for these positions, while other domains have no leaders at all. These are the most common delineations; your mileage may vary.

Baron

This is the oldest title in the Movement, and it has a great deal of history (and baggage) associated with it. Defined simply, a Baron is the Anarch Movement's equivalent of a Prince. The term "Baron" was first used by the Camarilla to define an Anarch territorial leader, and the term is not flattery. In a feudal society, a Prince rules by divine right and authority. A Baron owes fealty to a Prince, reminding the Anarch Movement that it is a sub-sect of the Camarilla. Rather than holding a royal connotation, the Camarilla sees Barons as local landowners: individuals born of common stock and given menial or governmental tasks by the true nobility.

A Baron straddles a fine line between being a wise leader and a tyrannical autocrat. She must be able to organize her citizens, enforce whatever laws the local Anarchs design, and defend the territory against enemies. Yet if she wields her power too authoritatively, it will rankle more independent Anarchs, who may then call for her to be overthrown. Many Barons use their position as a means of acquiring boons and favors from the other local Anarchs, since a web of favors is often the only personal benefit a Baron gleans from the position.

Advocate

An ever-growing majority of Anarchs reject the medieval title "Baron." As with most things, Anarchs prefer to keep up with the times and use more current terminology. The titles President and Minister have been used on occasion, but generally, modernist Anarchs prefer the more generalized title of *Advocate* for leaders in this role.

A Baron's authority typically includes:

- Creating and enforcing laws within the territory
- Approving new citizens and exiling the undesirable
- Calling for a vote on an issue or refusing to allow a specific vote
- Defining methods of judgment and punishment
- Naming another Anarchs *Marked* within the territory or lifting such a mark
- Issuing a Call to Arms against an enemy of the territory

A Baron gains the abiding status traits *Authority* and *Mandate* during her tenure in office. She can offer the acceptance of *Committed* to any individual within her territory without expending a status trait.

Constable

An Anarch Constable's task is difficult and can be likened to herding cats — albeit with a very large stick. A Constable serves as the strong-arm of the local government and provides a very visible threat to those who might think an Anarch territory is undefended. She is also responsible for carrying out punishments earned by unruly members of the territory, and thus is often a feared member of Anarch society.

The differences between a Constable and a Sheriff are significant: a Constable is elected by the people, not empowered by the Baron. She usually works with the assistance of a small group of militia, rather than as a solo operative, and she has no duties toward the Masquerade other than those which are expected of all Anarchs.

A Constable's authority typically includes:

- Training and maintaining a militia
- Maintaining an armory suitable for the defense of the territory
- Creating strategy and leading in combat during a Call to Arms
- Investigating crimes within the territory
- Carrying out punishments on those sentenced of a crime

A Constable gains the abiding status traits *Enforcer* and *Warrant* during her tenure in office.

Architect

Like other Kindred, Anarchs are protective of their territories. Maintaining the Masquerade is integral to a vampire's safety, but Anarchs take it a step further and actually work to upgrade technology and provide benefits to the mortals in their areas. An Architect (in modern times occasionally called a Civil Engineer) polices Anarch territory for violations of the Masquerade, establishes a defense perimeter, and maintains a watch on any Elysiums or revered locations within Anarch lands.

An Architect's responsibilities include maintaining control of security systems and surveillance within the territory, as well as keeping an eye out for intruders, be they Camarilla, Sabbat, mortal hunter, or other supernatural being. An Architect can shut down any parties or major functions within the territory, ensuring that the actions of one vampire don't endanger others. Additionally, she is responsible for keeping apprised of technological upgrades and applying them wherever possible.

An Architect's authority typically includes:

- Allocating hunting grounds and ensuring those areas aren't overhunted
- Maintaining any racks, Elysiums, or safe houses in the territory
- Keeping watch for supernatural intruders as well as mortal hunters
- Ensuring that exiled individuals respect the borders
- Studying and applying technological upgrades and security

An Architect gains the abiding status trait *Enforcer* during her tenure in office.

Ambassador

Ambassadors, also called Heralds or Emissaries, are usually chosen from among the more politically apt members of the Anarch Movement. In most cities, Anarchs intermingle with Camarilla vampires, and they even occasionally make treaties with the Sabbat (though they keep such meetings extremely secret, when they must happen). An Ambassador's primary task is to somehow convince these individuals that it's in their best interest to leave the Anarchs alone. Anarch Ambassadors to the Camarilla especially use the practice of boon-trading for the advantage of their gangs or domains. An Ambassador is not a Harpy; she has no obligation to track specific boons. It is in her best interest (and the best interest of her gang or territory) to know when a member is deeply in

debt and to help prevent such debt from occurring — or to shift boons around where possible, so that the Anarchs can prevent themselves from becoming pawns to outside forces.

Ambassadors are expected to have a great deal of knowledge about the Kindred world, enough that they can interact with other sects (as well as independents of many different clans). Some gain enough Lore to specialize their knowledge about these groups and others, providing an invaluable political resource to the Anarchs of their territory.

An Ambassador's authority typically includes:

- Negotiating on behalf of local Anarchs
- Collecting information and providing an educational resource
- Gathering and utilizing boons on behalf of the territory
- Maintaining a general knowledge of boons owed by other Anarchs and assisting in getting them out of debt where possible

An Ambassador gains the abiding status trait *Established* during her tenure in office.

Customs and Practices

Every Anarch domain respects two customs: the Call to Arms and the Masquerade.

The Call to Arms relies on the concept of Anarch unity and can be traced back to a similar Brujah tradition. Anarchs are famed for having an us-against-them mentality. If another sect mistreats one Anarch, many Anarchs will respond — occasionally travelling for days to reach their beleaguered brothers. While Anarchs would like to believe that this support occurs in the name of justice and freedom, as often as not, Anarchs find themselves defending a brother or sister whose boneheaded actions caused the problem in the first place. Still, the Movement has little choice; if the Camarilla or the Sabbat believe Anarchs can be picked off one-by-one, the Movement will eventually be destroyed.

The second constant in Anarch domains is the practice of respecting the Masquerade. Camarilla or no Camarilla, keeping the secret of vampirism away from mortal eyes is important and protects both sides. Mortals who discover that vampires exist must be abused, sometimes Dominated to forget, blood bound and turned into ghouls, or outright killed — all because some dumb Anarch didn't cover her tracks or act with caution. This is nothing short of criminal in the Anarch world, where libertas is a guiding ideal. To promote the idea that your own freedom should be utterly respected, you must respect the freedom and individual rights of others, both mortal and vampire alike. Keeping the Masquerade benefits both, even if the humans don't know it.

Boons

The custom of vampiric boons predates both the Camarilla and the Sabbat, originating with the Followers of Set long before the revolution of the 1400s. Vampires, as eternal creatures, rarely have long-term need for items such as money, cars, or other trinkets. When you can Dominate someone to let you have her possessions or use Presence to sway wealthy "patrons," what real power do these things have between vampires? Certainly, these items are useful, but when one is facing the prospect of hundreds of years of eternal life, something that isn't unique can lose a bit of luster — and something that's easy to acquire has no value as a bargaining chip.

Using personal boons as currency is ingrained into vampiric culture, and most Anarchs are canny enough to see the necessity of participating in such an economy, even if they don't like it. Anarchs tend to be significantly stingier about offering boons to Camarilla members, as they fear giving elders any kind of control, but they absolutely do engage in the custom. At times, prestation resolves issues where violence would cost Anarch lives or territory. For that alone, it is worthwhile.

Hazing You In

While the specifics of an Anarch hazing differ from domain to domain, all methods are deliberately dangerous, and most require the candidate to perform a bold and blatant act of defiance against an outside force, be it Sabbat or Camarilla. Hazing tests how far a candidate will go. The deeds performed are meant to ensure that sires, past allies, and Camarilla authorities will revile and turn their backs on the individual, so the newbie cannot easily return to those societies. Being hazed cements a newcomer's acceptance in the Anarch Movement and ensures loyalty enforced by the bond of external disdain.

The system of favors and debts creates an invisible web of reliance that helps to ensure weaker vampires are protected by stronger ones whom they owe — but also opens those weaker vampires to be used as pawns. It's a delicate business, particularly among the Anarchs.

The Measure of a Boon

Boons are quantified as Trivial, Minor, Major, Blood and Life Boons, and unlike status, can be exchanged between the Anarch and the Camarilla sects, as well as with independent vampires. Anarchs do not participate in boon exchanges with members of the Sabbat. For more information on measuring the indebtedness of a particular boon, see **Chapter 9: The Camarilla, page 395**.

Call to Arms

Traditionally, the residents of an Anarch territory are willing to put aside their differences and work together when there is a genuine threat. It is a custom that likely descends from the Brujah clan's unwritten law of brotherhood, where one member can call upon another for aid when times are difficult.

A Baron of an Anarch territory can issue a Call to Arms, and she must name a specific target that is currently putting the territory in real danger. This may be an individual, such as "Jordan Hoss, the vampire hunter," or it may be a relatively specific group, such as "the Phoenix Camarilla court" or "local members of Clan Tremere."

A territory can have only one Call to Arms active at any time. Other sects see the Call to Arms as an open declaration of war and will respond aggressively when the Call to Arms is targeted against their members.

All Anarchs who participate and significantly contribute in a Call to Arms receive the fleeting status trait *Loyal* after the Call to Arms ends. Decided by popular acclaim (or the Baron's discretion when popular acclaim is divided), the individual who contributed the most, or was the most effective in removing the threat, also receives the fleeting status *Hardcore*.

Marked

Although Anarchs do not technically have an equivalent of the Camarilla's blood hunt or the Sabbat's Wild Hunt, an Anarch can become *Forsaken*. Further, Anarchs who truly cause trouble or betray the movement, or individuals who are infiltrators from another sect, can also be *Marked* by the Anarch Movement.

Naming another Anarch *Marked* is the sole province of a Baron, and it is not an authority used lightly. Barons typically announce such only when the offender has been proven to be working against the Anarch Movement as a whole; this announcement cannot be based on a Baron's personal vendetta. The *Mark* extends past a single territory, denoting the individual as a threat to the entire sect.

Political and Social Plots

"Camarilla members want to be tyrants.
Sabbat want to be gods. Anarchs…we just want to be human.
If we lose our Humanity, does it matter what else we become?"

– Simply Simon

Anarch plots and motivations revolve around the mortal world more than those of either the Camarilla or the Sabbat. Where the Camarilla sees mortals as tools and the Sabbat sees them as cattle, the vampires of the Anarch Movement are not so removed from their original lives. They often still have living parents, siblings, and friends. Some Anarchs even continue their original mortal lives for as long as possible and are still enmeshed in mortal politics, business, and other concerns, maintaining the Masquerade with even their closest mortal companions. Such vampires are humanists, and they have a broader perspective on the supernatural world, because they haven't forgotten their origins or the time when they did not know vampires existed.

Anarchs are the most divisive and internally disparate sect, and there are few absolutes when considering members of the Movement. Joining the Anarch cause is a deeply personal choice, and one that will cost a vampire a great deal. They are scapegoats for the Camarilla, pawns for the independent clans, and prey for the Sabbat. It's a hell of a tough existence to lead. There are plenty of internal conflicts, both ideological and personal, and it's hard enough just to survive.

Anarchs deal with the Camarilla often and must take into account those scary, hoary old elders who guide and manipulate the sect. As young Embraces, most neonates see the phenomenal power elders wield and don't know how they can compete. But modern technology, mortal influence, and sheer audacity can be powerful too, and a clever Anarch will quickly figure out how to use those to her advantage.

At their most basic level, Anarchs want what everyone wants: safety, comfort, and meaning. The difference is that Anarchs have no real channels by which to acquire these things in the vampiric world. They have no real hierarchy, no stability, and very few avenues of advancement other than to seize what they want through force. They need

not necessarily use physical force; not all Anarchs are leather-wearing motorcycle gang members, though that is a common stereotype. Some are legal sharks, out for themselves. Others are smooth-talking businessmen, willing to make a buck from someone else's misfortune.

Dealing with the Camarilla

Associations between the Camarilla and the Anarch Movement are tense and complex, ranging from calm alliance to bitter disdain. All Anarchs are bound by the terms of the Convention of Thorns (and some have adopted the Edict of Succession), but that does not mean they willingly accept the Camarilla's yoke. The two groups are very different, and Anarchs often enjoy playing on those distinctions to make Camarilla members uncomfortable.

Anarchs fight the power using the most effective tool they have: technology. Violence is a secondary weapon, to be employed when necessary to make a point. Both are effective, but time has proven that a clever Anarch lives longer than a rampaging one. That said, plenty of Anarchs resort to violence first and ask questions later, especially where the Camarilla is concerned.

After the destruction during the Nights of Turmoil, Anarchs realized that they can no longer afford to ignore mortal threats — but they can use them to their advantage. More than any other sect, Anarchs know how to manipulate human technology and communications, pointing mortal hunters like a man steers a runaway vehicle. Anarchs cannot stop hunters, but they can help to ensure that the right people – such as Camarilla elders – are the ones most often targeted. Anarchs specifically target those elders who prove intractable in their hatred or disdain for the younger generations. They leave elders alone if they show even a hint of willingness to negotiate. Such tactics skirt the edge of the Masquerade, and Anarchs who engage in them must be exceptionally careful — or they will have more than mortal hunters to worry about.

Many Anarchs now focus specifically on politics, rather than random mayhem. Politically minded Anarchs are making deals and alliances like never before, sometimes approaching elders whom they would have avoided like the sun a mere 10 years ago. The Anarch Movement as a whole has begun taking an active interest in the boon trade, not merely among itself, but also with outsiders. Ambassadors are far more common than they were before Nights of Turmoil, and more than one elder has been stunned by an Anarch's newfound political savvy — especially when combined with more traditional steel-hard fists. When politics fail (and they often do), the Anarchs go back to what they do best: cause havoc.

Anarch Views on the Traditions

The First Tradition: The Masquerade

On this point, at least, no argument exists. The vast majority of Anarchs fully recognize the importance of maintaining the vampiric illusion of nonexistence.

The Second Tradition: Domain

Generally, Anarchs prefer to give a vampire leader only the respect she's earned, disdaining any sign of bias regarding age or clan. Those Anarchs who accept the Edict of Succession stand on the Tradition of Domain to keep Camarilla vampires from running roughshod over Anarch territory (and vice versa), but on the whole, most Anarchs ignore the Tradition of Domain unless they are given a very good reason to fear or respect the person in charge — whether Camarilla or Anarch.

The Third Tradition: Progeny

Popular opinion among Anarchs states that Camarilla elders enforce the Tradition of Progeny purely to maintain authority. By preventing young vampires from Embracing, the elders guarantee that the subgroup cannot grow large enough to threaten the balance of power. However, modern neonates insist that procreation is a basic right.

The Fourth Tradition: Accounting

In a society based on freedom and meritocracy, how can one vampire be held responsible for the actions of another? Would a mortal justice system imprison a parent because her son committed murder?

The Fifth Tradition: Hospitality

It's one thing to respect the leader of a territory; it's another to keep her constantly apprised of your movement. Freedom is compromised when too many people hold the reins of power.

The Sixth Tradition: Destruction

Suspicious of power, Anarchs split down the middle on this Tradition. On one hand, leaders should decide punishments when punishment is appropriate. On the other, if a vampire is obviously guilty, mob justice works just as well. Those Anarchs who accept no authority will never agree with either argument, of course.

Crossover Scenarios: Anarchs and the Camarilla

Anarchs within a Camarilla chronicle should struggle for power against a venerable societal machine that crushes them beneath rusted cogs. However, despite the gun-waving

and shouting, Anarchs are perfectly capable of manipulating the manipulators. The vast majority of Anarchs respect the Masquerade and the sanctity of Elysium, but they see no need for the inflexible division of power — and that is what they struggle to change or escape.

Players portraying Anarchs in a Camarilla chronicle could take a few notes from the civil unrest of the 1960s, or the current struggle for gay rights. An Anarch might spring from the national liberation revolution, the suffrage movement, or the Civil War. The hypocrisy and usury of the Camarilla is still very much in effect, and those injustices parallel many found in the history of the real world.

Of course, not all Anarchs are interested in slow, methodical change. Some insist on immediate change, and they're prepared to back up their demands with violence. Caitiff, more prevalent in the Anarchs, can rebel against Camarilla bigotry; Lasombra *antitribu* and Anarchs Embraced by the Sabbat might discover the Camarilla scheming to destroy them on suspicion of being infiltrators. Still, keep in mind the Anarchs' ideological aims and almost-unreachable ideals; Anarchs are not blind monstrosities of destruction. The revolution isn't one of murderous eradication. It's a call to change among creatures that are innately static, a modernization of ancient traditions, an ideological war surrounded by the difficulties of existing within a tremendously dangerous world.

Dealing with the Sabbat

"There's only one way to survive the darkness: make it fear you."

— Smiling Jack

Although they originate from the same idealistic vision of freedom born during the revolt, the vast majority of Anarchs bitterly oppose the Sabbat and everything it stands for. Once, Anarchs thought the Sabbat might be the answer to their desires: a society of freedom, governed by merit and not age. It sounded like the Sword of Caine was far closer to living the Anarch ideal than the actual Movement. The more the Camarilla ground its heel on its sub-sect, the more the Anarchs were willing to listen to Sabbat lies. However, during the Nights of Turmoil, the Sabbat turned on its erstwhile Anarch allies, assuming that Caine was returning and it no longer needed to hide its treacherous truths. Anarchs were slaughtered: diablerized, or worse, poached and forced to undergo the Vaulderie, chaining them to the Sabbat with bonds of blood in a hideous form of emotional slavery.

After the mortal hunters took a major bite out of the Sabbat hierarchy, the sect has become much quieter and more cunning — but no less dangerous, and Anarch opinions about the Sabbat have radically changed. The Sabbat is no longer to be envied or emulated; the Sabbat is the enemy. Unfortunately, a minority of Anarchs resist this judgment or refuse to acknowledge it. To some, the Sword of Caine's call is a powerful one.

As a whole, Anarchs find the Sabbat's holy war against the Antediluvians to be utter bunk. The Vaulderie is enslavement, paths are abhorrent, and the cruel abuse of mortals for rituals leaves most Anarchs sickened by the Sword of Caine. The Anarchs weren't surprised that the mythical Caine didn't return when the Red Star rose. He's a pretense, a fable told to childer by their elders in an attempt to make them afraid of the monster under the bed, and the Sabbat are fools.

One of the problems with having any sort of dealings with the Sabbat is the fact that it is just as willing to use (and abuse) Anarchs as it is to harm the Camarilla. According to Sabbat doctrine, a vampire is either Sabbat or she's food, and an Anarch soul is just as tempting to diablerize as any other. Giving Sabbat vampires a foothold in an Anarch domain is like playing with fire. While some infrequent, dangerous, and temporary alliances exist between an Anarch gang and a Sabbat pack, such things are rare and exceptionally short-lived, and rarely end well for the Anarchs.

For their part, the Sabbat loves to infiltrate Anarch territories. Its members snoop through gangs, slaughtering rogue Lasombra who escaped its vicious Embraces. They seek out territorial weaknesses, poaching and enslaving Anarchs who might be useful to the Sword of Caine. Sabbat pretending to be Anarchs infiltrate Camarilla gatherings, blaming any violence or assassination attempts on the Anarch Movement. Every time they manage it, more innocent Anarchs die — while the Sabbat sits back and laughs at Anarch naiveté.

Tzimisce

Only a scant number of Tzimisce ever flee the Sword of Caine; the discipline of Vicissitude is horrific and repellent to vampires adhering to Humanity, and therefore, Tzimisce fledglings do not survive well outside the Sabbat.

Free Lasombra

The Sabbat's devastation at the hands of mortal hunters resulted in one interesting thing: many mass-Embraced childer escaped indoctrination in the sect. Although the Sabbat has toned down its use of mass-Embrace in recent years, now more than ever, these lost vampires can be found among the Anarchs. Most of these individuals were sired by *antitribu* of common clans; such vampires settle into the Anarch Movement easily, with no lingering problems.

Others, like the freed childer of the Lasombra clan, have a harder time hiding their lineage. There's no reason they should, not from the Anarchs, at least. The Anarch Movement welcomes such young neonates; they are seen as assets. After what they've seen and experienced, these brave fledglings have every reason to adopt the cause of libertas. They know what it's like to have their life destroyed by a callous sire and to barely escape blood-slavery and rabid fanaticism. These vampires fight for independence even more fiercely than long-time members of the Movement.

Such vampires know almost instinctively that they're in danger, and when the Sabbat realizes one has escaped to find freedom among the Anarchs, it turns resources to the recapture (or destruction) of that fledgling. This doesn't stop the Anarchs from adopting free Lasombra; they're more than happy for an excuse to destroy any Sabbat who come hunting their new Anarch sisters and brothers.

Crossover Scenarios: Anarchs and the Sabbat

While the Camarilla is willing to tolerate Anarchs, the Sabbat is far more likely to forcibly convert or diablerize them. The Sabbat has no use for whimpering childer begging for equality; take what you want, destroy what you can't take, and survive — or be killed in turn. Sabbat packs enjoy tormenting mortals — especially the families and mortal friends of troublesome Anarchs. Due to Sabbat fanaticism and the Vaulderie, Anarchs have almost no chance to convert recruits from the ranks of the Sword of Caine or to infiltrate and rescue poached members of the Movement.

Anarchs have little choice but to resist and combat the Sabbat, and many members of the Movement enjoy such live-or-die battles. At least the Camarilla understands business, political ideology, and the realities of living among mortals; despite the Nights of Turmoil, the Sabbat are far more likely to slaughter humans than to live in peace among them.

The Sabbat provides a good antagonist for Anarch chronicles, particularly as a balance for effete political struggles in Camarilla salons. The Sabbat often tries to poach Anarchs for its own use (especially those who seem particularly capable or talented) and occasionally hunts them like jackals at the edge of the herd. For those who want to negotiate, the Sabbat are willing to abuse the Anarchs' good nature, slipping among their ranks in the hopes of getting a shot at a Camarilla elder — and then leaving the Anarchs to take the blame.

Crossover Scenarios: Dealing with the Independents

The various independent clans and organizations are an Anarch's best hope of fair treatment. With little to gain and a potential ally at their door, these groups are often willing to treat Anarchs with a little bit of respect. However, even the youngest vampire knows that everyone's out for themselves, and these groups have their own agendas. Tread lightly, but realize there is solid potential for gain.

Followers of Set

Sometimes the Anarch Movement gets desperate enough to ally with this untrustworthy clan, only to discover that its initial distrust was warranted. Double-crossing others is common and expected from Setites, so Anarchs have learned to be careful when dealing with them. Further, the Setites' religion, worshipping their Antediluvian, Set, is no less fanatic than the Sabbat's. The modernistic Anarch mindset can't agree that Set is a god (more likely, he's a really old, powerful vampire who likes the attention). This difference of opinion, as well as the Setites' general disregard of mortals, causes significant roadblocks, preventing alliances between the two groups.

Regardless, there are many Setites among the Anarchs. These rogues have left their clan and temples, preferring ideological freedom to the dogma and forced worship of Set. They are universally humanists, the result of recent Embraces. Such Setites rarely associate with their parent clan and prefer to rely on their gangs for survival and community.

Giovanni

The Giovanni Promise kept that clan from working openly with the Camarilla, but that's no longer the case. Forbidding any kind of politics or interference made the Giovanni passive watchers who couldn't interact with the real goings-on or make any kind of significant profit from vampire politics. Even where the Giovanni haven't yet come to their senses and thrown off the shackles of the Promise, the Anarchs are under no obligation to uphold treaties made by Camarilla elders. Their duty to the Camarilla is spelled out clearly: protect the Masquerade, period.

Anarchs realize that the Giovanni clan are necromancers, ghoul slavers, and incestuous bastards. They don't trust the Giovanni as far as a Malkavian could throw them. Still, sometimes you need allies, and the Giovanni are known to always make good on their deals.

Assamites

Long ago, the Assamite clan was staunchly allied with the Anarchs. This alliance wasn't caused by any kind of ideological bonding, but because the Anarch Revolt was an excellent excuse to attack and diablerize elders. Nevertheless, Anarchs and Assamites both hold grudges against the Camarilla, and both hold a higher regard for Humanity than either the Camarilla or the Sabbat. In these two issues, the Anarchs and the Assamites see eye to eye.

However, most modern Anarchs abhor the practice of diablerie, and Assamites revere it. Assamites accept contracts on Anarchs, and no amount of good will between two individuals can overcome a direct order from the Mountain. Allying with or making friends with a Mountain-loyal Assamite is like playing a game of Russian roulette. On occasion, Anarchs find an unaffiliated (or schismatic) Assamite and adopt her into the Movement, hiding her true nature in order to keep her free of Alamut's commands.

Famous Faces of the Anarch Movement

Anarchs gain prestige and reputation through their actions. A few are internationally known, either for their vehemence, their cunning, or their prowess in battle. While most Anarchs scoff at the idea of obeying someone just because she's well-known, the following Anarchs hold a great deal of respect among the Movement. Through their words and actions, they can sway Anarch temperament on an international scale.

Batu

(Gangrel, 11th generation)

Batu's tribe of Gangrel identify themselves as *Anda* and trace their ancestry to Mongolian travelers and warriors. Although her precise date of Embrace is unknown, Batu is one of the oldest Anarchs roaming the Americas, and she is well known as a powerful and dangerous warrior. She works openly with Assamites, but her loyalty has always unquestionably been to the Anarch Movement — so much so that she murdered her lover with her own claws when he threatened to return to the Mountain and sell out her fellows.

Frederick Douglas Nash, Ph.D.

(Brujah, 10th generation)

Nash is the Adjunct Professor of Philosophy & Political Science at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, where he spends his evenings urging the fractious Anarchs of his area to unify and stabilize the city. More of a philosopher than a warrior, Frederick has never been known to raise a hand to fight unless it was absolutely warranted. A handsome young African-American, Frederick is one of the Movement's foremost scholars and political philosophers, and his advice is often called on by Anarchs across the globe.

Juggler

(Brujah, 8th generation)

One of the most potent Anarchs by blood, Juggler is not seen as the equal of other famous Anarchs. He was in command of the Anarchs in Chicago before the Nights of Turmoil, and he lost that city in a bloody fight — eventually fleeing the city to save his own life. Although he still has friends among the Movement, his name has become something of a curse. This disgraced Anarch will have to atone to be accepted once again.

Lorderes of Tyre

(Malkavian, 9th generation)

Lorderes is an evangelical Anarch who proposes a "new moral perspective" on the myth of Caine. Her treatises state that Caine is innocent of the crime of Abel's death, and that God, who is omnipotent and all-knowing, both caused and allowed the murder to occur. Therefore, God created vampires deliberately, from conception to modern times. The curse is unjust, and if that is true, then vampires are not by default "evil." The vampiric Beast is a creation of a controlling God, trying to rob vampires of free will. She proposes that grace is a native human state, and that vampires can reject the condemnation of God and seek salvation on their own terms, outside of (and even against) divine will.

Marguerite Foccart

(Brujah, 9th generation)

Adopted progeny of Robin Leeland (sire of Patricia Tyler), Margerite is the undead lover of the famous Anarch, Jeremy MacNeil. Marguerite was born in a wealthy noble family

and Embraced just days before the spark of the French Revolution caught fire. She moved to the New World during the American Revolution, but became disillusioned with the colonies, returning to France until the Second Anarch Revolt began. At that point, she went to Los Angeles and fought to bring about the Free State. She still resides in northern California, although her precise whereabouts are unknown. It is unknown whether Jeremy MacNeil has met his Final Death or simply prefers to work through Marguerite; she has refused to answer all questions regarding his location, stating that it is too dangerous for Jeremy to work openly these nights.

Salvador Garcia

(Brujah, 9th generation)

Salvador is the author of "An Anarch Manifesto," a pamphlet on the Anarch Movement, which has been quietly distributed to Kindred via encoded electronic means. In it, he tells the tale of his Embrace and his involvement in the revolt that created the Anarch Free State, and he explains the concept of libertas to new generations of vampires. He currently resides among the gangs (his retainers) in the heart of Los Angeles' Hispanic community. He is involved in supplying equipment and riot training to many revolutionary groups in the United States and abroad. Because he is the individual who murdered Don Sebastian (the last Prince of Los Angeles), he has earned the special enmity of Justicar Di Zagreb. That Justicar has spread many rumors that Salvador is a repeated diablerist, and he is said to be negotiating to have Salvador placed on the Camarilla's notorious Red List of most-wanted criminals.

Smiling Jack

(Brujah, 10th generation)

Smiling Jack is a Brujah brawler, ex-pirate, influential Iconoclast, and notable Anarch. A presumably powerful and influential ancilla, Smiling Jack is one of the most infamous of all Anarchs. Smiling Jack is a clever planner, and his influence within the Anarch Movement is strong, though he absolutely refuses any formal leadership role. He acts as a mentor to many young vampires and is willing to show a newbie the ropes so she can survive and benefit the Anarch Movement. He has a strong dislike for the Camarilla in general and the Ventrue in particular. He doesn't fight openly, but his mischievous and underhanded tactics are legendary among young Anarchs.

Thomas Jurras

(Toreador, 10th generation)

Thomas Jurras is the leader of a significant gang of Anarchs known as the Night Crew. This gang makes its home in Birmingham, Alabama, and its territory is one of the strongest Anarch domains in the United States. Thomas was a strong proponent of accepting the Edict of Succession, and his domain is governed by a system fashioned to resemble modern American democracy. He has risen to power in the last few years by defeating the Sabbat on multiple occasions; it is known that the Sabbat would pay a great deal to see his Final Death.

Tyler

(Brujah, 7th generation)

The woman known as Tyler, born Patricia of Bollingbroke, is one of the most infamous Anarchs of all. Embraced during the Peasant's Revolt in 14th-century England, she was involved in the attack on Hardestat the Elder's castle — and she is rumored to be the one who diablerized that Ventrue noble. One of the few true elders in the Anarch Movement (by age and by generation), she is a constant voice promoting violence and upheaval against the Camarilla. In modern nights, she has been seen in Chicago and along the East Coast, taking advantage of the chaos in those regions to advance her personal goals.

Valentene

(Lasombra, 12th generation)

An escapee of a vicious Sabbat mass-Embrace during the Nights of Turmoil, Anarchs found Valentene in Cleveland, Ohio, and hazed her into the gang almost immediately. She has spent most of her last decade in the fractious East Coast. Bold, outspoken, and extremely cunning, she has managed to evade Sabbat attempts to destroy or control her, and she has gathered a great deal of respect and protection from her fellows among the Movement. She is seen as an example of nature versus nurture philosophy; not all Lasombra are Sabbat, nor are they all innately evil, as the Camarilla would claim.

Those Who Serve

Considering that the very concept of a blood-slave is diametrically opposed to everything Anarchs stand for, it's shocking how many Anarchs possess ghouls even though their sect disdains the practice. Even the Camarilla, which has used ghouls for hundreds of years, does not keep as many

servants, and elders at least have customs and protocols by which a ghoul can earn the Embrace and freedom from a domitor's bond. Anarchs have no such constraints, and it shows. More than one Anarch has been forced to let some of her ghouls lapse, simply because she couldn't spend all her time hunting enough blood to maintain them all.

Along those lines, it's worth noting that Anarch ghouls have a relatively high turnover rate. It's a lot easier to abandon a ghoul than a childe, and as soon as that girlfriend, drinking buddy, or whoever gets to be more trouble than they're worth (or just is no longer interesting), all the Anarch needs to do is stop feeding them. Unfortunately, such lapsed ghouls can be massive threats to the Masquerade — and there's nothing worse than a spiteful ex-girlfriend who was once bound to you by blood.

Reputation

Even though it espouses change and modernism, most members of the Anarch Movement don't want utter anarchy. Most seek to update the system to a modern one, and they claim that the Camarilla system of social justice simply doesn't work.

As a whole, Anarchs dislike the Camarilla's status system. It provides rewards and political power based on a social class, and that runs contradictory to the Anarch philosophy of libertas. Instead, an Anarch's status is her *reputation*, garnered through her deeds and long service to the Anarch Movement, rather than by some divine right granted by a vampire's clan, generation, or age.

Anarchs respect one another's reputation, as they realize it is the reward given for deeds performed on behalf of the sect, and represents ideals and activities given credence by the group as a whole. Anarchs do play symbels, both as duels and as ordeals, though they tend to prefer the latter — particularly when the challenge reinforces a group mentality or encourages members to trust and believe in one another.

Reputation is a measure of an Anarch braggadocio and of the deeds she has accomplished. While Anarchs call it "reputation," the mechanics use the general status system: a standard in Vampire: The Masquerade. Anarchs simply codify status differently, offer it differently, and think about it less as a measure of one's standing in polite society and more as a list of the deeds they have accomplished — and continue to accomplish. Anarch society is never static; thus, its members have more fleeting status traits and fewer abiding status traits. Anarchs gain status primarily through the system of popular acclaim, rather than via grants from patrons or taking political station, and they absolutely do not reward (or punish) a vampire's prominence based on her generation. Reputation is loose and flexible among the Anarchs, and most do not focus on it in the same manner as members of the Camarilla. It's a bragging tool, a method of showing that you are active and engaged in the Movement, and nothing more.

For more information on the overall status system, and symbels, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 310**.

Popular Acclaim

As an alteration to the status system, any member of the Anarch Movement physically present at a game session may be nominated for fleeting status by the Baron or the Constable, based on that Anarch's deeds. If a majority vote (comprised of at least three Anarchs) agrees, the individual gains a fleeting status chosen by the populous. This does not include wholly deed-based status, such as *Triumphant* or *Victorious*, which must be earned by specific action. A character can receive only one fleeting status in this manner per game.

Status Traits

Accepted

To be *Accepted* in the Anarch setting is to be *Committed*.

- Being *Committed* proves that you have been hazed into the Anarch Movement and are considered a full member of the Anarchs. You can use your Anarch status on any other *Committed* Anarch who has been in your physical presence within the last 30 days.

Anarch Abiding Status Traits

Anarchs use the following additional abiding status traits:

Mandate (abiding)

As a leader among the Anarchs, you have been given power by a popular mandate. You are supported by the will of the people.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Mandate*, you can command the exile of another Anarch, forcing her to leave your territory. So long as you hold this status, that individual may not enter your territory (or a specific location within that territory, as you choose) until you relent and allow the incursion. If the exiled character enters that location, she immediately gains the negative status *Loser*.

- **Spent:** You can expend this status trait to give another Anarch the fleeting status *Connected* or *Preacher*; to give or remove the negative status *Loser*, *Marked,* or *Warned*; or to give (but not remove) the negative status *Cherry*. You can also expend *Mandate* to issue a Call to Arms against a specific individual or group.

Moniker (abiding)

You are a member of a famous Anarch gang. Moreover, you are commonly attributed to be one of the most important members of that gang, responsible for its fame (or infamy). Other members of the gang may be proud of the group's renown, but your name is synonymous with its moniker.

- **Passive:** You receive a +1 bonus to your defensive test pools versus uses of Intimidation and Leadership, including supernatural power pools based on those skills. While you are within 10 steps of another vampire who possesses the *Moniker* merit (and status) for your gang, you gain an additional +1. This benefit is cumulative to a maximum of 5.
- **Spent:** This status has no spend bonus and cannot be expended.

Warrant (abiding)

You are granted the solemn duty to render punishment to those Anarchs who break the law of the territory or who violate the Masquerade.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Warrant*, you may issue orders in combat to any Anarch currently within your territory (including the Baron) and expect to have those orders obeyed. Those Anarchs who disobey your direct order in combat automatically gain the negative status *Loser*.
- **Spent:** You can expend this status trait to give another Anarch the fleeting status *Thug* or *Veteran*, to give (but not remove) the negative status *Cherry*, or to order the punishment of an Anarch according to the law of your territory. Those individuals who do not accept punishment in this manner receive the negative status *Disgraced* and the negative status *Loser*.

Anarch Fleeting Status Traits

Anarchs use the following additional fleeting status traits:

Connected (fleeting)

You are well known as a trusted asset, capable of providing necessary resources, be it money, equipment, information, or influence-based favors.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Connected*, you can call upon one of the following backgrounds once per game without expending that background: Allies, Contacts, Herd, or Resources.
- **Spent:** If you expend *Connected*, you can add 2 levels to an influence you possess, for the purpose of a single use of that influence.

Hardcore (fleeting)

You have gone above and beyond the call of duty, placing yourself directly in harm's way and even risking Final Death in order to complete a mission of great importance or to defend another Anarch.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Hardcore*, you gain a +1 bonus to your test pool when comparing to see if you have achieved an exceptional success. This bonus is not cumulative, even if you possess more than one *Hardcore* status trait.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Hardcore* to perform a combat maneuver, rather than expending a Willpower. You cannot apply both a combat maneuver purchased with Willpower and one purchased with *Hardcore* to the same action. This bonus is not cumulative, even if you possess more than one status trait of *Hardcore*.

Preacher (fleeting)

You are recognized for teaching other vampires about libertas and the ideals of the Anarch Revolt, gathering recruits or defusing tensions within the sect and with those outside it.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Preacher*, your words cannot break the Masquerade. If a common mortal overhears you talking, she will assume you are speaking in code or that she simply misunderstood what you said. This effect will not help you cover for such verbal breaches if the mortal already knows about vampires.
- **Spent:** If you expend *Preacher* while inspiring another individual about the Anarch cause, that character resists the effects of any currently active emotion-based power, or any form of blood bond, for the next five minutes.

Thug (fleeting)

You are known for being a strong-arm for the sect. Your area of expertise may be physical, or it may be a less tangible form of expression.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Thug*, your Intimidate skill affects Stock NPCs with a rating of up to 3, rather than 2.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Thug* to sneak a one-handed weapon past detection (even supernatural or technological means).

Veteran (fleeting)

You have entered a conflict on behalf of the sect (a siege, pitched battle, or similar major undertaking, not just a raid or a minor brawl), and comported yourself well on behalf of the Anarch Movement.

- **Passive:** While you possess *Veteran*, Stock NPCs who are following your character's instruction gain an additional simple action per turn. Stock NPCs can gain benefit from only one *Veteran* status per turn.
- **Spent:** You can expend *Veteran* to receive an additional downtime action between game sessions.

Anarch Negative Status Traits

Anarchs use the following additional negative status traits:

Cherry (negative)

You exhibit a dangerous naiveté about the Movement, Kindred society, goals, or unlife in general. Your inexperience has caused serious problems or harm to your fellow Anarchs.

- **Censure:** While you carry the *Cherry* negative status, you are the low rung on the ladder of the Anarch Movement social order. You may not speak at gang or territory meetings unless first spoken to, and you do not get a vote on topics being discussed by the gathered Anarchs of your territory. Further, a character who possesses the *Cherry* trait suffers the lesser status ban.

  Once applied to a character, this negative status lasts for six games or three months, whichever is longer. It cannot be removed by other uses of status.
- **Punishment:** If a character with the *Cherry* negative status is found to break the censure of this status, she gains the additional negative status trait *Warned*, and the three month/six game duration of *Cherry* is reset.

Marked (negative)

Through your action or inaction, the entire Anarch Movement has suffered. Perhaps you have been hunted by another sect, perhaps you defected and committed treason, or perhaps you attempted to infiltrate the Anarchs on behalf of an outside organization. In any case, this censure is never given lightly.

- **Censure**: As an exception to the rule that status cannot cross sects, characters who are not *Committed* can receive the *Marked* negative status, so long as they were *Committed* at some point within the last year and a day.

  You are not welcome in Anarch lands. If you cross into territory controlled by Anarchs, you will be harassed, taunted, and even outright attacked. Any Anarch who publicly insults a *Marked* character gains the fleeting status trait *Praised*. Multiple characters can gain status for insulting a *Marked* individual, but no character can benefit from a single individual's *Marked* censure than once per game. The *Marked* status lasts until removed by a unanimous vote of Anarchs who live in the territory where the character was originally given the negative status.
- **Punishment:** While you carry the *Marked* status, you are a target for Anarch rage. If you enter any Anarch territory, your car may be stolen, your mortal acquaintances attacked, and your resources purloined. When in Anarch territory, you do not have access to your backgrounds or influences. If you haven in Anarch territory, that haven will be discovered by local Anarchs within two nights. If you bring Retainers into Anarch territory, they will be destroyed the minute they leave your side.

Loser (negative)

The Anarch Movement considers you a failure, someone who cannot be trusted to live up to her word and cannot be relied upon when trouble comes knocking.

- **Censure:** While you carry the *Loser* (occasionally called Mongo or Gonk) negative status, you are barely considered a member of the Anarch sect. You suffer the greater status ban and must wear a visible sign of your failure at all times. This badge of dishonor is chosen by the person punishing you with this status and may range from wearing a specific item, to maintaining a physical alteration such as the loss of a finger, or having the word "failure" tattooed across your forehead. This status lasts for two games or one month, whichever is longer.
- **Punishment:** If a character with the *Loser* status is discovered by another Anarch to have broken the censure of this status, the holder of this status suffers a -3 penalty to her defense test pools against any *Committed* Anarch for the rest of the night. Further, she automatically gains the *Disgraced* status.

Status Bans

Status bans in the Anarch Movement reflect the sect's fundamental ideals. The most important societal ideals are those of freedom, humanity, and modernism. Individuals who willingly give up their Humanity or who negligently allow humans to learn about vampires are considered untrustworthy and unworthy of glory. Further, those who commit diablerie or create slaves with vampiric blood are scorned.

Unlike the more organized sects, Anarchs do not have a prescribed manner of removing or lessening a status ban. Anarch society has shifted and evolved over the centuries, and its status bans have changed as well. During the Anarch Revolt and the 16th century, diablerie was not the offense to the sect that it is today, and the custom of Call to Arms did not exist. In a century, the Movement as a whole might alter its stance on any of a number of issues, adding or removing them from the list of items that cause a member to be mistrusted. The best thing an Anarch can do when she suffers under a status ban is to hold tight to the ideals of the Anarch Movement as her personal ethics dictate, and see what the future brings.

For more information on status bans, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 313.**

Lesser Bans:

- Members of the Anarch Movement who have ever committed diablerie
- Members of the Anarch Movement who are known to blood bond others (including enslaving ghouls) — this ban lasts while the blood bond exists, plus an additional three months. If this ban is enacted against a specific character twice, it becomes permanent for that character.
- Members of the Anarch Movement who were members of the Camarilla or the Sabbat within the past 10 years

Greater Ban:

- Members of the Anarch Movement on a Path of Enlightenment
- Members of the Anarch Movement who have refused to participate in a local Call to Arms within the past five years
- Members of the Anarch Movement who are responsible for large-scale (and unrepaired) breaches of the Masquerade

Setting-Specific Mechanics

"Freedom is a long, hard road.
But it's the only one worth walkin'."

—Delilah, Constable of Fall City

Anarchs are idealists, modernists, and beatnik philosophers, clinging to the hope that an innately unequal society can be brought into balance. They've been fighting a war of ideas since the 1300s, and for every two steps the Anarchs take forward, they're knocked another step back. In their nightly war for survival, they face more than politics. They must fight ravenous Sabbat, incredibly skilled and well-trained mortal hunters, and vicious ideological arguments within their own sect. The Anarch setting is a rich and fast-paced backdrop for urban fantasy games, tactical strategy scenarios, and philosophical arguments. It can move from the salon to the street in a hot instant, and players had better be ready to keep up.

In keeping with the younger, modernist theme of the setting, players are encouraged to make Neonate characters that have been Embraced within the last 50 years. The occasional Ancillae or Pretender Elder is also appropriate, if they are fairly rare and also Embraced recently — within the last 100 years. Ancient vampires or particularly low-generation elders are inappropriate for the Anarch setting. Although such Anarchs exist, they are best suited as non-player characters, and do not tend to associate with or actively involve themselves in the activities of the Movement in modern nights.

Rarity Adjustments: Clans

The most common clans among the Anarch Movement are the Brujah and the Gangrel. Members of those clans are given special respect for their clan's presence during the First Anarch Revolt and subsequent conflicts. Caitiff are particularly common as well, while Ventrue and Tremere rarely become Anarchs or spend any time with the members of the Movement.

The clan rarity system is designed to reflect the population numbers of various clans in the Anarch setting on a chronicle scale. The appearance of a clan on this list does not mean that a member of that clan can be a *Committed* Anarch, only that a member of the clan or bloodline might appear in the setting. Such individuals are often independent or Autarkis allies (or mercenaries seeking work from the Anarch cause).

Remember that rarity merits count against a character's merit limit of 7 points. For example, if you purchase the Rare Clan merit, you have spent 4 points, and can only buy 3 more points of merits for the same character.

Common Clans (available at no cost):

A setting's common clans are the most appropriate for play. There is no additional cost for playing a clan that is common to your chronicle's setting.

Common clans in the Anarch setting include: Brujah, Caitiff, Gangrel, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Toreador, and Followers of Set.

Uncommon Clans (2 point merit)

Your character is a member of an uncommon clan, one that is not ordinarily found in your chronicle's setting. This clan is not often found, and you may be something of an outsider. You will find few other individuals of your clan within this setting, and you may be afforded fewer benefits than those given proper members of society.

Uncommon clans in the Anarch setting include: Daughters of Cacophony, Giovanni, Lasombra, Ravnos, and Ventrue.

Rare Clans (4 point merit):

Your character is a member of a rare clan, one that is very infrequently found in your chronicle's setting. Such characters may be loners, outcasts, or solitary observers of society, and they may be treated poorly or shunned by the rest of the characters in play (as may be appropriate to the setting).

Rare clans in the Anarch setting include: Assamites, Salubri, Cappadocian (Samedi), and Tremere.

Cappadocian Bloodline Alteration for the Anarch Setting

Cappadocians in the Anarch setting are, by default, members of the Samedi bloodline. Being a member of this bloodline requires no expenditure of merit points once one has purchased the Uncommon Clan merit to play a Cappadocian. If a player should wish to play a non-Samedi Cappadocian, she may spend 6 points to purchase the Restricted Clan merit instead of purchasing the Rare Clan merit.

Restricted Clans (6 point merit):

With this merit you may portray any clan not listed above or any clan-and-bloodline combination that, with application of a Rarity merit, would total more than 7 points. Check with your Storyteller before purchasing this merit. The Storyteller may disallow individual clans or bloodlines that do not mesh well with her setting.

Bloodline Cost Modifications

The following bloodlines are not appropriate for the Anarch setting, and their merit costs increase by 1. This may require the player to spend more than 7 merit points to play the combination of clan and bloodline; in this case, the player should gain permission from her Storyteller and purchase the combination as the Restricted Clan merit.

- Assamite: Vizier, Assamite: Sorcerer, Toreador: Volgirre

Generation and Age

The Anarch Movement is a setting primarily composed of modern, non-elder characters. A player who wishes to purchase the 4th or 5th dots of Generation (Master Elder or Luminary Elder) at character creation must first purchase the merit *Elder of the Revolution* (see **Setting-Specific Merits, page 486**, below).

A player who wishes to play a character Embraced prior to the year 1800 (whether of elder generation or not) must purchase the merit *Old Dog* prior to finalizing a background of that age or older.

Paths of Enlightenment

Anarchs tend to be young, and they tend to be humanists, still very interconnected with the mortal world. Adhering to a Path of Enlightenment is an incredibly difficult thing, and it takes decades of study and dedication to alter one's inner compass from the ethics of Humanity to those of a path. As such, very few Anarchs are on paths. If a player wishes to purchase a Path of Enlightenment for her Anarch-setting character, the path merit costs 4 points, rather than the standard 3.

Setting–Specific Merits

Note that you must remove all sect merits without receiving an experience point (XP) refund if you leave the sect. If a character wants to leave the sect, but possesses a background merit that cannot be removed, the character must be retired.

Dauntless (2 point merit)

Your dedication to the Anarch ideal of libertas goes beyond idealism; freedom is the core of your being, and you cannot stand to be controlled. If you win a test against a user's mind-controlling power (such as Dominate), you are immune to further mind-control powers (of that discipline or any others) from that individual for the rest of the night.

Dhampir (4 point bloodline merit)

A character can only take this merit if she has no dots in Generation. A *dhampir* is the offspring of a mortal and a vampire, causing her to exist in a half-state between life and undeath. It shouldn't be possible, but it is — very, very rarely. By their very nature, dhampir are young, the oldest are no more than 25 years old. Although they are treated like ghouls, Dhampirs are not automatically blood bound and do not have a domitor.

Build your character using the rules for a standard ghoul, except where this merit specifically differs. Dhampirs are supernatural creatures, not mortals. They have no in-clan disciplines and place 7 (rather than the 5 dots normally assigned to ghouls) starting dots in any disciplines they choose. However, a dhampir can never purchase any discipline above the 3rd dot. Dhampir characters have no Beast and can never purchase a path merit. Unlike a ghoul, a dhampir cannot be Embraced; attempts to do so will simply kill the dhampir character.

Ear to the Ground (1 point merit)

During the Nights of Turmoil, the Anarchs tapped into vampire hunter communications, utilizing that information both to avoid hunters and to manipulate them into attacking the Sabbat and the Camarilla. Although some hunter organizations have increased their security measures (and some were not tappable in the first place), you still get advance warning about mortal incursions from your contacts in the Movement. You can spend a downtime action to gain knowledge about mortal hunters in your area, and if you choose, you can feed those hunters information or false leads.

Elder of the Revolution (2 point merit)

This merit must be purchased at character creation. The Anarch Movement primarily consists of young, relatively newly Embraced Neonates and Ancilla. A player who wishes to purchase the 4th or 5th dots of Generation (Master Elder or Luminary Elder) must first purchase the merit *Elder of the Revolution*. If you leave the Anarchs for the Camarilla (or Sabbat), you receive the XP spent on this merit back as a refund, while keeping your current dots of Generation. If a character becomes 7th or 6th generation as a result of in-game diablerie, she does not need to purchase this merit. Note that buying this merit does not indicate the Anarch was also Embraced before 1800; for that, a character must purchase the merit *Old Dog*.

Lion of the Cause (3 point merit)

Wherever the Call to Arms is sounded, you are there. Throughout your history, you have always stood by your fellow Anarchs, holding your ground against any threat and protecting others with your very unlife. You are known and honored by the Anarch Movement for your loyalty; you are considered a Lion among the sect. When you are involved in a Call to Arms against the enemy specifically targeted by that Call to Arms, all Anarchs within a 10-step radius of you receive a +2 wild card bonus to either their Brawl or Melee skill, up to a maximum of your total number of dots in whichever skill they choose.

Moniker (1 point merit)

You are a member of a famous Anarch gang. Moreover, you are commonly attributed to be one of the most important members of that gang, responsible for its fame (or infamy). Other members of the gang may be proud of the group's renown, but your name is synonymous with its moniker. When you purchase this merit, you gain the innate status of your gang name (*Dead Eyes*, *Aces & Eights*, and so forth). This innate status has the same function as the status *Moniker*. If you leave the gang, you must either join another (and change the name of this status) or remove this merit without XP refund.

Moral Compass (1 point merit)

You've spent a great deal of time protecting and retaining your Humanity. With that effort, you have become capable of controlling the vampiric Beast better than most. It's likely that you are still deeply connected to the kine; you may have a night-to-night job or continually engage in mortal society and culture in some other fashion. If you spend 10 minutes counseling a vampire who has gained Beast traits, that vampire can reattempt one degeneration challenge she failed during that night. If she is successful in this second attempt, she removes any penalty she gained from the initial failure of that degeneration challenge. An individual may gain one Moral Compass retest per game session.

Old Dog (1 point merit)

This merit must be purchased at character creation. You were Embraced prior to 1800. Perhaps you were a part of the original Anarch Revolt, or you may even have been present at the signing of the Convention of Thorns. Note that buying this merit does not indicate the Anarch was also Embraced as an elder; if the player wishes to purchase the 4th or 5th dots of Generation (Master Elder or Luminary Elder), she must purchase the merit *Elder of the Revolution*.

Sorcerous Dabbler (2 point merit)

You may not be a dedicated magical practitioner, but you've picked up a few tricks. A character with this merit can perform a few magical rituals even if she has no dots of Thaumaturgy. You do not have to purchase the *Thaumaturgic Training* merit (see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 253**) to buy Sorcerous Dabbler. When a player purchases this merit, she selects a number of Thaumaturgical rituals: either three level 1 rituals, or two level 2 rituals, or one level 3 ritual. The character must then purchase these rituals with XP at standard cost. Anarchs who possess Thaumaturgy are particularly valuable to the Movement (and particularly persecuted by Camarilla Tremere and Sabbat kolduns). Remaining among the Anarchs provides a level of political and personal safety the character would not otherwise

possess. If this character loses her *Committed* acceptance, she is removed from the game, and it is assumed that she has been located and destroyed by her sorcerous enemies.

Tech Junkie (2 point merit)

You are well-known in tech circles; perhaps you were a famous hacker in life, or perhaps your fascination with technology led you to discover the vampire world, forcing a vampire to Embrace you before you became a threat to the Masquerade. You possess newly-invented or still-in-development technological items before they become available to the public. You receive a +2 bonus to test pools involving Computers or Science, and you may spend a downtime action to place either the *Stylish* or *Nondescript* equipment quality on a piece of equipment. This quality may exceed an item's two-quality maximum.

Wild One (1 point merit)

You are well-known in scurrilous circles; perhaps you spend a lot of time among gang-bangers, prison lowlifes, or with some of the more dangerous motorcycle clubs. What's more, this reputation is well-deserved. You receive a +1 bonus to test pools involving Brawl or Drive, and you gain a +2 to defense test pools against powers used by individuals who currently hold a formal position in the Camarilla or the Sabbat.

Setting-Specific Flaws

Bastard Childe (2 point flaw)

This flaw must be purchased at character creation. You were sired without the permission of local authorities. While this isn't technically illegal among Anarchs, the Camarilla frowns on it — and on you. If you'd been created by a member of the Camarilla, you (and your sire) would have certainly been killed. Only the fact that you are an Anarch keeps you from the retribution of Princes and Justicars. If you ever suffer negative status from the Anarch Movement, you also lose access to your backgrounds, as your friends and allies realize you're no longer protected and hide from the potential wrath of your Camarilla enemies. When the negative status is lifted, these backgrounds return.

Black Sheep (2 point flaw)

This flaw must be purchased at character creation. The genealogy of your vampiric blood is distinguished, and includes some of the Camarilla's most well-known names. Your lineage considers you an embarrassment, and you're constantly under pressure to "grow up" and join the Camarilla. Worse, the other Anarchs find such a privileged heritage worthy of ridicule, and you must work twice as hard to prove yourself to them. You lose 1 downtime action a month, due to your constant need to avoid the Camarilla and prove to the Anarchs that you are truly *Committed* to their cause.

Dubious Loyalties (2 point flaw)

Because of something that happened in your past, other Anarchs have a good reason to be suspicious. Perhaps you abandoned your brothers and sisters in combat, perhaps you were once a Camarilla Prince before you joined the Movement, or perhaps you've been duped once too often. Other Anarchs are generally skeptical of your dedication and treat you with less respect. Your maximum fleeting status is 1 less than usual while you have this flaw. This penalty adds to that imposed by any status ban.

Escaped Shovelhead (2 point flaw)

Your sire was a member of the Sabbat. The mental trauma of being a shovelhead lingers, and those horrible memories affect you most when you come into conflict with the monsters you were nearly forced to join. You have a -2 to your mental test pools (including defense pools) when you engage in a challenge against a known member of the Sabbat.

Once Enslaved (2 point flaw)

At some point in your past, you suffered the awful love forced by the blood bond (or the Vaulderie). It terrifies you to think you might endure that feeling again. When faced with a situation where you might become even partially blood-bound (or gain a vinculum rating), you suffer the effects of an immediate psychotic break as though you had a Phobia Derangement relative to that specific individual.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Twelve: Allies and Antagonists

"Do not fear weapons, magic, or strategy. Fear desperation."
— "Blackjack" Jones, werewolf

Vampires are not the only predators in the World of Darkness. Other creatures prowl the shadows and stalk their prey, threatening man and vampire alike. Some are allies, some are enemies, and some defy simple definitions. This chapter presents basic material on some of the other supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness, as well as ideas for using them in a **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade** game.

Stock NPC Generation

Important antagonists should have detailed statistics in order to challenge your players and provide depth to their interactions. However, you don't need a complete character sheet for every bartender, police officer, or street hustler that your players meet. Sometimes, a Storyteller simply needs a few simple antagonists, monsters to fight, or victims for a complex scenario. When creating stock non-player characters, or NPCs, Storytellers can utilize this quick generation system.

NPC Rating

To create a Stock NPC, you must first assign your Stock NPC a rating between 1 and 5. This rating indicates the level of challenge, or difficulty, represented by that NPC. When an NPC makes tests, the NPC's test pool is double its rating. For example, if a bartender with an NPC rating of 3 tries to punch a player, she will have a test pool of 6 for the opposed challenge.

NPC Specializations

Each Stock NPC has a number of specializations equal to its rating. Mortal NPCs can only possess skill specializations. Vampire, ghoul, and other supernatural NPCs (such as werewolves) can choose a combination of skill and discipline specializations.

Skill Specializations

When an NPC attempts a challenge that utilizes one of her skill specializations, she receives a +5 bonus to that test pool. For example, if a bartender with an NPC rating of 3 has a specialization in Brawl, she bids 11 traits (instead of the normal 6) in Brawl-related opposed challenges.

Discipline Specializations

Vampires, ghouls, and other supernaturals can specialize in a discipline. This allows the NPC to possess a number of dots of that discipline equal to her NPC rating. For example, if our 3-point bartender NPC was a ghoul, she could place one of her specializations into Potence. Doing so gives her

access to the first 3 dots of the Potence discipline (Prowess, Might, and Vigor).

Stock NPCs cannot learn elder powers or techniques, and they should have reasonable justification for their supernatural abilities. NPCs who specialize in a path of Necromancy or Thaumaturgy do not gain access to rituals. Stock NPCs do not have attribute focuses and cannot use the focus effects for any discipline powers they possess.

Willpower and Blood

Stock NPCs do not have Willpower and cannot retest failed challenges unless they are capable of overbidding their opponent. Further, mortal and partially mortal Stock NPCs have a Blood pool of 5. Ghouls may spend this Blood on supernatural powers. Fully supernatural creatures (such as vampires) can hold 10 points of Blood. Stock NPCs may spend 1 point of Blood per turn.

Health Levels

Stock NPCs have health levels equal to their NPC rating. For example, an NPC with a rating of 2 has 2 effective health levels. Dealing 2 points of damage to such an NPC will cause her to be knocked out of the fight, but the NPC is not necessarily dead. She may be knocked unconscious, paralyzed, or too wounded to fight, at the Storyteller's discretion.

NPC Types

Certain thematic NPCs often recur in the **World of Darkness**: mortal hunters, powerful mages, vicious werewolves, and more. To help Storytellers utilize such extraordinary NPCs for their chronicles, we've included simple, easy-to-use rules for their creation.

These Stock NPCs provide a framework for using such creatures in a **Vampire: The Masquerade** chronicle, and they are not intended to stand alone or to be integrated as character concepts. Content and more detailed rules featuring other supernatural settings will be forthcoming from *By Night Studios* in the future.

Sample (Vampire) NPC

Nemian the Nosferatu

Stock NPC: Rating 4

Specialties: Brawl, Stealth, Potence, and Obfuscate

Blood: ○○○○○ ○○○○○, spent at 1/turn

Effective Health: ○○○○

Nemian has a test pool of 8 in most challenges. In challenges involving Brawl or Stealth, his test pool is 13. Nemian has access to the first 4 dots of Potence and Obfuscate.

Vampire Hunters

Despite the Masquerade, some mortals inevitably discover that vampires walk among them. A few of these mortals even dare to strike back. Vampire hunters occasionally operate alone, but more often, they band together in their common cause, for greater safety against the powerful creatures of the night.

The Inquisition

The primary organization of mortal vampire hunters is the Society of Leopold, once called the mortal Inquisition, which dates back to the 12th century. Once entirely Catholic (but now open to other faiths), the society is an intensely secretive branch of the Catholic Church charged with ridding the world of vampires, demons, and other supernatural dangers.

The current head of the society, Ingrid Bauer, reinstated torture as a means of learning more about vampires. While some modern Inquisitors balk at such harsh methods, none question that they are fighting evil and must use every advantage at their disposal. Under her tutelage, the society also opened several training camps specifically dedicated to advance their soldiers' skills. They seek to escalate the conflict with the undead and cause significant damage to vampiric control. Any Inquisitor encountered by vampires will be well-trained in combat techniques, schooled in means of incapacitating or destroying vampires, and perhaps even possessed of True Faith.

Special: Inquisition hunters may specialize in the *numina* (a term for mortal magic) of *True Faith*. NPCs who specialize in True Faith gain 1 dot of that numina per NPC rating. For example, a rating 3 Stock NPC with True Faith as one of her specializations gains access to the first 3 dots of True Faith.

True Faith

Those who are truly faithful to their religion, even beyond the zealotry of belief, are occasionally granted special blessings and abilities through their deep connection to the divine. The numina of True Faith is rated on a scale of 1 to 5. The powers afforded to the faithful depend on this rating, as described below.

Remember that these ratings are guidelines; Storytellers may amend them as required to fit the tone of the Stock NPC's faith or to add drama to a chronicle. A character with True Faith cannot be Embraced. If a vampire attempts to Embrace a character with True Faith, the victim will simply die.

- Any character with True Faith may attempt to ward off vampires by brandishing a holy symbol or similar sigil. To do so, the NPC must succeed in an opposed Social challenge against her opponent, using the NPC's rating x2 (+5 if the NPC possesses the Intimidation specialty) versus the vampire's Social attribute + Willpower. If the vampire loses this challenge, she must flee for the remainder of the scene.

•• A person with a True Faith rating of 2 or more may instinctively sense the presence of a vampire. She must be in peaceful, quiet surroundings to do so, but she need not expend an action to gain this knowledge. Note that the user of this power may not have enough knowledge to understand what a vampire is; she simply realizes that something evil is nearby.

••• A person with a True Faith rating of 3 or more is immune to the powers of Dominate and Dementation.

•••• A mortal with a True Faith rating of 4 or more cannot be turned into a ghoul; the blood simply fails to induce change. She is also immune to the powers of Presence and Obfuscate.

••••• A person that has achieved this level of True Faith is so sacred that her mere presence can fill a vampire with self-loathing, terror, and even physical pain. Any vampire who is touched by the faithful or hears her pray, preach, or recite holy words must make a frenzy challenge against a difficulty rating of 30 (an epic difficulty) or flee immediately. A vampire who fails the challenge but is unable to flee is reduced to a gibbering wreck, screaming, sobbing, and begging for her unlife. The vampire cannot take action against the individual with True Faith, but she may defend herself.

In addition, someone with True Faith can pray for an instance of direct divine intervention. On rare and inspiring occasions, the deity answers such a prayer with a miracle. Such miracles should be dramatic and extremely rare, never more than one per story. Prayers that are selfless or seek to aid others have the best chance of being answered. Miracles should be specifically tailored to each unique situation.

The Arcanum

An elite group of occult scholars founded a mortal society of supernatural research and academics in the 19th century, naming it "The Arcanum." Since then, this group has built chapter houses across the world, documenting supernatural phenomena and researching all manner of ancient mysteries. In keeping with its scientific perspective, the Arcanum rarely takes direct action. Arcanum members prefer to observe, despite the fact that some Arcanists possess formidable powers.

Certainly, the Arcanum controls astonishing arcane resources, and while its facts are mixed with folklore, it has an incredible amount of knowledge on all types of supernatural creatures. To protect these resources, the Arcanum screens applicants carefully for any sign of blood bonds or other supernatural control.

In 1910, a Boston chapterhouse burned down as a result of vampiric activity. The incident only increased the fervor of the recent calls within the Arcanum to take a more active role in battling the undead. Still, rather than enter the conflict itself, the Arcanum prefers to pass its information on to more militant vampire hunters, aiding the Inquisition or Project Twilight without endangering its own members' lives.

Special: Many Arcanum hunters have access to *Hedge Magic*. To simulate Hedge Magic, Arcanum hunters may purchase specializations in any of the following disciplines:

- Thaumaturgy: Lure of Flames
- Thaumaturgy: Path of Corruption
- Necromancy: Ash Path
- Necromancy: Bone Path
- Necromancy: Sepulchre Path

Hedge magicians utilize a resource called *mana*. Mana is intrinsic to a Hedge Magician, and it is spent like Blood to power magic. NPCs with Hedge Magic have 5 points of *mana* and can spend 1 point of this resource per turn. An NPC can regain 1 point of spent *mana* by meditating for one hour.

Project Twilight

One of the greatest threats to vampires is a specially trained group of operatives working within the United States government: Project Twilight. This division is primarily responsible for the devastating blows that struck the city of Savannah during the Nights of Turmoil, and it has seen a great deal of success in its attempts to eradicate vampires of all sects.

This agency investigates incidents of supernatural activity using the full and considerable resources of the U.S. government. Recently, laws secretly passed by Congress gave this shadow organization unprecedented authorization to rifle through emails, licenses, and other private information about citizens and corporations. While Project Twilight does not have the significant occult resources of the Inquisition or the historical perspective and lore of the Arcanum, it does possess a number of parapsychologists researching the potential of psychic numina. Some agents are even trained to utilize such abilities.

Special: Many Project Twilight hunters have access to Psychic Numina. To simulate Psychic Numina, Project Twilight hunters can purchase specializations in any of the following disciplines:

- Auspex
- Dominate
- Thaumaturgy: Movement of the Mind
- Thaumaturgy: Path of Technomancy

Psychics utilize a resource called *focus*. Focus is intrinsic to a psychic, and it is spent like Blood to power magic. NPCs with psychic numina have 5 points of focus and may spend 1 point of this resource per turn. An NPC may regain 1 point of spent focus by meditating for one hour. Further, psychics who specialize in a path of Thaumaturgy do not need to speak or make magical gestures to use this power, but may invoke their magic invisibly, through the power of their minds.

Standard Hunter NPC

Douglas Houston, Vampire Hunter
Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Dodge, Melee, and Investigation

Effective Health: ○○○

Douglas has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Dodge, Melee, and Investigation, his test pool is 11.

Inquisition Hunter NPC

Inquisitor Carlos Perez
Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Melee, Investigation, and True Faith (see below.)

Effective Health: ○○○

Carlos has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Stealth, Melee, and Investigation, his test pool is 11. In addition, Carlos's True Faith specialization grants him the first 3 dots of True Faith.

Arcanum Field Investigator NPC

Michael Stanton,
Arcanum Field Investigator
Stock NPC: Rating 4

Specialties: Firearms, Investigation, Occult, and Hedge Magic: Lure of Flames

Mana: ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○

Michael has a test pool of 8 in most challenges. In challenges involving Firearms, Investigation, and Occult, his test pool is 13. In addition, Michael's Hedge Magic specialization grants him the first 4 dots of Thaumaturgy: Lure of Flames.

Project Twilight Investigator NPC

Lieutenant Denise Wellington,
Project Twilight
Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Firearms, Investigation, Psychic Numina: Auspex

Focus: ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○

Denise has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Firearms and Investigation, her test pool is 11. In addition, Denise's Psychic Numina specialization grants her the first 3 dots of Auspex.

Werewolves

Where vampires are creatures of civilization, werewolves are creatures of the wilderness, choosing to exist as their ancestors did, by honoring the land and the spirits of nature. Though some can be found in an urban environment, the majority of these "lupines" prefer to live in rural areas, outside city walls. During the Dark Ages, many vampires who traveled into the wilderness simply never returned, destroyed by packs of savage werewolves.

Werewolves are intensely spiritual creatures, claiming to serve the will of a goddess they call Gaia, the Earth Mother. While vampires as a whole do not know a great deal about the culture of their ancient enemy, it is known that werewolves are guardians, protecting Gaia from the ravages of a celestial entity called the Wyrm — and that vampires, in werewolf mythology, are (knowingly or not) servants of that evil spirit. Certainly, werewolves hunt down anything that threatens to defile nature's bounty. They consider vampires to be unnatural parasites, blasphemies on the face of the sacred earth. Most lupines will go to great lengths to destroy a vampire, regardless of the cost.

Shapeshifters are descended through both mortal and wolf lineages, and these creatures divide themselves into tribes, placing a great deal of importance on one's ancestry. Like their animal cousins, most werewolves attack in packs, using greater numbers and practiced strategy to their advantage.

Of all vampires, only the bestial Gangrel deal with werewolves peaceably — though not without animosity. Relations between the two groups are standoffish at best. As long as each side honors the territory of the other (including mortal and wolf companions), the Gangrel and the lupines tend to leave one other in peace.

Special: Storytellers may approximate the powers of werewolf NPCs by using the following rules:

- A vampire who feasts on werewolf blood is far more susceptible to frenzy while the lupine blood remains in her system. Every Blood point of werewolf blood is counted as a Beast trait for the purposes of determining when a vampire must resist rage frenzy, and each trait increases the difficulty to resist such frenzy by 1. Werewolves are considered to be supernatural creatures, not mortals. Powers that have an increased effect on mortals do not have those increased effects when used against a werewolf.
- All Werewolf NPCs possess the Protean powers Feral Claws and the fight-form transmutation of Shape of the Beast. Additionally, all werewolves possess the Gangrel merit Shape of Beast's Wrath. Use of these powers does not require expenditure of Blood points.
- Werewolf NPCs utilize a resource called *rage*. Rage is used to fuel disciplines and to boost the werewolf's Physical attribute, in the same way that vampires use Blood for these effects. All werewolves have a rage pool of 10. They may spend up to 3 rage per turn, and they automatically regenerate 1 point of rage every five turns.
- Werewolves automatically heal 1 point of normal damage per round. Additionally, a werewolf may spend 1 point of rage to heal a point of normal damage or 3 rage to heal a point of aggravated damage.
- All werewolves take aggravated damage from silver weapons.
- Werewolves may purchase specializations in Celerity, Potence, Fortitude, Auspex, Obeah, Obfuscate, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery.
- Stock NPC werewolves have twice the normal number of effective health levels; a werewolf with an NPC rating of 3 has 6 health levels (instead of 3).

Dangerous Draughts

Lupine blood is potent and powerfully alluring to vampires. A werewolf's blood is so rich that, though its body holds the equivalent physical volume of 10 blood points, a vampire can draw 20 or more actual Blood points from the lupine before its veins run dry. Each point of blood consumed is worth 2 for the purposes of refilling a vampire's Blood pool.

Werewolf Scout NPC

Shannon "Moon Watcher" Marsh, Werewolf Scout
Stock NPC: Rating 2

Specialties: Stealth, Survival, and Obfuscate

Rage: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○

Shannon has a test pool of 4 in most challenges. In challenges involving Stealth and Survival, her pool is 9. All werewolves possess the Protean power of Feral Claws, the fight form of Shape of the Beast, and the Gangrel merit: Shape of the Beast's Wrath. In addition, Shannon gains the benefits of the first 2 dots of Obfuscate.

Werewolf Shaman NPC

The wolf called "Black Wyrm's Foe," Werewolf Shaman
Stock NPC: Rating 5

Specialties: Brawl, Melee, Occult, Celerity, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery

Rage: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Black Wyrm's Foe has a test pool of 10 in most challenges. In challenges involving Brawl, Melee, and Occult, his pool is 15. All werewolves possess the Protean power of Feral Claws, the fight form of Shape of the Beast, and the Gangrel merit: Shape of the Beast's Wrath. In addition, Black Wyrm's Foe gains the benefits of all 5 dots of Celerity and Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery.

Werewolf Warrior NPC

Joseph "Bites-the-Hand" Timmeson, Werewolf Warrior
Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Brawl, Dodge, and Celerity

Rage: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○○ ○

Joseph has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Brawl and Dodge, his test pool is 11. All werewolves possess the Protean power of Feral Claws, the fight form of Shape of the Beast, and the Gangrel merit: Shape of the Beast's Wrath. In addition, Joseph gains the benefits of the first 3 dots of Celerity.

Werewolf Healer NPC

Athena Tearsong, Werewolf Healer
Stock NPC: Rating 4

Specialties: Brawl, Dodge, Medicine, and Obeah

Rage: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○○ ○○○

Athena has a test pool of 8 in most challenges. In challenges involving Brawl, Dodge, and Medicine, her test pool is 13. All werewolves possess the Protean power of Feral Claws, the fight form of Shape of the Beast, and the Gangrel merit: Shape of the Beast's Wrath. In addition, Athena gains the benefits of the first 4 dots of Obeah.

Mages

Mages are mortals who possess the special talent and insight necessary to cast "true magic." They shape the spheres of reality and tempt the dangers of paradox by altering the natural world. Some scholars theorize that the *magi* share history with vampires, and certainly, the Tremere are evidence of their similar natures. Still, it is a cardinal fact that mages who survive the Embrace lose their control of the spheres, and that blood magic and sphere magic – while related – are not one and the same. Nevertheless, the rivalry between the two supernatural types is heated and vicious, as though fed by some long-forgotten blood feud. Vampires have tried for centuries to learn the mages' secrets, but to no avail. Blood bonds, Embraces, mystical pacts, and even ripping apart a mage's mind only produces frustrating and conflicted information. It seems that the power of life is somehow tied into these arts, and life is something a vampire can never fully replicate.

A powerful mage can perform amazing feats, but most prefer subtler effects. Strange coincidences are the tools of the modern mage, not fireballs or widespread reality-alterations. As mages are mortal, they can hide in plain sight, carefully conducting their business beneath a veneer of the common man. Clever, intelligent, and studied, mages prefer to lay traps and scheme. Conflicts between vampires and mages more often resemble chess matches than cage matches, but when necessary, a mage has the power to be a ferocious enemy to a vampire who incurs her wrath. Because of this, most undead refuse to deal with mages. The Tremere clan is a singular exception. They maintain an uneasy and secret truce with one mage faction, a group known as the Order of Hermes.

Special: Storytellers may approximate the powers of Mage NPCs by using the following rules:

- Mages are considered to be supernatural creatures, not mortals. Powers that have an increased effect on mortals do not have those increased effects when used against a mage.
- Mage NPCs utilize a resource called *essence*. Essence is used to fuel disciplines and to heal, in the same way that vampires use Blood for these effects. All mages have an essence pool of 10. They can spend up to 3 essence per turn, and they automatically regenerate 1 point of essence every 10 minutes.
- Mages may concentrate for one turn (taking no other action) and spend a point of essence to heal 1 point of normal or aggravated damage.
- Mages may purchase specializations in Auspex, Dominate, Celerity, Chimeristry, Presence, Protean, Obfuscate, Obtenebration, any path of Necromancy, or any path of Thaumaturgy.

Disciple of Illusion NPC

Sarah Juniper,
Disciple of Mind and Entropy
Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Occult, Thaumaturgy: Movement of the Mind, and Chimeristry

Essence: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○

Sarah has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Occult, her test pool is 11. In addition, she gains the first 3 dots of Thaumaturgy: Movement of the Mind and Chimeristry.

Adept of Fire NPC

Elizabeth Gold, Adept of Forces
Stock NPC: Rating 4

Specialties: Lore, Occult, Thaumaturgy: Elemental Mastery, and Thaumaturgy: Lure of Flames

Essence: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○

Elizabeth has a test pool of 8 in most challenges. In challenges involving Lore and Occult, her pool is 13. In addition, she gains the first 4 dots of Thaumaturgy: Elemental Mastery and Thaumaturgy: Lure of Flames.

Dark Magus NPC

Cenotaph, Master of the Dark Prime
Stock NPC: Rating 5

Specialties: Lore, Occult, Obtenebration, Necromancy: Bone Path, and Necromancy: Ash Path

Essence: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○○

Cenotaph has a test pool of 10 in most challenges. In challenges involving Lore and Occult, his test pool is 15. In addition, he gains all 5 dots of Obtenebration, Necromancy: Bone Path, and Necromancy: Ash Path.

Seeress NPC

Medea, Master of the Mind
Stock NPC: Rating 5

Specialties: Intimidation, Investigation, Occult, Auspex, and Dominate

Essence: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○○

Medea has a test pool of 10 in most challenges. In challenges Intimidation, Investigation, and Occult, her test pool is 15. In addition, she gains the first 5 dots of Auspex and Dominate.

The Fae

The fae come from a world filled with fantastic heroes and mythical beasts. Fae magic harnesses the primal power of legend, of emotions so vast and rich that they can cause even the most jaded elder vampire to feel once more. Some creatures, vampire and otherwise, even succumb to madness when faced with the powers of the fae, unable to tell the truth between reality and the Dream.

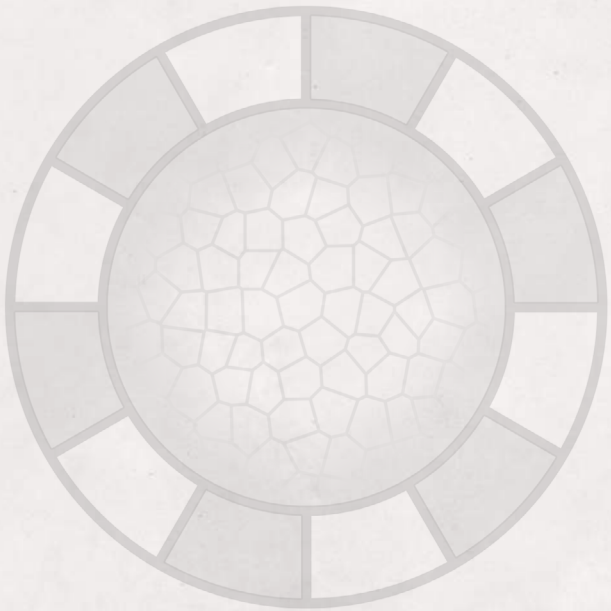
In modern nights, the fae spend most of their time masked as mortals, hiding themselves among the "common folk" of the world. When a faerie does choose to reveal her true form, she is an unearthly creature of power, myth, and glorious presence. Some are regal and exquisitely beautiful, while others are hideous and gruesome.

Little is known about the customs or society of the fae. After an encounter with one, fae enchantment is such that only those of particularly strong will can remember what transpired, and even to them, such an event may feel as though it were a fading dream. It does seem true that fae activity increases during certain times of the year; equinoxes, solstices, and primitive festivals call them from hiding, encouraging them to unveil themselves if only for one brief moment.

Faeries encountered in a Vampire story should remain distant and mysterious. Even if a vampire somehow befriends one of these beings, the differences and alienation between the two should be constantly reinforced. The fae are so vibrant and full of life that the presence of a vampire causes them sorrow, and if sustained, could cause spiritual harm. Vampires find fae intriguing, but also see them as a constant reminder of the life lost when one became undead — a situation that could quickly prove intolerable for both.

Special: Storytellers may approximate the powers of fae NPCs by using the following rules:

- Fae are considered to be supernatural creatures, not mortals. Powers that have an increased effect on mortals do not have those increased effects when used against a fae.
- Fae NPCs utilize a resource called *glamour*. Glamour is used to fuel disciplines and to heal, in the same way that vampires use Blood for these effects. All fae have a glamour pool of 10. They may spend up to1 glamour per turn, and they automatically regenerate 1 point of glamour every 10 minutes. Fae regain glamour by experiencing the Dream or through inspiring mortals to acts of creativity (such as art or music).
- Fae take aggravated damage from pure iron weapons. Alloys that include iron (such as steel) do not inflict aggravated damage on the fae.
- A fae may spend glamour to heal herself or any friendly character within one pace, healing 1 point of damage (normal or aggravated) per glamour expended for that purpose.
- Fae may purchase specializations in Auspex, Dominate, Potence, Fortitude, Chimerstry, Dementation, Mythreceria, Presence, Obfuscate, Temporis, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Conjuring.



Unseelie Rogue NPC

Dulcina, Unseelie Rogue
Stock NPC: Rating 4

Specialties: Empathy, Chimerstry, Dementation, and Obfuscate

Glamour: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○

Dulcina has a test pool of 8 in most challenges. In challenges involving Empathy, her pool is 13. In addition, she gains the first 4 dots of Chimeristry, Dementation, and Obfuscate.

Sidhe Duke NPC

Paul Daskovich, Sidhe Duke
Stock NPC: Rating 5

Specialties: Melee, Dodge, Leadership, Dominate, and Presence

Glamour: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○○

Paul has a test pool of 10 in most challenges. In challenges involving Dodge, Leadership, and Melee, his pool is 15. In addition, he gains all 5 dots of Dominate and Presence.

Troll Knight NPC

Vividea, Troll Knight
Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Dodge, Melee, and Fortitude

Glamour: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○

Vividea has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Dodge and Melee, her test pool is 11. In addition, she gains the first 3 dots of Fortitude.

Sidhe Courtesan NPC

Thorn Peppersprite, Courtesan
Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Empathy, Leadership, and Presence

Glamour: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○

Thorn has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Empathy and Leadership, his test pool is 11. In addition, he gains the first 3 dots of Presence.

Wraiths

In the harsh, cruel World of Darkness, many humans die with their fondest hopes and desires still unfulfilled. Mortal hearts ache to express love one last time or fill with the need to gain vengeance on those who wronged them. Some, killed abruptly by accident or violence, cannot accept the fact that they have died, and they seek to affect the living or to bring closure to the life they left behind. Not every mortal lingers on as a wraith, but those who do are deeply anchored to the world. They remain because of their *passions* (emotions that drive them even beyond death) and *fetters* (people, places, or things that were of tremendous importance in life).

Most of the time, wraiths are confined to a dark, decaying reflection of the living world known as the *Shadowlands*. This land of the dead is a grey wasteland, with echoes of the living world, battered by Stygian storms and maelstroms. The underworld's laws are more psychological than physical; echoes and manifestations of the real world hold substance here so long as they have emotional meaning. Within this tempestuous landscape, wraiths struggle to remember their purpose and fulfill it, hoping always to find peace and transcend beyond death into the unknown. Yet at the heart of the Shadowlands is the labyrinth of death, and within it, the horrors of Oblivion.

Wraiths are intangible beings, spiritual in nature, but with great effort they can manifest in the physical world. Each wraith is afflicted by a dark core, a Shadow within her being that is similar to a vampire's Beast. When this Shadow takes over, the wraith is helpless, forced to be a passenger to the terrible passions that drive her inner psyche. If she fails to resist her inner Shadow, she can become a *spectre* – a cruel, mindless spirit.

The Giovanni clan and other necromancers have a great deal of interaction with wraiths, and they are known to enslave and torture them. This causes most wraiths to dislike and even hate vampires as a whole, both fearing and challenging their power. Haunted places are not friendly to vampires, and the wraiths have the power to enforce their demands with terrible, spiritual might.

Special: Storytellers may approximate the powers of Wraith NPCs by using the following rules:

- Wraiths are considered to be supernatural creatures, not mortals. Powers that have an increased effect on mortals do not have those increased effects when used against a wraith.
- Wraith NPCs utilize a resource called *Pathos*. Pathos is used to fuel disciplines and to heal, in the same way that vampires use Blood for these effects. All wraiths have a Pathos pool of 10. They may spend up to 3 Pathos per turn, and they automatically regenerate 1 point of Pathos every 10 minutes.
- All wraiths have access to the first 2 dots of Dementation. Wraiths who additionally take the Dementation specialization gain Dementation powers above those first dots.
- Wraiths typically exist in the Shadowlands, where they may view (but not interact with) the real world. With the exception of the first 2 dots of Dementation, which can be targeted and take affect "across the Shroud," wraiths cannot attack or use powers on individuals in the real world unless the wraith manifests.
- A wraith may spend Pathos to manifest in the physical world for one hour. While manifested, the wraith can attack or use powers on individuals in the physical world as if the wraith was a normal creature of this plane. The number of Pathos required to manifest is variable; a wraith has a number of health levels equal to the amount of Pathos spent initially for this purpose, with a maximum of 5. If a wraith runs out of health while manifesting, she is forcibly returned to the Shadowlands. A wraith cannot spend Pathos after manifesting in order to gain more health levels, though she may use Pathos to heal, as described above.
- Unless a wraith manifests, she cannot interact with the physical world in any way. Therefore, she might have great difficulty traveling, as she cannot interact with physical vehicles. There are echoes of old conveyances within the Shadowlands, but these are neither reliable nor free to utilize.
- Wraiths may purchase specializations in Dementation, Dominate, Chimerstry, Potence, Presence, Obfuscate, Obtenebration, and Thaumaturgy: Movement of the Mind.

The Not-So-Friendly Ghost NPC

Castañeda, The Not-So-Friendly Ghost Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Empathy, Dementation, and Chimerstry

Pathos: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○ (or, while manifested, as per Pathos spent to manifest)

Castañeda has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Empathy, his test pool is 11. In addition, he gains the first 3 dots of Dementation and Chimeristry.

Sinister Spectre NPC

The Bishop of Wellingsley, Sinister Spectre Stock NPC: Rating 4

Specialties: Brawl, Occult, Potence, and Obfuscate

Pathos: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○ (or, while manifested, as per Pathos spent to manifest)

Wellingsley has a test pool of 8 in most challenges. In challenges involving Brawl and Occult, his pool is 13. In addition, he has the first 4 dots of Potence and Obfuscate.

The Recently Deceased NPC

Steven, the Recently Deceased Stock NPC: Rating 2

Specialties: Empathy and Thaumaturgy: Movement of the Mind

Pathos: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○ (or, while manifested, as per Pathos spent to manifest)

Steven has a test pool of 4 in most challenges. In challenges involving Empathy, his test pool is 9. In addition, he gains the first 2 dots of Thaumaturgy: Movement of the Mind.

Ancient Legionnaire NPC

Tullius, Ancient Legionnaire Stock NPC: Rating 5

Specialties: Brawl, Occult, Chimerstry, Obtenebration, and Potence

Pathos: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○○ (or, while manifested, as per Pathos spent to manifest)

Tullius has a test pool of 10 in most challenges. In challenges involving Brawl and Occult, his pool is 15. In addition, he has the first 5 dots of Chimerstry. Obtenebration, and Potence.

Demons

Of all the foul, evil, and reprehensible denizens of the **World of Darkness**, the worst monstrosities are those whose existence predates recorded history, beyond Enoch and the legends of vampires, to the beginning of time. These creatures committed the original act of evil: they dared to make war on God. True demons are treasonous, treacherous entities with no empathy or humane morality. Condemned by a divine power and locked away in a dark, eternal hell, a demon's presence on the physical plane is an aberration, and a blasphemy to the very forces of life and existence. Hell's void tugs constantly at them, trying to suck them back into the depths of torment.

Demons need worship or abject fear in order to survive. To gain these commodities, these creatures will corrupt and destroy anything in their path — even one another. They seek power, and they seek souls to torment in order to give them strength. A demon will ravage the souls of mortals, supernatural beings, or even other demons, creating a chain of fear that ultimately empowers the greatest master of all.

Yet these horrific entities have gifts to give, as well. They offer power to their worshippers, and they can provide useful services to anyone willing to make a deal. Such a bargain is known as a *foedus* (fo-ee-dus), an ancient word that coincidentally means both "binding contract" and "obscenely loathsome." If an individual agrees to a demon's bargain, she is marked as that demon's thrall. Her spirit invisibly holds the sigil of her demonic master — a sigil that becomes visible on her aura only when she actively utilizes the powers of the infernal. At any other time, the mark is unnoticeable, even to aura-perceiving powers.

Killing a demon doesn't destroy it. Demons who run out of health levels are banished to their plane of origin and cannot return for a year and a day.

Anyone who spends time discovering a demon's true name and learns a simple non-Thaumaturgical ritual may contact an infernal entity. It is far more difficult, of course, to control one.

- Demons are considered to be supernatural creatures, not mortals. Powers that have an increased effect on mortals do not have those increased effects when used against a demon.
- Demon NPCs utilize a resource called *faith*. Faith is used to fuel disciplines and to heal, in the same way that vampires use blood for these effects. All demons have a faith pool of 10. They may spend up to 3 faith per turn, and they automatically regenerate 1 point of faith every 10 minutes.
- Demons take aggravated damage from blessed or sacred weapons. For a weapon to qualify, it must have been used in religious ceremony for more than 10 years, or it must be a specific and unique holy item from the myths of that religion.
- Demons automatically heal 1 point of damage (aggravated, if such exists, or normal if there is no aggravated damage) per turn. Additionally, a demon may spend 1 point of faith to heal a point of normal damage or 3 faith to heal a point of aggravated damage.
- All demon NPCs possess the first 5 dots of Daimoinon. Further, if the demon's NPC rating is 4 or more, it possesses 1 Daimoinon elder power. This is an exception to the rule that prevents stock NPCs from having elder powers.
- All demons possess dots of Fortitude and Potence equal to their NPC rating.
- Demons may purchase specializations in Auspex, Chimerstry, Dominate, Dementation, Presence, Obfuscate, and the Thaumturgy paths: Lure of Flames, Movement of the Mind, Path of Elemental Mastery, Path of Corruption, and Path of Conjuration.

Storytellers and Infernalism

Demons are always under the strict control of the Storyteller. All infernalist rituals, requirements, and characters' capacity to communicate or make deals with infernal entities should occur only as part of a plotline, regulated by the Storyteller in charge, and should never be allowed except where they benefit the overall game.

Crossroads Demon NPC

Jalb Nin-Distraugh
Stock NPC: Rating 4
Specialties: Subterfuge, Occult, Chimerstry, and Presence
Faith: ○○○○○ ○○○○○
Effective Health: ○○○○

Jalb has a test pool of 8 in most challenges. In challenges involving Subterfuge or Occult, his test pool is 13. In addition, he gains the first 5 dots of Daimoinon, 1 Daimoinon elder power, 4 dots of Fortitude, and 4 dots of Potence.

Servitor Demon NPC

Wormwood, Servitor Demon
Stock NPC: Rating 2
Specialties: Subterfuge, Chimerstry
Faith: ○○○○○ ○○○○○
Effective Health: ○○

Wormwood has a test pool of 4 in most challenges. In challenges involving Subterfuge, his test pool is 9. In addition, he gains the first 5 dots of Daimoinon, 2 dots of Fortitude, and 2 dots of Potence.

Methuselah Generation NPCs

A Methuselah is a potent elder of the 4th or 5th generations. Methuselahs have lived for a millennium, or more, hoarding their power and besting their enemies. These vampires are the apex of the undead ecosystem, and their power is nearly unimaginable. The only thing that can truly stop a Methuselah is another Methuselah, as their machinations are far deeper, more subtle and more terrifying than those of normal vampires. Naturally, Methuselahs are unplayable as player characters in MET: Vampire The Masquerade.

A Storyteller should think carefully before introducing a Methuselah in her chronicle. These vampires are very rare, extremely powerful, and can unbalance your game. If overcome too easily, a Storyteller risks making players feel as if the world isn't dangerous; if too difficult, the Storyteller runs the risk of slaughtering every character in the game. It's extremely difficult to portray these alien creatures accurately. If you must do so, it is best to use mystery, deception, and subtlety.

When creating a Methuselah NPC, a Storyteller should use the rules for creating a 6th generation vampire, with the following exceptions:

- Methuselahs generally have enormous quantities of experience to spend, as they have lived for millennia. Don't bother tracking experience points on a Methuselah NPC, just give the sheet whatever you feel is appropriate. A good rule of thumb is 300 initial XP plus the maximum possible XP earned by any character in your chronicle.
- Methuselah NPCs may not purchase techniques, but they may purchase elder powers and Methuselah powers.

Methuselah Level Powers

All Methuselah powers are custom powers. Methuselahs do not teach their powers to one another, nor to their childer, for fear the power might one night be used against them in the Jyhad. Storytellers are encouraged to create a power that matches the flavor of the NPC being generated. To create a Methuselah power, take a standard or elder power and make one of the following adjustments:

- Remove one of the power's limitations. For example, a Ventrue might create a Methuselah version of the Dominate power Possession that works on a supernatural creature, such as a vampire or a werewolf.
- Double the numbers of one of the power's effects. For example, a Malkavian Methuselah might create a Methuselah version of Psychic Assault that inflicts 8 points of damage instead of 4 per strike.

The benefits of a Methuselah (4th or 5th) Generation character are:

Title	Generation	Blood Pool	Blood per Round	Attribute Bonus
Methuselah	5th	40	8	6
Master Methuselah	4th	50	10	8

Vampire Antagonists

The following rare bloodlines are included in this chapter to serve as NPCs and occasional antagonists. Think carefully before introducing one of these NPCs in your game. They are very rare, extremely powerful, and intended to be used as flavor, rather than as a primary focus of the chronicle.

Blood Brothers

Nickname: Frankensteins

Disciplines: Fortitude, Potence, Celerity

Unlike the members of the clans, who claim lineage from the first vampire (whomever they believe that to be), the Blood Brothers were created by a sorcerous designer. Their creator, likely a Tzimisce, developed a process by which humans are artificially Embraced using an amalgam of enchanted vampire blood. They have no true sire, and as they cannot Embrace, they have no lineage. They are strong, savage, and unrelenting.

Due to the nature of the process, a group of Blood Brothers must be created at the same time. Typically, a single mixture of blood will Embrace three to 10 individuals. These "circles" of vampires emerge with a unified nature — a personality that is both individual and shared. The process wipes away any unique qualities and gives the entire circle a single identity. Unfortunately, this process also eradicates any creativity or imagination. Blood Brothers make ideal foot-soldiers, but are worthless for detailed or complex tasks. It should be noted that such vampires are rare in the extreme, as the process required to create Blood Brothers is jealously guarded and seldom used.

Special: Blood Brothers have the following capabilities and limits:

- Blood Brothers automatically have their NPC rating in Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence.
- Up to four Blood Brothers may physically merge into a gestalt creature that combines all of their NPC rating scores into one monster. The gestalt NPC rating may go above 5.
- Blood Brothers have 2 times their NPC rating in health levels.

The "Fearsome Courage" Gestalt

Gestalt Blood Brother (Entire Pack)
Stock NPC: Rating 8

Specialties: Brawl and Melee

Blood: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○○ ○○○○○ ○○○○○ ○

The gestalt has a test pool of 16 in most challenges. In challenges involving Brawl or Melee, its test pool is 21. In addition, the gestalt gains all 5 dots of Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence. The Gestalt may break down into four individual Blood Brothers, as seen above.

Individual Blood Brother NPC

Satronos, Blood Brother
Stock NPC: Rating 2

Specialties: Brawl and Melee

Blood: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○○

Satronos has a test pool of 4 in most challenges. In challenges involving Brawl and Melee, his test pool is 9. In addition, he gains the first 2 dots of Potence, Celerity, and Fortitude. Satronos is one of four Blood Brothers in the Sabbat pack Fearsome Courage, each of whom have an identical NPC sheet.

Lhiannan

Nickname: Druids

Disciplines: Animalism, Presence, Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery

The Lhiannan claim that their founder is an ancient crone. They tell the tale of a vampire who summoned a forest spirit and bonded with it, transforming herself into an avatar of the earth. Her childer are as much dryad as vampire. The Lhiannan connection to nature spirits is unparalleled, and their knowledge is respected — and feared.

The crone empowered her children with a governance of the earth, passing each of them a shard of her spirit with the Embrace. Whenever a Lhiannan Embraces a childe, a portion of that shard is passed on to the new vampire, marking her forever. Because this weakens the sire, Lhiannan Embrace infrequently, as they must allow their inner connection to grow strong again before they make another childe.

These vampires hold to pagan beliefs, and they fought viciously against the Christian conquest of Europe. By the end of the 14th century, the bloodline was thought destroyed, burned by the Inquisition or eradicated by vampiric enemies. It resurfaced with the renewal of modern paganism, but the Lhiannan are not numerous. For the most part, they shelter in wild places, avoiding contact with cities and technology.

Special: Lhiannan have the following capabilities and limits:

- The Lhiannan are part nature spirit, and the mark of their inhumanity runs strong within them. All difficulties to detect their nature via Auspex are reduced by 2, and even normal humans feel vaguely uncomfortable in their presence.
- Any Lhiannan who leaves her territory becomes agitated and suffers a -3 penalty to all test pools while outside of her homeland. Once she re-enters that territory, her test pools return to normal within a few hours.
- Lhiannan can meld with any natural substance, as per the Protean power Earth Meld. This includes wood, stone, and other such materials.
- In addition to the typical specializations, Lhiannan automatically gain their NPC ratings of the following disciplines to simulate their magical powers: Animalism, Presence, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery.

Seeker of Wisdom NPC

Branwen, Seeker of Wisdom
Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Animal Ken, Empathy, and Occult

Blood: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○

Branwen has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Animal Ken, Empathy, and Occult, her test pool is 11. In addition, she gains the first 3 dots of Animalism, Presence, and Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Nagaraja

Nickname: Cannibals

Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Necromancy: Sepulchre Path

The Nagaraja are a foul bloodline of flesh-eaters who practice bloody, primitive magic. The clan supposedly originated in the Middle East, arising from a death cult that engaged in cannibalism for ritual purposes. How these creatures became vampires, and how they were left unattended long enough to develop into an independent bloodline are mysteries that the Nagaraja are unwilling to explain. They prefer enigma, twisting truth and rumor; they remain horrible bogeymen to vampiric society.

Other clans exterminate the Nagaraja wherever they are found. The bloodline's practices are abhorrent, and too many Nagaraja in an area create a significant threat to the Masquerade, as more and more mortals are consumed. The bloodline has no allies, skulking on the outskirts of vampire society like hyenas as they wait to cull the weak from the herd. When they find an unsuspecting vampire, they strike quickly, leaving little trace. The Cannibals are dangerous, practiced, and stealthy.

Strangely, most Nagaraja are well-educated, Embraced from those with medical backgrounds: doctors, morticians, and other scientific professionals. Typically, they seek those with an interest in the dark arts, or those whose personalities already show signs of psychopathy or sadistic tendencies. As a whole, the bloodline is selfish and cruel, feeding their bellies to satiation and caring for little other than their own survival.

Special: Nagaraja have the following capabilities and limits:

- The Nagaraja require raw, still-living flesh in addition to blood to survive. For every night a Nagaraja goes without consuming flesh, she suffers a -1 penalty to all test pools.
- In addition to the typical specializations, Nagaraja automatically gain their NPC rating in the following disciplines to simulate their magical powers: Auspex, Dominate, and Necromancy: Sepulchre Path.

Eater of the Dead NPC

Devon, the Eater of the Dead
Stock NPC: Rating 3

Specialties: Dodge, Intimidation, and Survival

Blood: ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Effective Health: ○○○

Devon has a test pool of 6 in most challenges. In challenges involving Dodge, Intimidation, and Survival, his test pool is 11. In addition, he gains the first 3 dots of Auspex, Dominate, and Necromancy: Sepulchre Path.

Ryan Chaddock (order #5338590)

Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment

"If something can be disproved by truth…then it should be."

— Krassimir, Sage

Influences

Vampires have lived alongside mortals since antiquity, subtly influencing human civilization. A vampire can easily control a single person, perhaps manipulate a dozen discreetly, but thousands upon thousands of mortals pose a threat too large to be restrained directly. To aid in their dominion over mortal culture, vampires learned to leverage institutions, societies, and other agencies to influence the population to react according to their designs.

The Influence background mechanically expresses the series of social connections, business transactions, and personal favors that make up a vampire's influence in the mortal world. Utilizing this kind of pull is not the same thing as having direct control. Rather, vampires use a great deal of subtle manipulation, changing patterns of behavior and affecting the nuances of the mortal world rather than beating on it with the hammer of their will. A creature with eternal life has plenty of time to turn small changes into significant control. A vampire who tries to force her will on society in an obvious manner will be discovered – and likely destroyed – by vampire hunters in righteous defense of mortals.

Influence Categories

There are two broad categories of influences: *Elite* and *Underworld*. Each influence category is a unique background that must be purchased separately (from levels 1 to 5).

- **The Elite:** You have influence over the upper crust: those who are wealthy, hold legitimate power, own corporations, or control noteworthy institutions. These individuals live in a world of wealth and affluence.
- **The Underworld:** You have influence over those who work outside of the law: working class people looking the other way, and those who live on the street, rule gangs and drug cartels, run networks of thieves, or control intricate cultural bureaucracy. These individuals live in a world of rumors, whispers, and lies.

Influence Specializations

For every dot of influence that a character possesses, you must choose one category in which to specialize. These specializations help to define the nature of your character's social network: the types of people who owe her favors and where she wields her subtle control.

It's possible to have the same specialization in both influence categories. Having a police specialization in Elite might mean that your character knows the most prestigious detectives, spends time with the head of the Special Operations division, or regularly contributes to the commissioner's "election fund." Having a police specialization in Underworld would instead mean that your character knows corrupt cops, undercover agents, or the poor guy who pulls the graveyard shift in the evidence room.

Anything that can be defined as a close-knit, influential society can potentially be a specialization. Storytellers are encouraged to allow a wide variety of influence specializations, but should not allow too broad a generalization. Your Storyteller must approve your influence specializations, and she may deny them if you choose too broad a group.

A few sample specializations are:

- Internet bloggers
- Television stations
- Banks
- Street gangs
- Fashion industry
- City airports
- Steel mill workers
- Theatre
- Teamsters
- The homeless
- Video game companies
- Catholic churches
- Morticians
- Taxi drivers

Storytellers should not allow overly general specializations, such as "doctors," "government employees," or "business." Similar specializations might be allowable if they were narrowed down to "pathologists," "city hall bureaucrats," or "the University of Southern California."

Influence Actions

Each dot of an influence background gives your character one *influence action* per month. If you have an Elite influence of 3 and an Underworld influence of 2, then you have 5 influence actions to spend within the calendar month. Record these influence actions separately; although influence actions are occasionally interchangeable, the origin often makes a difference regarding how that influence action can be spent.

There are two types of influence actions: targeted and general. Targeted actions affect other influences: your own or those belonging to other individuals. General actions affect the world around your character, providing tangible benefits or causing events to happen (or not happen).

Influence actions cannot be "banked," or held over from month to month. A character must be able to spend the full amount of influence actions required for a given result within a single month.

Targeted Influence Actions

Targeted influence actions can perform the following activities:

- **Attack:** Temporarily reduce another character's total influence levels.
- **Block:** Prevent other characters from taking certain influence actions.
- **Boost:** Temporarily loan your influence actions to another character.
- **Defend:** Lessen the impact of attacks against your influences.

Attack

You may spend influence actions to attack, and potentially reduce, another character's influence level. To lower an influence in the same category (Elite to Elite or Underworld to Underworld) you must spend 2 influence actions for each point you wish to remove. To lower an influence in the opposing category (Elite to Underworld, and vice-versa), you must spend 3 influence actions for each point to be removed.

Example:

Sariah has an Elite influence of 4. She wishes to attack Persephone's influences, and she must decide how best to do that. If Sariah wishes to reduce Persephone's Elite influence by 1, she will need to spend 2 influence actions. If she wishes to reduce Persephone's Underworld influence by 1, Sariah will need to spend 3 influence actions. If Sariah intends to reduce Persephone's Elite influence by 2, she would need to spend all 4 of her influence actions. She could perform any of those attacks.

If Sariah wanted to reduce Persephone's Underworld influence by 2, she would need to spend 6 actions — two more actions than Sariah possesses in a month. Therefore, Sariah could not perform such an attack against Persephone's Underworld without help.

To attack another character's influence, you must have witnessed the target character interacting with her influences within the past month, or you must have investigated the results of that character's influence action. For example, you can target someone's influence if you overheard a telephone call between her character and police officers that represent her Underworld influence. You can also target someone's influence if your own influences were attacked by that character's influence. You do not need to be able to identify the owner of the influence you are attacking, only that the influence exists.

If your influence is reduced by an attack action, you lose both the appropriate influence levels and an equal number of unspent influence actions. If you possess fewer actions than the total lost, you lose all remaining actions. If you already spent influence actions during that month, you lose levels of influence, but any previously expended influence actions are not affected.

Influence levels (and their associated actions) reduced as the result of an attack are lost for two games or one month, whichever is longer. After that time has elapsed, lost levels of influence return, but actions lost in this manner are lost forever.

Defend

By spending influence actions to defend, you protect your influence from attacks for one month. Each defend action you spend reduces a potential influence loss by 1 level.

Actions spent to defend an influence apply to all incoming attacks during that month. For example, an action spent to defend your Underworld influence would protect against the loss of 1 level from every incoming attack on your Underworld influence for the rest of the month. If an attacker attempts to reduce your Underworld influence by 2 levels, her attack is reduced by your defend expenditure, and your Underworld would only be reduced by 1. If a second individual performed another 2-level attack later in the same month, the results would be identical, as your defend is still active.

An action spent to defend only protects the influence category from which it originates; Underworld actions defend your Underworld influence, and Elite actions defend your Elite influence. Spending an Elite action to defend doesn't prevent attacks from reducing your Underworld influence.

Defend actions must be logged with your Storyteller before attack actions are logged against you; spending an action to defend after an attack has been made does nothing to protect an influence. Storytellers are encouraged to allow a grace period at the beginning of each month, so that players can log defend actions before processing any attack actions.

Block

You can spend influence actions to increase the difficulty of general influence actions. A block action might to make it harder to conceal a crime, acquire black market guns, or to perform occult research about a specific situation. When you establish a block, you must choose one influence category to affect, although actions used to establish a block do not need to originate in the category being blocked.

Each action spent on a block removes 1 action from attempts to use influence to perform the specified activity. If you spend 2 actions to block the acquisition of firearms through the Underworld influence, anyone attempting to use the Underworld influence to acquire a gun would need to spend at least 3 actions: 2 to overcome your 2-point block, and 1 to acquire the firearm. However, a character using Elite influence to acquire a gun would not be affected by your block.

Block actions only affect general influence activities. You cannot block targeted influence actions (attack, defend, block, or boost).

Boost

You can spend targeted actions to temporarily increase another character's influence level. By working together in this manner, a group of characters can achieve extraordinarily high levels of influence for a short period of time.

To boost an influence, you must spend a number of influence actions equal to the level possessed by the receiving character. For example, to boost a receiving character's influence from level 5 to level 6, one or more donating characters must provide a total of 5 influence actions.

Players may boost an influence up to a maximum level of 10. To do this, the donors would have to boost the receiver's influence multiple times, and that requires a large number of donated actions. If the receiver's Elite influence was naturally at level 5, donating characters would need to provide 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9 actions (a whopping total of 35 donated influence actions) to raise the receiver's influence through the various levels until it reaches 10. The boosted character only receives the actions from her temporary level, not the actions that others spent to get her there. For example, Edward's coterie boosts him to level 10 in Underworld. This gives Edward 10 influence actions that month.

Boost actions cannot cross influence categories. You cannot spend Elite actions to boost a player's Underworld influence and vice versa. Further, a character gains no benefit from using influence actions to boost themselves.

All actions to boost an influence must be spent within the same month. Boosting a player's influence lasts until the end of the month, at which point the receiver's influence reverts to its normal level.

General Influence Actions

In addition to targeted actions, players may also use their influences for general actions. Each influence category has its own list of general actions, delineated by the level of influence required to perform specific activities. To achieve the result for a specific level from a general influence category, you must expend 1 influence action. For example, if you have 5 levels in Elite, you get 5 influence actions to spend. If you wish to achieve the results of Level 3: Bureaucratic Errors, you must expend 1 of those influence actions.

Because the two influence categories are distinct, a certain task may require different levels of influence based on which influence category you use. This variation reflects each influence's sphere of authority.

Each influence category allows you to perform a number of special actions based on your total influence level. You may perform one of these actions only if you have equal or more levels of influence. When a character's influence has been boosted by donated actions, those temporary influence levels count for the purpose of determining the level of general actions you may perform.

If you can justify an activity as appropriate for your influence specializations, your influence is considered 1 level higher when performing a general action. For example, it is easier for you to get tickets to the policeman's ball if you have an influence specialization defined as "police."

General influence actions cannot be spent across categories. Actions from one influence category, either Elite or Underworld, have no effect on general actions in the other category.

Indirect Influence Attacks

General influence actions are best used when interacting with plots, but players will occasionally use the benefits of general influence actions to cause trouble for other characters. This type of *indirect attack* is different from a targeted attack action. When a character is targeted by an indirect influence attack, the Storyteller may choose to roleplay the results in a side-scene with the affected player, or she may simply apply a mechanical penalty to the affected character.

If the Storyteller chooses to apply a mechanical penalty, the target of an indirect attack loses 1 downtime action for every 2 levels of influence used for the general action. If the affected player does not have enough downtime actions to pay this penalty, she loses all of her available downtime actions. For every 2 levels of influence that were not paid in this manner, the Storyteller may reduce one of the targeted player's other backgrounds by 1 dot (choosing the most appropriate background based on the circumstances of the indirect attack). If the character has no other backgrounds to reduce, the Storyteller may lower that character's starting Blood supply by 3 Blood points.

The effects of indirect influence attacks last for two games or one month, whichever is longer.

Elite Actions

Level 1: A Friend in Need

You've got a reputation for having lots of money and influence, so naturally people want to give you stuff for free. Or at least, they feel comfortable letting you borrow some of their stuff on occasion, as long as you say nice things about them.

You can spend 1 influence action to "borrow" the resources of a wealthy friend, a corporation, or the government up to the maximum rental value of $1,000 per level of Elite influence you control. For example, you might want to borrow someone's fancy yacht to host a party, a penthouse for a private meeting, or an art gallery to impress your sire for the evening.

Level 2: Gossip & Insider Trading

Whispers swim like koi fish in the elegant pond of the upper crust, tracing the ebb and flow of high society. These are people in the know, and a few "useful tips" can make the difference between living on the cutting edge and being rendered obsolete.

By spending 1 influence action, you gain information about any recent use of the Elite influence (within the last 3 months) that touches on your Elite specializations. You will discover the name of any mortal institutions or individuals that were involved, as well as how the actions were spent. However, you do not learn the identity of any character (or characters) responsible for that influence expenditure. You may use this knowledge to assault those influences with a targeted attack action. Storytellers may also choose to pass along information about local plots or unusual events within the area.

Level 3: Bureaucratic Errors

The workday's hell when your 9-5 job is something more like 6-12: mountains of paperwork, power meetings over expensive dinners, handshake agreements, and knows-too-much nods. Don't worry, I'm sure we can do something about that little problem of yours. You'd do the same for me...right?

By expending 1 influence action, you manipulate the system, acquiring expensive (and mostly legal) favors. You can alter government paperwork, "modify" incident reports, detain a mortal on trumped-up charges, cause a major police effort to investigate a locale or individual, gain a legal (registered) weapon, acquire falsified identification or other paperwork, or otherwise use the system to your advantage.

Level 4: Smooth Over

Trouble comes in all shapes and sizes, but cold, hard leverage clears up any problem. Hey, everybody's got secrets. I'll hide yours, if you hide mine. It's just a favor between old friends. Right?

By spending 1 influence action, you can smooth over inconvenient or embarrassing problems, making them disappear. Witnesses get paid off, news stories get squashed, alibis materialize, and Masquerade breaches simply disappear.

Level 5: No Party Crashers

It's a private party. Very exclusive. Unless you're on the guest list, you just can't get in. The upper crust take security very seriously, especially when it comes to things they'd rather keep secret. The guards won't ask questions, and no paparazzi need apply.

With the expenditure of 1 influence action, you can secure an area the size of a manor house or small office building. For one 24-hour period, you control all security protocols, the amount (or lack) of police response to the area, and general access within a half-mile radius of the site. Helicopters cannot fly over the area, nor can unknown persons pass through without the use of supernatural powers such as Obfuscate. With your go-ahead, the location can be made almost completely Masquerade-safe and protected from hostile incursions. Further, anyone using influence to cause trouble in the area must overcome a level 5 block (see the block targeted action description, **page 511**).

Level 6: Everything Has a Price

Pulling strings, buying integrity, sabotaging innocent lives for a small advantage — those are just the breaks, kid. The world is divided into "haves" and "have-nots," and you can guess which one I am....

You can spend 1 influence action to manipulate the mortal world, acquiring a major favor that isn't necessarily legal. Through your control over the wealthy and the powerful, you can arrange things like jail breaks, acquire a large amount of illegal drugs, plant a false news article (with evidence and witnesses to back it up), gain an illegal weapon (no serial number), or cause someone trouble on a personal scale.

Level 7: Private Collection

Arranging a "private showing" of the world's most coveted and protected items is no easy task. Fortunately, you know the right people to manipulate, and they're more than willing to do as you say.

By spending 1 influence action, you gain temporary access to a rare or unique item. For example, an artifact might disappear from a museum for a few days with no questions asked. If you lose, steal, or damage the object, your influence is reduced by 2 levels for the next four games or two months, whichever is longer. This action cannot be used to acquire items owned by player-characters, although it can be used to acquire items from important NPCs with the Storyteller's permission.

Level 8: Pop Star Meltdown

One minute, everything's fine. The next, it's like the whole world descended on this place, scratching at an itch and yelling for attention. It's like a train wreck; they just can't look away.

Expending 1 influence action allows you to arrange for a city-wide incident. You can distract news agencies, focus philanthropic attention, or cause significant disruption. You might persuade an influential businessman to sell a popular sports team, have the city planners construct an enormous statue, cause the police to go on strike, arrange for the health department to quarantine a large area, or any other such concentration of mortal attention.

Level 9: The Power Behind the Throne

If you don't do exactly as I say, the "pooled resources of the Brujah clan" won't be enough to buy a doughnut in this town! Do you understand?

By using 1 influence action, you arrange a situation with significant, long-term effects. You could choose the next mayor; cause nearly all of the city's police to go off duty at the same time; prohibit fire departments or other emergency responders from answering a call; indelibly frame someone for a crime they didn't commit; close down all major highways; have a rival's home, haven, or office building demolished; or other such manipulation.

Level 10: Regional Influence

Those with tremendous pull can shift culture and society on a wide scale, manipulating thousands of individuals through a chain of circumstance that begins and ends with their will. With this amount of influence, you can change the world in a significant and long-term manner.

You can choose to have the results of your general influence actions applied to the entire region (typically a large state, a major territory, or small country). This ability has no effect on targeted actions.

Underworld Influence

Level 1: Free Travel

Robberies, muggings, drug deals: some parts of town are simply too dangerous to walk through without friends.

You can spend 1 influence action to freely travel through any part of the city without being harassed by gangs or the criminal element. As a bonus, law enforcement will generally look the other way, giving you relatively safe and unmonitored passage through the slums.

Level 2: Word on the Street

Whispers flow through the gutters and churn in the streets, keeping tabs on the goings-on of the common man. Secrets thought to be hidden, shredded by circumstance, can be rediscovered with some invisible tape and a little patience. If you know who to ask, you can always get a useful answer.

By spending 1 influence action, you gain information about any recent use of the Underworld influence that touches on your Underworld specializations. You will discover the name of any mortal institutions or individuals that were involved, as well as how the actions were spent. However, you do not learn the identity of any character (or characters) responsible for that influence expenditure. You may use this knowledge to assault those influences with a targeted attack action. Storytellers may also choose to pass along information about local plots or unusual events within the area.

Level 3: Illegal Favors

Nobody pays attention to the scum that drifts in the shadows, and even fewer people care when things go wrong or break the law — as long as nobody gets caught. If you need something done, you know just the people to do it.

You can spend 1 influence action to manipulate the mortal world, acquiring a major favor that isn't necessarily legal. Through your control over the wealthy and the powerful, you can arrange things like jail breaks, acquire a large amount of illegal drugs, plant a false news article (with evidence and witnesses to back it up), gain an illegal weapon (no serial number), or cause someone trouble on a personal scale.

Level 4: Airing Dirty Laundry

Folks love reality television. They'll stick to it like glue, even as their stomachs churn. There are plenty of idiots, ingrates, and incompetents who will do anything for attention; the trick is knowing which piece of meat to throw in front of the dogs.

Expending 1 influence action allows you to arrange for a city-wide incident. You can distract news agencies, provoke civil rights marches, and cause significant disruption. You might persuade a major mafia leader or gang head to start a war against rivals; cause a series of unexplained arsons; convince corrupt officials to shut down area-wide utilities; re-appropriate vaccinations, donated blood, or other medical supplies from the needy; assassinate a Stock NPC (rated 4 or less); or any other sort of shady affairs.

Level 5: Lockdown

Gangs control territories, mafia dons claim cities, and even the homeless maintain areas where common citizens fear to tread. You know who "owns" what in the shadows of the city, and you can make deals to ensure that certain areas are under a complete protection.

With the expenditure of 1 influence action, you can secure an area the size of a large warehouse or small office building. For one 24-hour period, you control all security protocols, the amount (or lack) of police response to the area, and general access within a half-mile radius of the site. Helicopters cannot fly over the area, nor can unknown persons pass through without the use of supernatural powers such as Obfuscate. With your go-ahead, the location can be made almost completely Masquerade-safe and protected from hostile incursions. Further, anyone using influence to cause trouble in the area must overcome a overcome a level 5 block (see the block targeted action description, **page 511**).

Level 6: Pulling Strings

Through a combination of cunning manipulation and suave business acumen, you can gain expensive favors and moderate benefits. You've heard the expression "friends in low places," right? Well…you're that friend.

With the expenditure of 1 influence action, you manipulate the system, acquiring expensive (and mostly legal) favors. You can make sure money flows in the right direction, sway a city council vote, target a major police effort to investigate a locale or individual, gain a legal (registered) weapon, arrange raves and major urban events and festivals, or otherwise use the system to your advantage.

Level 7: Look the Other Way

Survival in the city means knowing when to stay the hell out of things that aren't your business. You've got people trained not to ask questions and not to volunteer information when the authorities come sniffing at their doors.

By spending 1 influence actions you can smooth over inconvenient or embarrassing problems, making them disappear. Witnesses get paid off, news stories get squashed, alibis materialize, and Masquerade breaches simply disappear.

Level 8: Want. Take. Have.

There's always a hole in security systems: a person willing to take a bribe or look the other way. You know the right palms to grease and the right blackmail to use to open doors. It's not hard for you to get what you want, even at someone else's expense.

By spending 1 influence action, you gain access to a rare or unique item. For example, an artifact might disappear from a museum for a few days with no questions asked. You may lose, steal, or damage the object, with no detriment to your influence — although such misappropriations may gain the unwanted attention of authorities. This action cannot be used to acquire items owned by player-characters, although it can be used to acquire items from important NPCs with the Storyteller's permission.

Level 9: An Offer You Can't Refuse

Look, pally, this situation goes a whole lot deeper than you can imagine. You got a nice unlife, great childer, plenty of rank and status. Are you sure you want to cock all that up by messing with me?

By using 1 influence action, you arrange a situation with significant, long-term effects. You could make prostitution or gambling legal in your state (or repeal such a law), discredit religious leaders with scandal, create widespread riots, indelibly frame someone for a crime they didn't commit, move jobs or corporate headquarters overseas, fix the outcome of major collegiate-level athletic events, or other such manipulation.

Level 10: Regional Influence

Those with tremendous pull can shift culture and society on a wide scale, manipulating thousands of individuals through a chain of circumstance that begins and ends with their will. With this amount of influence, you can change the world in a significant and long-term manner.

You may choose to have the results of your general influence actions applied to the entire region (typically a large state, a major territory, or small country). This ability has no effect on targeted actions.

Props, Weapons, and Armor

Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade encourages players to wear incredible costumes, create authentic props, and (when it's safe to do so) carry ornate weapon representations. The majority of items in the game are solely decorative, having no real combat capacity. However, items such as swords, guns, and armor have bonuses that increase a character's combat potential, and therefore, those advantages must be quantified.

For obvious reasons, real weapons should not be allowed in Mind's Eye Theatre games. Even nonfunctional weapon representations can be dangerous and should be carried only with advance Storyteller permission, especially if they are at all realistic and could be mistaken for actual weapons. The Mind's Eye Theatre system does not use any kind of weapons, nor are participants allowed to strike one another for any reason, at any point in the game.

Weapons and other items used in opposed challenges should be represented with an item card. Typically, an item card is a 3x5" index card, on which the item's statistics have been written. If possible, such cards should also contain a picture or description of the item. All item cards should be reviewed, approved, and signed by the Storyteller before entering play.

Items such as weapons and armor can be gained by spending downtime actions. For more information on using a downtime action to acquire items, see **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, page 307**.

Equipment Generation System

In order to allow both flexibility and simplicity, Mind's Eye Theatre uses an equipment generation system. First, determine the kind of item to be created, and then build it using the system below.

To begin, choose one of the following equipment categories:

- **Melee Weapons:** Hand-to-hand combat weapons, such as swords, knives, and clubs.
- **Ranged Weapons:** Weapons capable of inflicting damage at a distance, such as pistols, rifles, flamethrowers, and bows.
- **Protective Gear:** Equipment that protects a character from damage, such as armor or shields.
- **Miscellaneous Gear:** Equipment for use in non-combat challenges, such as lock-picks, a laptop, or a vehicle.

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After you've chosen the item's equipment type, you may choose special qualities for the item from the associated list of bonuses. Cheap, easily obtained, or improvised gear has only one special quality. Standard-grade or expensive equipment has up to two special qualities. No item may have more than two qualities.

Characters cannot use two weapons or receive bonuses from anything but the weapon in their primary hand, unless they possess the Ambidextrous merit. For more information on the Ambidextrous merit, see **Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws, page 248**.

Changing Equipment

In some cases, equipment qualities can be altered. For example, a shooter can change her gun's silver ammunition out in order to reload it with incendiary ammunition. However, not all weapons can be so easily tweaked; a metal, silver-plated axe cannot simply be set on fire to provide a torch-like flame. At the Storyteller's discretion, players can spend at least 10 minutes of time in-game altering their equipment's qualities, but only so long as those quality changes make sense. Note that more difficult alterations may take longer to perform.

Melee Weapons

Unless otherwise modified by its equipment qualities, a melee weapon requires one hand to wield and inflicts 1 point of normal damage. Most melee weapons are somewhat archaic or unusual, and carrying one openly can attract unwanted attention.

When building a piece of melee equipment, you may choose up to two qualities from the following list:

- **Accurate:** You receive a +2 wild card bonus when using this weapon. This bonus applies both for purposes of determining whether or not your test pool is greater than your opponent's and whether or not you score exceptional successes.
- **Antique:** This weapon was created generations ago. While it may have some minor negatives (it may be more fragile or more difficult to use), it is also rarely considered a weapon by standard law-enforcement individuals. You can usually convince mortals that the weapon is nonfunctional, purely prop or artistic, and thus can more easily smuggle it into otherwise weapons-restricted areas. A weapon with this quality sells for three times normal value.
- **Armor Piercing**: This weapon ignores the bonuses and special abilities of protective gear.
- **Artisan:** This item is an exquisite, artistic example of its kind. This item's beauty will trigger the clan weakness for members of the Toreador clan. Characters with a Crafts skill of 3 or higher who score an exceptional success while creating this item may add the Artisan quality; characters with a Crafts skill higher than 5 may add the Artisan quality without needing an exceptional success. Adding the Artisan quality in this manner does not consume a quality slot. A weapon with this quality sells for three times normal value.
- **Balanced**: This weapon is balanced for throwing. You may hurl such a weapon at any target within 10 steps by making an opposed challenge using your Physical attribute + Athletics versus the target's Physical attribute + Dodge.
- **Brutal:** If you win (not tie) the final test in a challenge while using this weapon and your test pool is greater than your target's pool, your attack scores an exceptional success. This occurs even if you lost or tied on a previous test in that challenge. This is an exception to the rule requiring you to win all tests in a challenge in order to be eligible for an exceptional success. Items with this quality require both hands to wield and cannot be wielded ambidextrously with another weapon. This weapon cannot possess the Concealable quality.
- **Cold Iron**: This weapon is made from cast, poured, or "pig" iron: iron that has never "known the heat of a forge." This weapon inflicts aggravated damage against fae and other individuals who are vulnerable to cold iron.
- **Concealable:** This item is unusually small for its type and easy to miss on casual inspection. When in its sheath, in a pocket, or otherwise hidden, this weapon is impossible to notice visually. You must be physically patted down, targeted by supernatural powers, or targeted with an electronic detector in order for the weapon to be revealed. Weapons that require two hands to wield cannot benefit from this quality.
- **Deadly:** When comparing test pools to see if you achieve an exceptional success when using this weapon, you gain a +5 bonus to your test pool.
- **Disabling:** This weapon is designed to remove an opponent's weapon from her grasp. While using this weapon, it does not cost a Willpower to use the Disarm combat maneuver; however, as per any use of that combat maneuver, you deal no damage during a turn in which this maneuver is used.

- **Fast**: This weapon is extremely aerodynamic in its use. You receive a +3 bonus to your initiative when fighting with this weapon.

- **Flaming:** The weapon is on fire, such as a torch or a lit flare. Even if a weapon is capable of having this quality, the quality is not always active. A character must spend a simple action to light the weapon on fire. Once lit, the weapon will burn for 5 full turns. Flaming weapons inflict aggravated damage to vampires. While the weapon is on fire, characters wielding it suffer a -2 penalty to attack test pools.

- **Masterwork**: This is a magnificent, one-of-a-kind item. This item's beauty will trigger the clan weakness for members of the Toreador clan. It may have one story-related (non-combat) effect, such as the ability to sever chains or create a soft musical sound when wielded. Characters with a Crafts skill of 5 or higher who score an exceptional success while creating this item may add the Masterwork quality to that item. The Masterwork quality does not consume a quality slot. A weapon with this quality sells for five times normal value.

- **Trip:** This weapon is designed to trip or knock people to the ground. While wielding this weapon, you may perform the Knock Down combat maneuver without spending Willpower. You can only use this benefit once per fight.

- **Impaling:** This weapon is designed to pierce and impale organs. While wielding this weapon, you may perform the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver without spending Willpower.

- **Reach:** This weapon is particularly long, like a halberd or a staff. You can strike targets standing up to four steps away, rather than two. Items with this quality require both hands to wield and cannot be wielded ambidextrously with another weapon. This weapon cannot possess the Concealable quality.

- **Quick Draw**: This weapon is specifically designed to be drawn quickly. You do not need to expend a simple action to draw this weapon, although you must still wait for your turn in the initiative order. Weapons that require two hands to wield cannot also have the Quick Draw quality.

- **Silver**: This weapon is edged with, plated with, or made of silver. This weapon inflicts aggravated damage against werewolves and other individuals who are vulnerable to this metal.

- **Staking:** When fighting a vampire who has damage in her Incapacitated wound track, you may use this wooden weapon in combination with the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver to stake that vampire. You must still pay all costs for the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver.

- **Strange Composition:** This weapon is edged with, plated with, or made of some unusual material. It may inflict aggravated damage on creatures that are vulnerable to this material, at your Storyteller's discretion. Otherwise, it just looks cool.

Ranged Weapons

Unless otherwise modified by its equipment qualities, a ranged weapon requires one hand to wield and inflicts 2 points of normal damage. Ranged weapons may have up to 12 shots of ammunition capacity; note that certain weapons can carry fewer bullets than others at your Storyteller's discretion. Reloading a ranged weapon requires you to be carrying the appropriate type of ammunition for that weapon, and it requires the expenditure of a simple action. By default, all ranged weapons have a range of 50 steps.

When building a piece of ranged equipment, you may choose up to two qualities from the following list:

- **Accurate:** You receive a +2 bonus when using this weapon. This bonus applies both for purposes of determining whether or not your test pool is greater than your opponent's and whether or not you score exceptional successes.

- **Antique:** This weapon was created generations ago. While it may have some minor negatives (it may be more fragile or more difficult to use), it is also rarely considered a weapon by standard law-enforcement individuals. You can usually convince mortals that the weapon is nonfunctional, purely prop or artistic, and thus can more easily smuggle it into otherwise weapons-restricted areas. A weapon with this quality sells for three times normal value.

- **Ammo Capacity I:** This weapon holds up to 30 rounds, rather than the default maximum of 12.

- **Ammo Capacity II:** This weapon holds up to 100 rounds, rather than the default maximum of 12. Items with this quality require both hands to wield and cannot be wielded ambidextrously with another weapon.

- **Armor Piercing:** This weapon ignores the bonuses and special abilities of protective gear.

- **Artisan:** This item is an exquisite, artistic example of its kind. This item's beauty will trigger the clan weakness for members of the Toreador clan. Characters with a Crafts skill of 3 or higher who score an exceptional success while creating this item may add the Artisan quality; characters with a Crafts skill higher than 5 may add the Artisan quality without needing an exceptional success. Adding the Artisan quality in this manner does not consume a quality slot. A weapon with this quality sells for three times normal value.

- **Automatic:** By expending 6 rounds of ammunition in a single burst, you can spray an area rather than targeting an individual. Choose up to three targets within three steps of each other. When targeting multiple enemies with this quality (up to three), you must make a separate opposed challenge against each of the defenders. Should you spend a point of Willpower to retest any of these opposed challenges, you also gain that retest for the remainder of the opposed challenges without spending further Willpower. If you spend a point of Willpower to retest after some challenges are resolved, you cannot go back to previous challenges you've lost and apply that Willpower retest retroactively. You inflict your victory condition on every target you defeat in this challenge. Weapons with the Automatic quality cannot also have the Spread quality.

- **Brutal:** If you win (not tie) the final test in a challenge while using this weapon and your test pool is greater than your target's test pool, your attack scores an exceptional success. This occurs even if you lost or tied on a previous test in that challenge. This is an exception to the rule requiring you to win all tests in a challenge in order to be eligible for an exceptional success. Items with this quality require both hands to wield and cannot be wielded ambidextrously with another weapon.

- **Cold Iron:** This weapon carries ammunition made from cast, poured, or "pig" iron: iron that has never "known the heat of a forge." This weapon inflicts aggravated damage against fae and other individuals who are vulnerable to cold iron.

- **Concealable:** This item is unusually small for its type and easy to miss on casual inspection. When in its sheath, in a pocket, or otherwise hidden, this weapon is impossible to notice visually. You must be physically patted down, targeted by supernatural powers, or targeted with an electronic detector in order for the weapon to be revealed. Weapons that require two hands to wield cannot benefit from this quality.

- **Deadly:** When comparing test pools to see if you achieve an exceptional success when using this weapon, you gain a +5 bonus to your test pool. This weapon requires two hands to wield and cannot be wielded ambidextrously with another weapon.

- **Fast:** This weapon is extremely aerodynamic in its use. You receive a +3 bonus to your initiative when fighting with this weapon.

- **Incendiary Ammunition:** This weapon fires incendiary bullets or releases a narrow gout of flame. In either case, it inflicts aggravated damage on vampires.

- **Knockback:** This weapon inflicts a serious amount of impact. On a successful hit with this weapon, you may choose to move your target up to 2 steps away from the point of impact. Further, targets that are not Stamina focused are knocked prone.

- **Long Range:** This weapon has an exceptional range and an integrated scope. You may target individuals up to one-half mile away from your location. This weapon requires both hands to wield. Weapons with the Long Range quality cannot also possess the Spread quality.

- **Masterwork:** This is a magnificent, one-of-a-kind item. This item's beauty will trigger the clan weakness for members of the Toreador clan. It may have one story-related (non-combat) effect, such as the ability to create a thunderous, frightening noise or a bright light when fired. Characters with a Crafts skill of 5 or higher who score an exceptional success while creating this item may add the Masterwork quality to that item. Adding the Masterwork quality in this manner does not consume a quality slot. A weapon with this quality sells for five times normal value.

- **Quick Draw:** This weapon is specifically designed to be drawn quickly. You do not need to expend a simple action to draw this weapon, although you must still wait for your turn in the initiative order. Weapons that require two hands to wield cannot also have the Quick Draw quality.

- **Rapid Reload:** You do not need to expend a simple action to reload this weapon, although you must still wait for your turn in the initiative order.

- **Silver Ammunition:** This weapon carries ammunition plated with or made of silver. This weapon inflicts aggravated damage against werewolves and other individuals who are vulnerable to silver.

- **Spread:** You can spray a small area rather than targeting an individual. Choose up to three targets within one pace of each other. When targeting multiple enemies with this power (up to three), you must make a separate opposed challenge against each of the defenders. Should you spend a point of Willpower to retest any of these opposed challenges, you also gain that retest for the remainder of the opposed challenges without spending further Willpower. If you spend the Willpower to retest after some challenges are resolved, you cannot go back to previous challenges you've lost and apply that Willpower retest retroactively. You inflict your victory condition on every target you defeat in this challenge. This weapon cannot hold more than six rounds unless it also has the Ammo Capacity quality. Weapons with the Spread quality cannot also have the Automatic or Long Range qualities.

- **Staking:** When fighting a vampire who has damage in her Incapacitated wound track, you may use this weapon in combination with the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver to stake that vampire. You must still pay all costs for the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver. A ranged weapon with the Staking quality requires both hands to wield and has an ammo capacity of 1. Further, ranged weapons with the Staking quality cannot benefit from qualities that increase ammo capacity.

- **Strange Composition:** This weapon is edged with, plated with, or made of some unusual material. It may inflict aggravated damage on creatures that are vulnerable to this material, at your Storyteller's discretion. Otherwise, it just looks cool.

Protective Gear

Unless otherwise modified by its equipment qualities, protective gear (or "armor") provides no bonuses or advantages. A character can only wear one type of protective gear at a time, although that gear may provide up to two qualities. By default, protective gear is noticeable unless actively concealed under bulky outerwear, such as a trenchcoat, cloak, or heavy-weather clothing. Protective gear only functions when it is being worn. Removing or equipping protective gear requires three standard actions.

When building a piece of protective gear, you may choose up to two qualities from the following list:

- **Ballistic**: This type of protective gear applies a + 3 bonus to your defensive test pools when resisting ranged attacks. Further, it applies a +1 bonus to your defensive test pools when resisting Brawl or Melee attacks.

- **Chest Plate**: This type of protective gear has a hardened piece of metal over your chest and another over your upper back, effectively shielding your heart from damage. You cannot be targeted by the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver.

- **Concealable**: This armor is small and form-fitting, designed to be worn under normal clothing. You must be physically patted down, targeted by supernatural powers, or targeted with an electronic detector in order for the weapon to be revealed. Protective gear with the Concealable quality cannot also have the Full Body quality.

- **Full Body**: This type of protective gear applies a +3 bonus to pool comparisons for the purpose of avoiding exceptional successes from Brawl, Melee, or Firearms attacks. However, Full Body armor is extremely obvious and cannot be covered with bulky outerwear. Anyone glancing at you can easily tell you're wearing this type of protective gear.

- **Hardened**: This type of protective gear applies a +3 bonus to your defensive test pools when resisting Brawl or Melee attacks. Further, it applies a +1 bonus to your defensive test pools when resisting ranged attacks.

- **HazMat**: This quality indicates that the equipment is specifically designed to shield against a certain type of hazardous environment. When you create this armor, choose one perilous circumstance, such as heat, methane gas, or deep-water pressure. While wearing this gear, you are protected from this type of environmental hazard. (Storytellers should use common sense as to the limitations of this quality.) Note that HazMat gear isn't designed for combat use. If you are successfully hit with a piercing or slashing attack, such as bullets, claws, or swords, the HazMat protection stops functioning until the gear is repaired.

- **Impact Absorption:** You are not affected by the Knockback quality of ranged weapons, and you are unaffected by the Knock Out or Knock Down combat maneuvers.

- **Rugged**: This quality indicates that the gear is particularly hardy and capable of absorbing damage. The first time you are hit by a Physical attack while wearing this armor, the damage dealt by that attack is reduced by 2 points. This reduction occurs before reduction caused by Fortitude or similar supernatural powers applies. Rugged armor can absorb normal or aggravated damage. The player wearing the armor may choose which damage is absorbed, if more than 2 points are dealt. Once expended, rugged armor must be repaired or replaced before this effect can be used again.

Miscellaneous Gear

Miscellaneous gear is non-combat equipment that may be used in other types of opposed challenges. This category of equipment includes items such as musical instruments, computers, crafts-making tools, or scientific equipment, as well as many other things. Bonuses provided by miscellaneous gear cannot be used in any sort of combat challenge. You cannot gain bonuses from more than one piece of miscellaneous gear at a time.

When building a piece of miscellaneous gear, you may choose up to two qualities from the following list:

- **Antique:** This item was created generations ago. While it may have some minor negatives (it may be more fragile or more difficult to use), it is also rarely considered useful. You can usually convince mortals that the item is nonfunctional, purely prop or artistic, and thus can more easily smuggle it into otherwise restricted areas. An item with this quality sells for three times normal value.
- **Artisan:** This item is an exquisite, artistic example of its kind. This item's beauty will trigger the clan weakness for members of the Toreador clan. Characters with a Crafts skill of 3 or higher who score an exceptional success while creating this item may add the Artisan quality; characters with a Crafts skill higher than 5 may add the Artisan quality without needing an exceptional success. Adding the Artisan quality in this manner does not consume a quality slot. A weapon with this quality sells for three times normal value.
- **Concealable:** This item is unusually small for its type, and easy to miss on casual inspection. When in its sheath, in a pocket, or otherwise hidden, this item is impossible to notice. You must be physically patted down, targeted by supernatural powers, or targeted with an electronic detector in order for the item to be revealed.
- **Customized**: This piece of equipment is specifically customized to give you a bonus in a specific circumstance, which must be narrower than the overall utility of a single skill. For example, your computer might be customized for hacking, defended against virtual intruders, or optimized for graphic design. When using a piece of customized gear in this specific circumstance, you receive a +2 bonus in that challenge. This bonus does not stack with the bonus granted by the Superior quality, although an item can possess both qualities; your computer could gain a +1 Superior wild card bonus for general usage or instead gain a +2 for being Customized in specific hacking challenges. You cannot benefit from the Customized quality if you do not have the appropriate skill to perform the related task.
- **Flashy:** This piece of gear is curious and notable, gaining attention easily. When you are using this gear, it may distract nearby individuals, causing them to forget to ask other questions or be unable to concentrate on what you are saying or doing. While this is not a supernatural effect, such items can be very useful in redirecting the attention of mortals so they do not notice nearby breaches of the Masquerade.
- **Masterwork:** This is a magnificent, one-of-a-kind item. This item's beauty will trigger the clan weakness for members of the Toreador clan. Characters with a Crafts skill of 5 or higher who score an exceptional success while creating this item may add the Masterwork quality to that item. Adding the Masterwork quality in this manner does not consume a quality slot. An item with this quality sells for five times normal value.
- **Nondescript:** This item is somewhat common to look at, with no particular distinguishing features and no signs of exceptional quality or value. When other things around it are stolen or destroyed by random causality, this particular item has a way of avoiding notice and managing to remain completely overlooked.
- **Secure**: This item is exceptionally hard to compromise. If it has a lock, hidden compartment, computer protocols, or other protective functions, the item gains a +3 wild card bonus to resist all attempts to discover or gain access to the secure area.
- **Streamlined**: This piece of equipment is optimized to perform its function faster than most tools of its type. When using this item for its intended purpose, you can use a simple action to perform a test that would ordinarily take a standard action to complete, or you can finish a downtime task in half the time the task would ordinarily require.
- **Stylish**: Your equipment, clothing, or other gear is stylish, expensive-looking, and utterly cutting-edge. Those who recognize and value such items will consider you very important, and they are more likely to allow you access to reserved seating, restricted areas, or private rooms. They may also give you the benefit of the doubt, allow you to bypass lines, or attempt to impress you. At the Storyteller's discretion, stylish equipment can reduce the difficulty of feeding, effectively granting you an additional level of Herd (maximum 6).
- **Sturdy:** This item is a particularly solidly-built object of its type. While other items shatter if they take a significant impact, this item can suffer 5 health levels of damage before becoming nonfunctional.

- **Superior:** This piece of equipment gives you a +1 bonus to your test pool when used for its intended purpose. For example, a Superior set of lock-picks gives you a +1 bonus when using the Security skill to pick a lock. A Superior computer gives you a +1 bonus when performing any standard Computer skill test. You cannot benefit from the Superior quality if you do not have the appropriate skill to use this item. This quality may be applied multiple times to a single item.

Sample Equipment

These are some examples of simple equipment that can be found in the **World of Darkness**. By expending the appropriate downtime actions, crafting, or otherwise taking reasonable effort, a character can acquire one of these items.

TWO HANDED AXE

Qualities:
Brutal, Deadly

TWO HANDED SWORD

Qualities:
Accurate, Brutal

KATANA

Qualities:
Accurate, Brutal

SILVER DAGGER

Qualities:
Concealable, Silver

THROWING KNIFE

Qualities:
Balanced, Accurate

SPEAR

Qualities:
Staking, Reach

WOODEN STAKE

Qualities:
Concealable, Staking

SHOTGUN

Qualities:
Spread, Accurate

ELEPHANT GUN

Qualities:
Brutal, Deadly

PISTOL (DRAGON'S BREATH)

Qualities:
Accurate, Incendiary Ammunition

HIGH-CALIBER RIFLE

Qualities:
Accurate, Brutal

SNIPER RIFLE

Qualities:
Accurate,
Long range

MACHINE GUN

Qualities:
Automatic,
Ammo Capacity II

GAMING LAPTOP

Qualities:
Superior,
Customized:
Video Games

SPORTS CAR

Qualities:
Flashy, Stylish

WALL SAFE

Qualities:
Secure, Concealed

Alchemical Set

Qualities:
Antique, Streamlined

Table-Leg Club (Improvised)

Qualities:
Staking

Bow

Qualities:
Accurate, Deadly

Chain Mail

Qualities:
Chest Plate, Hardened

Flak Vest

Qualities:
Ballistic, Chest Plate

SWAT Team Armor

Qualities:
Full Body, Rugged

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Brad Klinger
Bran Bresal
Brandon Bensen
Brandon Grinslade
Brandon 'Kerensky' Yarberry
Brandon Stalnaker
Brannon "Pinky" Livingston
Braxton Rutledge
Brendan Sherlock
Brendan Whaley
Brent "John Hartmann" Sturdevant
Brent Cerrato
Brent Colliins
Brent Logan Reitze
Brett "Adam Calhoun" Grimstad
Brett Kaminski
Brettwick Gordon
Brian "Chainsaw" Campbell
Brian "Midas" Johnson
Brian "The Mad Brujah"
Brian "Wolf" Kasheta
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Khoross
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kinok0
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leosapiens

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Ligeia Elizabeth Fitzpatrick
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Loco Diablo
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Lord Garret Wingate
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Lorenzo Melchor
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Loriean
Lorik
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Lt. Robert Middleton of the Ivory Patriots
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Lucas D`Riviera - O Rebelde
Lucas Greene
Lucian "Spike" Zantosa
Lucian Du'Raine
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M. Sean Molley
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Mae Empson
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neothoron
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Nigel Kesington of Clan Tremere
Nikika Giovanni
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Nikki Lewandowski
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No name listed. Thanks.
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qblueknight
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Rain and Riot of Father's Favored
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Ramon De Javier
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Randall Dederick
Randy (Marphos) Burkhart
Randy Allen
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Red, Ogre for Hire
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Sérgio, the Jack
Serremo Duncan
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The Bratovitch Family
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Wonko
Wormwood Yantary
Wright
Xavier Aubuchon-Mendoza
Xavier Flawinne
Xeres LeNoire
Xxero
Xyrus Oblisk aka Hieu "Tony" Nguyen
Yan Beauchamp
Yes
Yes
Yngwie Robinson
Z Spellstorm
Zac Taylor
Zach Keane
Zach S. Parsons - Vycanthus
Zachary Thomas Tyler, Taifa Gangrel ashipu
Zanic Night
Zanikkah Reed-Chase
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MIND'S EYE THEATRE

VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE

By Night Studios

Player:
Character:
Archetype:
Clan: **Setting/Sect:** **Title:**

Attributes

Assign 7 dots to your primary attribute, 5 to your secondary, and 3 to your tertiary. Choose one focus in each attribute.

Physical OOOOO OOOOO
Bonus Attributes OOOOO
❑ Strength ❑ Dexterity ❑ Stamina

Social OOOOO OOOOO
Bonus Attributes OOOOO
❑ Charisma ❑ Manipulation ❑ Appearance

Mental OOOOO OOOOO
Bonus Attributes OOOOO
❑ Perception ❑ Intelligence ❑ Wits

Skills

Choose one skill and assign 4 dots. Choose two, and assign 3 dots each. Choose three, and assign 2 dots each. Then choose four, and assign 1 dot each.

Academics OOOOO	Empathy OOOOO	Performance OOOOO
Animal Ken OOOOO	Firearms OOOOO	Performance OOOOO
Athletics OOOOO	Intimidation OOOOO	Science OOOOO
Awareness OOOOO	Investigation OOOOO	Science OOOOO
Brawl OOOOO	Leadership OOOOO	Security OOOOO
Computer OOOOO	Linguistics OOOOO	Stealth OOOOO
Crafts OOOOO	Lore OOOOO	Streetwise OOOOO
Crafts OOOOO	Medicine OOOOO	Subterfuge OOOOO
Dodge OOOOO	Melee OOOOO	Survival OOOOO
Drive OOOOO	Occult OOOOO	OOOOO

Backgrounds

Assign one background 3 dots. Assign a second background 2 dots. Assign 1 dot to a third.

Generation OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO

Blood

Generation determines maximum blood, and limits blood spent per turn.

☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐

● 10/1, ●● 12/2, ●●● 15/3, ●●●● 20/4, ●●●●● 30/5

Disciplines

Choose one in-clan discipline and assign it 2 dots. Assign 1 dot to each of your other in-clan disciplines.

OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO

Willpower

Characters begin play with 6 willpower.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Merits & Flaws

Buy up to 7 points of merits and 7 points from flaws.

Morality

Characters begin on Humanity, with a Morality of five.

Humanity

1 2 3 4 5 6

Health Levels

Incapacitated characters lose their simple action.

Healthy	☐☐☐
Injured	☐☐☐
Incapacitated	☐☐☐

Status

Common Test Pools

Initiative

Primary Attack				○
				○
				○
				○
				○

Initiative is your higher attribute: Mental or Physical.
Pools are your Attribute + Skill (or WP) + Wild Card.

Beast Traits

All Beast Traits are removed after a day's sleep.

1 — Wrong Another
2 — Inflicting Injury
3 — Killing
5 — Heinous Acts

❑ **1 Beast Trait**
Rage: Test if you take 4 damage; **Hunger:** Test if out of blood; **Fear:** Test if immersed in fire or sunlight.

❑ **2 Beast Traits**
Rage: Test at 3 damage; **Hunger:** Test if blood is below 1/3; **Fear:** Test if burned by fire or sunlight.

❑ **3 Beast Traits**
Rage Test at 2 damage; **Hunger:** Test if blood is below 1/2. **Fear:** Standing too close to fire or sunlight.

❑ **4 Beast Traits**
Rage: Test if you take any damage.; **Hunger:** Test if not at full.blood; **Fear:** Seeing sunlight or fire larger than a lighter.

❑ **5 Beast Traits**
Lose a permanent point of morality.

Difficulty Scale: Easy-5, Standard-8, Difficult-15, Challenging-20, Epic-30

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