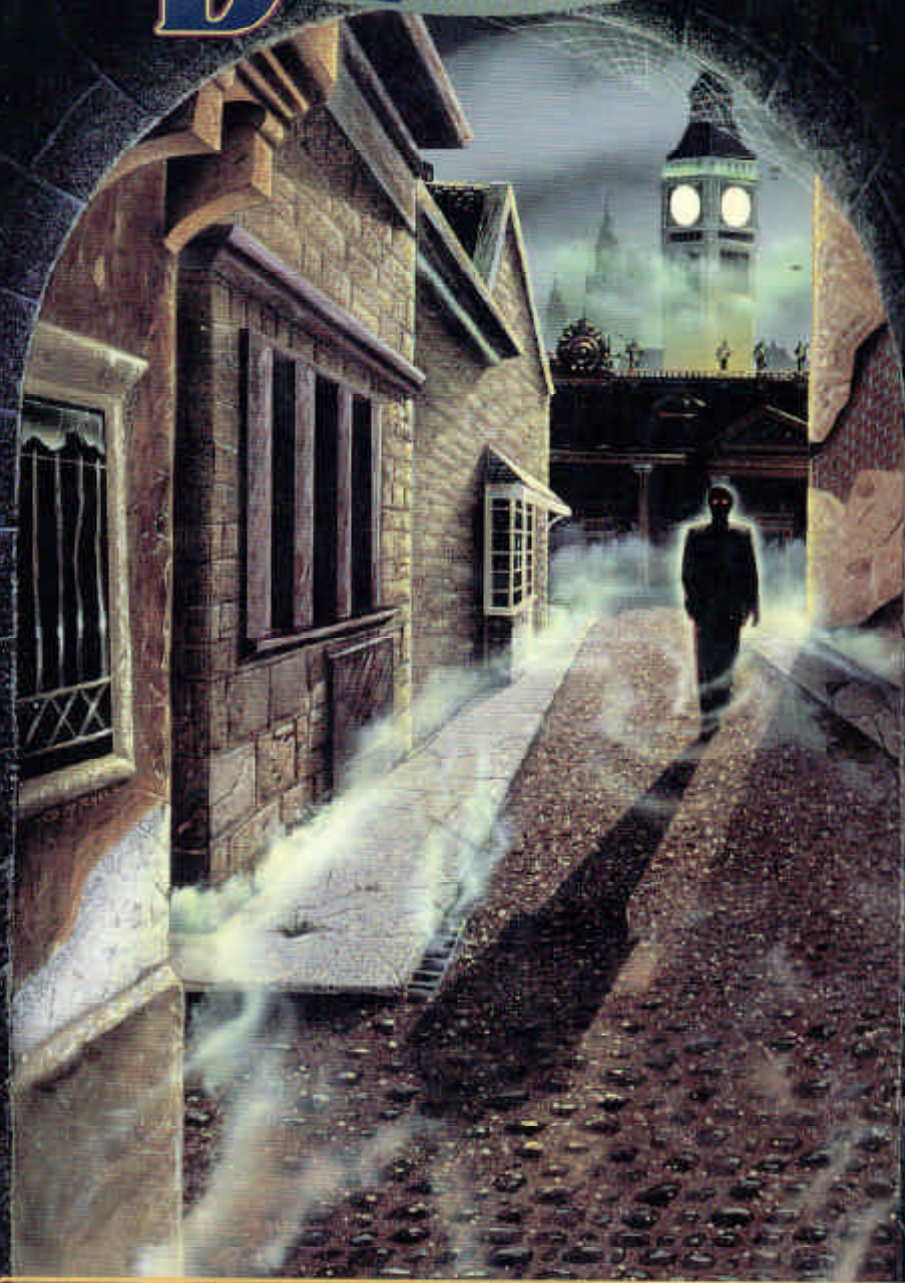


World of Darkness



*Beginning a series of World Sourcebooks for
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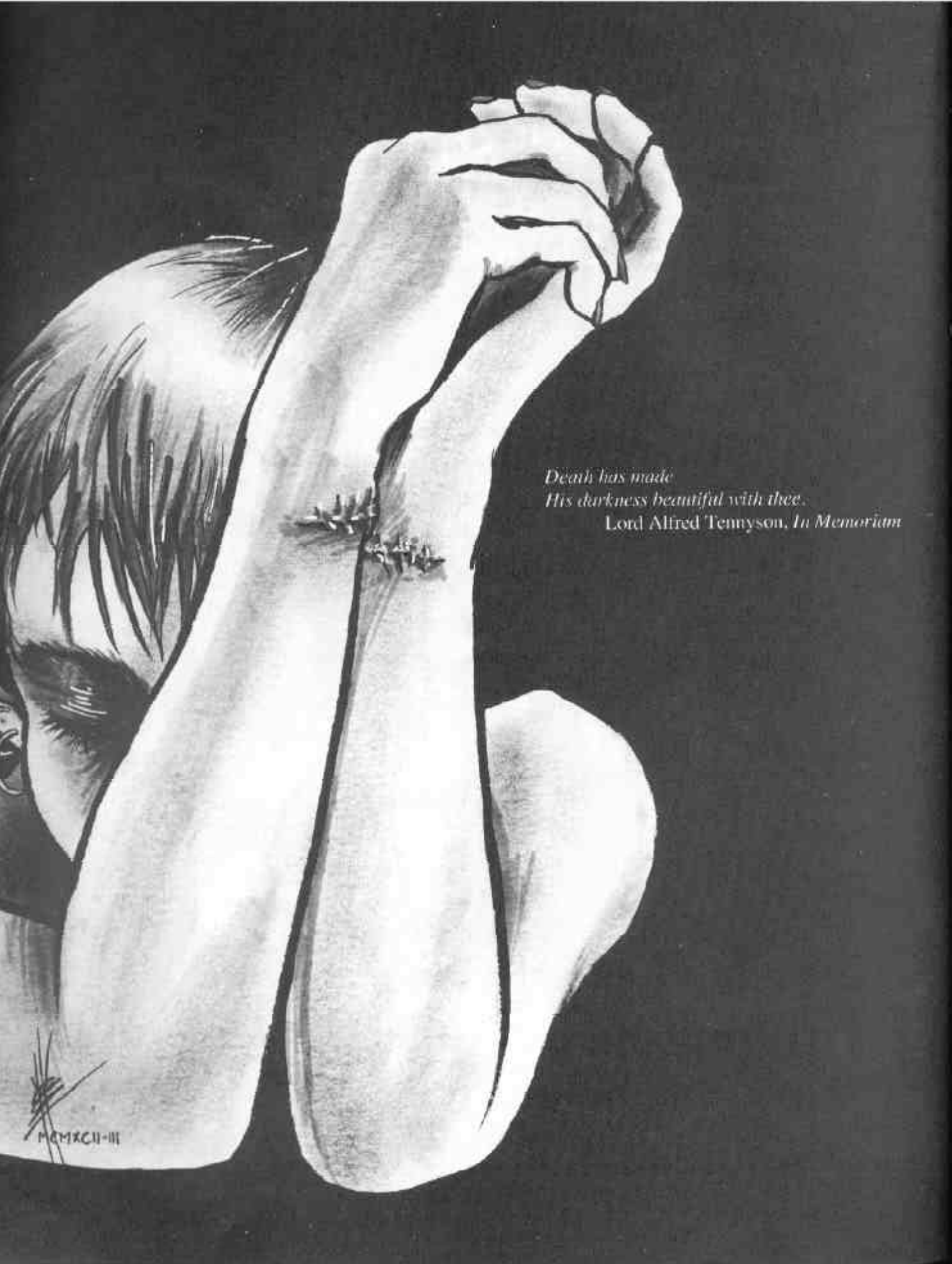
A World of Darkness:

The Promised Lands

Written By:

Graeme Davis, Rob Hatch,
Andrew Greenberg, Steve Crow,
Ryan O'Rourke, Lee Gold,
Frank Frey





*Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.
Lord Alfred Tennyson, In Memoriam*

A scratching in the shadows. Footsteps on a foggy street. Ripples in the perception along a murky sky. A chill breeze on a dusky evening. You see nothing, but the cold horror swells all the same.

You quicken your pace, hoping to leave it behind. But the sounds build, the wind becomes colder ... and the darkness grows.

Soon the patter of your feet on the cobblestones has turned into a stacatto beat, and you flee, tripping and stumbling along roadways and alleys. Brushing past lightpoles, careening by brick walls, you race toward sanctuary, only to see it fade into the distance.

Alone but for the shapes coalescing around you, you sit in the dirt where you tumbled as though hit from behind. Now there is nought you can do but block from your eyes the vision of what will come out of the night.

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Special Thanks to:

Mark "Been There, Done That" Rein-Hagen, for all his world-traveller stories. "Why, I remember that time in Singapore when all I had was my shorts and 32 cents ..."

Stewart "Eagle Eye" Wieck for inventing new games to fit our shrinking warehouse space. "Okay, Josh, you run that way and I'll throw this ball at your head ..."

Ken "High Points" Cliffe, for scoring a 31.

Josh "Motor Mouth" Timbrook, for his deals and wheels.

Wes "40 Acres and a Pallet Mule" Harris, for the simple pleasures of life (who remembers the hill?).

Sam "Triple Agent" Chupp, for being the only corporate spy in the gaming industry (sorry for breaking your cover).

Rob "Cthulhu Kid" Hatch, for divulging the secrets of his misspent youth.

Chris "\$12 an hour" McDonough — yeah, right.

Travis "Headbasher" Williams, for making us all mighty insecure.

Andrew "Blah-blah-blah" Greenberg, for showing us how insane he can become.

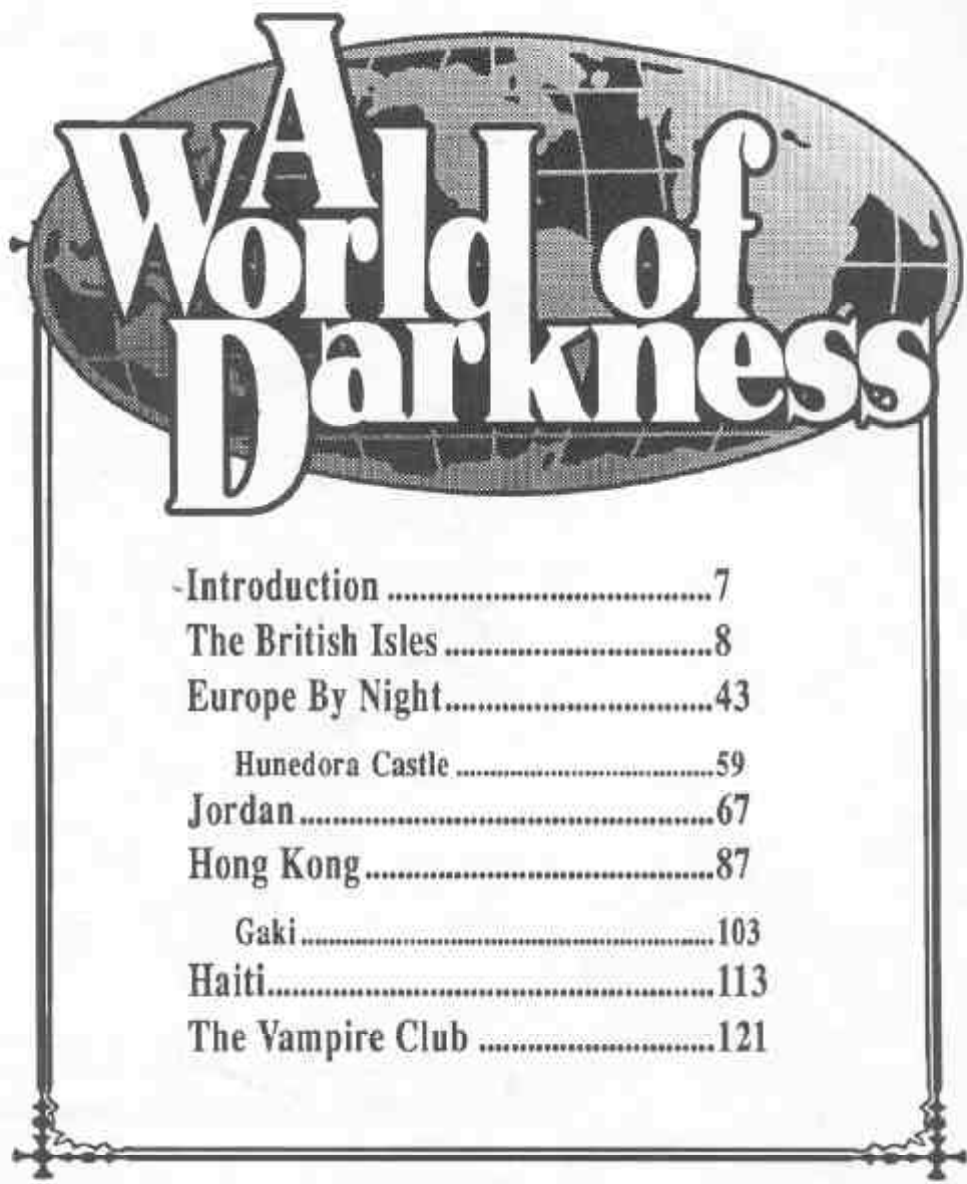
Brian "Buckshot" Blume, for highway robbery (Wells Fargo caught up yet?).

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Word From the White Wolf Game Studio:

Continuing our incredibly rapid, poorly thought-out expansion, Chris McDonough, after much begging and pleading, has resigned himself to making his relationship with us official. As of April 1 (no coincidence in the date, is there Chris?), White Wolf will have a new production guru. Best known for his stunning back covers (check out the beauty on the back of this book), Chris also does maps, art, layout, production, windows, very small rocks Finally convinced to join on because of our sparkling personalities (we said he could play seven hours of four square during each eight-hour workday), Chris has already sworn that if his salary doesn't bankrupt us, all the computer toys he needs will.



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Introduction

Despite the interest the Kindred show in America and the United States, the New World is only a small part of their concerns. A whole world spins in monolithic order, ripe for the plucking. For cons they have followed the progress of civilization, and even where it is no more, at least some trace of the Undead can be found. But where civilization continues, and grows strong, there the Kindred can be found in force, a power beyond reason.

They become a part of the landscape, hidden and disguised, but an element which exists on the edges, taking what it wants and returning death. They seep into the very foundation of the culture, worming their way into its most vital parts and corrupting all they can. However, they are not all there is to this world of darkness.

Werewolves, magi, faeries and spirits all exist on the periphery of reality. Vampires have their game, and they play it through the world of the kine, but theirs is not the only one. The other beings of legend have their own methods and goals, often in conflict with the Kindred but sometimes in conjunction.

However, even these powerful figures of myth are not the whole of the supernatural spectrum. As illustrated through *A World of Darkness* and other supplements, more exists in this world than even the Undead may suspect.

It is up to the Storyteller, the maker and shaper of the myths of the Chronicle, to decide the role of these unnatural powers. One can have engage in a fully satisfying Chronicle from start to finish without ever adding anything other than the Kindred and kine — no werewolves, demons from the pits, crazed sorcerers, rotting mummies, living mansions or blood-drinking Cats.

The Jihad of the Cainites can be completely fulfilling, dangerous and exciting enough for any player. For those who want to stretch their Stories beyond this format, *A World of Darkness* provides a starting point. Not only does it offer descriptions of the Kindred communities and conspiracies around the planet, but it provides a glimpse into those unlit areas where creatures equally mysterious — and equally deadly — dwell.

The focus is on Vampires, for of all the creatures of wicked fables, they are the ones most enamored of humanity. Where humans make their home, there too treads the Vampire. From London to Jordan to Hong Kong to Haiti, in all these places the kine resides, the Undead are sure to be found.

Of course, everything contained within this book is dependent upon you and your imagination. There is no reason for Jordan to be under the control of the mysterious Talaq or Hunedoara castle home to such powerful Cainites except as it makes for better stories and a more compelling chronicle. As with any product for *Vampire: The Masquerade*, everything presented herein exists at the the whim of the Storyteller. Feel free to discard any part of this supplement you feel does not fit the concept, mood or theme of the world where you want your Chronicle to take place.

Additionally, none of these sections should be considered whole and immutable. Add your own Vampires, change the motivations of those provided or subtract them altogether. Room has been left for the Storyteller's creations and, since anyone can go out and buy this book, making one's own changes is a sure way to keep the surprises intact.

Finally, if one does use this book as is, remember that even in the world of the Walking Dead things are not static. Any and all of this can change through the actions of characters or others, and indeed it should. White Wolf will be releasing more products fleshing out this world of darkness, but your Chronicle will develop through your own creativity as well as ours. While the Queen may reign in London today, she may be staked to a roof on the morn. Sic semper tyrannis.

The British Isles

Written by Graeme Davis, Art by Larry McDougal

Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the mid-day sun.

- Noel Coward, *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*

Introduction

This chapter cannot hope to cover the entire history and geography of the British Isles, nor give an exhaustive listing and description of the islands' Cainite population. Instead, the following pages present a summary of places, personalities and events, hoping to give the reader a broad overview. Those interested in reading further will find travel guides to Britain and Ireland (available in most bookstores) a convenient way to pick up key information about an area; to look further into a particular period of history, there are few better starting points than *The Pelican History of England* paperbacks, which are inexpensive, written for ordinary people to understand, and available in most good bookstores.

Before going any further, the author would also like to make it clear that any resemblance between events and personalities presented here and actual historical events and personalities is entirely contrived. Any distress or outrage which these fictional contrivances may cause to any readers is unintentional. Any political opinions or interpretations are entirely the author's own, and events have sometimes been slanted to better serve the game. This is *not* the *real* British Isles: it's the British Isles in the Gothic-Punk world of *Vampire...*

Geography

There is often confusion over the distinctions between England, Britain, Great Britain, the United Kingdom and the British Isles. Needless to say, the inhabitants of these Islands guard these distinctions jealously, and react to foreigners' confusion with a mixture of amusement and contempt. The differences are actually very straightforward.

England is one of three nations which (together with Wales and Scotland) makes up the island of Britain, which is the largest of the British Isles. The geographical term "British Isles" includes Ireland, although the Irish often dislike any implied association with Britain. (More of this under the heading of *History*.) Great Britain is the term used to refer to

the political entity which consists of the island of Britain and various small offshore islands, such as Anglesey, Mull and the Isle of Wight. The United Kingdom is the political entity which consists of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Despite their disgust at foreign confusion over this issue, very few Britons use these terms consistently. For all but the most doggedly pedantic, the terms "Britain," "Great Britain" and "United Kingdom" are more or less the same; the important thing is to keep in mind the distinctions between English, Welsh, Scots and Irish. Asking a Scot what part of England he is from is one of the most dangerous things you can do in these islands, with the possible exception of asking an Irishman the same question.

Physical

England consists mainly of fertile lowlands in the south and east, with hills and moorland in the north and west. The highest point is Scafell in Cumbria, at 978 meters (approximately 3,180 feet). Major river systems are the Thames in the southeast, the Severn in the southwest, and the Humber, Tees and Tyne in the north.

Wales is a mountainous country, with fertile ground only in the deep east-west valleys which run down to the Irish Sea, the narrow strips of coastal lowland and the rich island of Anglesey. The highest point is Mount Snowdon, at 1,085 meters (approximately 3,525 feet).

Scotland consists of southern lowlands and northern highlands, with many islands, especially on the rugged west coast. The highest point is Ben Nevis, at 1,343 meters (approximately 4,365 feet).

Ireland is a mixture of rugged mountains, peat marshes and fertile lowlands. On the whole, it is the wettest of the islands. Its highest point is Carrauntoohil, at 1,041 meters (approximately 3,383 feet).

In addition to the two main islands of Britain and Ireland, there are various smaller islands and island groups. The Hebrides, Orkneys and Shetlands are west, north and north-

east of Scotland respectively, while the Isle of Man sits in the Irish Sea between Britain and Ireland. Anglesey lies off the northwest coast of Wales, close enough to be connected to the mainland by a bridge. The Isle of Wight is off the south coast of England, and the Scilly Isles lie to the southwest. The Channel Islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Sark and Alderney are physically part of France; politically connected to the United Kingdom, they are all that remain of the feudal lands of the Norman kings. There are many other islands, too numerous to mention.

Climate

More than anything else, Britain is famous for its grey skies and rain. The climate of the British Isles is actually fairly mild for their latitude, partly because of the temperature-moderating influence of the sea and partly because of a warm current known as the North Atlantic Drift, which originates in the Gulf of Mexico. The British Isles are the first land encountered by rain-bearing winds from the Atlantic, and rainfall is year-round but seldom as torrential as some Hollywood moviemakers like to think. The wettest months are in late spring and early summer — the term “April showers” is a typically British understatement.

Of more significance to the Kindred population are the hours of daylight. In the southern half of the islands, winter sunset is around 4:30 p.m. and sunrise around 8 a.m., while in summer sunset can be as late as 10:30 p.m. and sunrise as early as 4 a.m.. In the extreme north, summer nights are shorter and winter nights longer. The northern isles of Scotland experience midnight sun in the summer; owing to their high latitude, the sun grazes the horizon but does not actually set for a few days at the height of summer.

Throughout most of the year, there is an appreciable period of twilight between light and dark; combined with overcast weather, this weak light can enable stronger Kindred to extend their period of activity by as much as two hours per night. In winter and early spring, under dire enough circumstances, it is even possible to go out at noon on a particularly overcast day (if one can keep awake), provided that one takes reasonable precautions to avoid direct light on the skin. Since most people are thoroughly wrapped up against the weather at these times of year, a Cainite can walk among mortals without being noticed.

The British have a saying that they have weather while other people have climate, and it is certainly true that the weather of the British Isles can be unpredictable. Hail and sleet can fall in July, while a March or April day can suddenly turn from overcast gloom to brilliant sunshine. The British reputation for talking endlessly about the weather arises from this uncertainty, and is not unjustified; but like most things to do with the weather, it has become somewhat exaggerated in the minds of other nations.

History

The strength of history and tradition in those islands is immense, and the intrinsic potential of their Kindred equally powerful. If they would only divert their energies from fighting among themselves and alternately mourning the past and bemoaning the present, bury their differences and apply themselves to moving forward, there is not telling what they might accomplish.

- Hoteph, Ventrue Justicar

The written history of the British Isles is generally accepted as beginning in 55 BC, with the first expedition of Julius Caesar. Earlier Phoenician texts mention the “Tin Islands,” and it is known that traders from the Middle East came to southwestern Britain for tin. The prehistory of the British Isles stretches back much further.

Farming came to the British Isles around 4000 BC, having spread across Europe from the eastern Mediterranean. Although there is some archaeological evidence for small-scale, short-distance migrations, it seems certain that ideas did more travelling than people. Nearly all of the British Isles were under cultivation when the Bronze Age dawned, around 2000 - 1500 BC. Archaeologists believe that the Bronze Age saw a series of social changes which permitted the rise of ruling classes and a warrior caste from the basically egalitarian Neolithic farming communities. By the beginning of the Iron Age around 500 BC, society seems to have reached the form which the Romans encountered: tribes of farmers and herders, protected and ruled by a warrior elite.

Roman Britain

Caesar's two expeditions to Britain, in 55 and 54 BC, were little more than reconnaissance missions, and did not lead up to an invasion. Augustus was more concerned with consolidating and organizing the Roman Empire than extending its boundaries, and although the mad Emperor Caligula made one attempt at a British expedition, this ended in a farcical scene on the coast of Gaul as he ordered his troops to collect seashells, which he took back to Rome and tried to pass off as the spoils from the conquest of the ocean. It was not until AD 43 that Caligula's successor Claudius undertook the conquest of Britain.

The lowlands of the south and east were quickly taken, some by politics and some by force of arms. The Celtic tribes and kingdoms were a fractious lot, and it was easy to play on their rivalries and feuds and prevent their uniting against the common enemy. Things were harder going in the north and west, where terrain was rougher and the tribes were more independent. For a while, the southern leader Caradoc (also known as Caratacus or Caractacus) seemed to have a chance of uniting the Britons, but he was defeated in battle and subsequently betrayed to the Romans by another tribal ruler.

The conquest of northern and western Britain took another generation, and was never fully completed. A governor was drafted in from Asia Minor, where he had had experience of fighting in the hills of Afghanistan, and given the task of conquering Wales. Guerilla warfare in the hills and mountains was too much for the Romans, who contented themselves with razing Anglesey and pinning down the coast with a chain of forts. In the north, the talented governor Agricola may have reached the northern shores of Scotland, but the only sustainable frontier was the line of what later became Hadrian's Wall.

Britain was more or less peaceful from the end of the first century AD. Roman towns sprang up (the place-name ending *-chester* or *-caster* indicates Roman origin), trade flourished, and the province gradually became "civilized." Trouble on the northern frontier was intermittent. But by the end of the third century, trouble was brewing elsewhere in Europe.

Germanic peoples from the north were on the move: Goths pushed southward across the frontiers in Germany and the eastern provinces, Franks moved into Gaul, Vandals headed through Spain to North Africa and then doubled back to Sicily and southern Italy, Lombards pushed across the Alps into northern Italy, and Saxons began to put pressure on the eastern coast of Britain.

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes were three Germanic peoples living in what is now northern Germany and southern Denmark. They began making raids on the eastern coast of Roman Britain, and later they came to settle. Rome adopted the short-sighted policy of giving land to some Saxons on condition that they kept others out; word got around that there was free land to be had in Britain, and settlement increased. In the north, the Scots had migrated from northern Ireland, and were forcing the native Picts eastward as they settled western Scotland.

Being a frontier province, Britain was one of the first places stripped of troops in order to defend the rest of the Empire, and sensing Roman weakness, the Picts and Scots overran Hadrian's Wall and ravaged the north. Remaining Roman forces in Britain mutinied repeatedly, and there were some attempts to set up an independent Empire of Britain, but no one could hold back the Saxons. In AD 410, a request for help was answered by a letter from Rome stating that Britain must look to her own defense from now on. Roman Britain was dead, and the Dark Ages had begun.

The Dark Ages

The Dark Ages are so called because of the collapse of Roman civilization in Britain, and because of the gap in written history. This became a time of legend, with leaders like Vortigern, Ambrosius (who may or may not have been Merlin) and Artorius Riothamus (who may or may not have been Arthur) fighting a losing battle against the incoming flood of Saxons. The Romano-British population was gradually pushed back into the north and west as the Saxons took

the lowlands. Some Britons set sail for the continent and established the province of Brittany.

The Saxons were a pagan people, worshipping gods closely related to the later deities of the Vikings. The Britons had become Christian along with the rest of the Roman Empire, and Christianity had even conquered Ireland where Rome could not — according to legend, Saint Patrick was a Welshman by birth, taken to Ireland by slave-raiders, and proceeded to convert the whole island to Christianity in addition to driving out the snakes. Now, Ireland set about converting the Saxons. Island monasteries at Iona on the west coast of Scotland and Lindisfarne on the northeast coast of England formed the bases for missionary activity, and by the time Saint Augustine came from Rome to convert the people of Kent in AD 597, Irish and Scottish missionaries had already made great advances in the north.

Over the next few decades, the Saxons — or English, as they called themselves — were gradually converted to Christianity. Missionaries used a "top down" approach, targeting rulers and having them enforce Christianity on their subjects. Much of what later became witchcraft and faerie lore was a garbled folk-memory of pre-Christian Saxon belief.

England at this time consisted of a number of distinct kingdoms. The most prominent were Northumbria in the northeast, Mercia in the Midlands and Wessex in the south-central region. Kent, Essex and Sussex were smaller kingdoms who generally sided with Wessex, and in the northwest the Saxon kingdom of Cumbria bordered on the tiny surviving



British kingdom of Elmet. The lands of East Anglia were mainly reed marsh, and apparently only sparsely settled — by the Angles, who gave them their name.

The Vikings

In AD 793, the first recorded Viking raid struck the undefended island monastery of Lindisfarne, off the Northumbrian coast. Christian England was rocked to the foundations by the ferocity of these pagan raiders; it is ironic that they were so similar to the Saxons' own pagan ancestors. For the next fifty years, raiding continued along the coasts of England and on the mainland of Europe as well. Some saw it as God's punishment for the sins of the people.

Towards the middle of the ninth century, the Scandinavians began to colonize instead of raiding. Around 840, Norwegians in Ireland founded a city which became Dublin. In 866, the Danes took York and began to colonize the north of England. In 911, Norwegians in France were granted land and the Duchy of Normandy was born. Mercia and Wessex fought a series of losing battles, buying time with Danegeld ("Dane-money": in effect, protection money) as they tried to muster troops, and it was not until 878 that Alfred the Great of Wessex stemmed the tide at the Battle of Edgington and

forced the Danes to agree to a frontier — now, the land was divided into Christian England and the pagan Danelaw.

With occasional battles and other problems, this situation remained stable for a century or so. By the year 1000, the entire Viking world had accepted Christianity. England and the Danelaw were subject to intermittent attacks by Scandinavian rulers who wanted to add this new Viking land to their realms. The most successful was Cnut the Great (the legendary King Canute) who in the early 11th century ruled Norway, Denmark and the whole of England; for the first time, England was a unified country under a single ruler. As is so often the case, Cnut's achievements died with him. His son Hardacnut became king of England, but upon his death was succeeded by the Saxon Edward the Confessor.

Meanwhile, a Norwegian prince called Harald Hardrada returned to his homeland from Byzantium, where he had served in the elite, ethnic Scandinavian Varangian Guard. He demanded a share of the throne from his brother Magnus, and a shaky deal was arranged. Two years later, Magnus fell off his horse and died, leaving Harald in control. He took Denmark within a decade, and then turned his eyes to England.

By now, Edward the Confessor was on his deathbed, and other eyes were on the throne of England. Edward's nomi-





nated successor was Earl Harold Godwinson, but Duke William the Bastard of Normandy had extracted a promise from Harold that he would help him to the throne of England in Edward's death. When Edward died in 1066, Harald Hardrada attacked the north; Harold Godwinson defeated him at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, and then had to force-march the length of the country to Hastings to face the invading forces of Duke William. At the Battle of Hastings Harold was killed and the English forces routed; William the Conqueror became the first Norman king of England.

Norman and Medieval England

Within 20 years, William I had subdued all of England, and the Normans mounted campaigns in Ireland. Norman rule varied from firm to tyrannical, and this is the background for the early Robin Hood legends. The nobles who had helped William were rewarded with grants of land, and form the oldest of England's noble families. The barons built castles to awe the peasants and keep them in line, and the king built castles and forts to keep the nobles in check.

William's successors strengthened the position of the ruling classes, and also began to organize the administration of the kingdom. As Dukes of Normandy, the kings of England also had lands in France, which had to be maintained and defended. These lands presented the king with a dilemma,

which characterized much of the Middle Ages. Fighting endless wars in France drained the kingdom of money and manpower and necessitated unpopular taxes which sometimes led to revolts; on the other hand, failing to fight in France threatened the Baron's interests there and gave the king a reputation for being weak, which could lead to a coup by the nobility. When King John signed the Magna Carta in 1215, it was under the threat of just such a coup.

England's holdings in France gradually dwindled. Wales was conquered by Edward I, but border conflicts and raiders from Scotland were constant problems. Campaigns in Ireland were inconclusive and bloody.

The Tudors

The Wars of the Roses lasted from the 1460s to the succession of Henry Tudor as King Henry VII. England was divided into two factions, led by the noble houses of Lancaster (whose badge was a red rose) and York (whose badge was a white rose). When the dust had settled, the Lancastrian house of Tudor had gained the throne, but only had a very weak claim to it. Henry made the most of people's fears of renewed civil war, and was able to bring peace and stability to the kingdom despite various rebels and pretenders.

Henry was succeeded by his second son, Henry VIII, an enthusiastic scholar who dreamed of bringing Renaissance

glory to England. He encouraged the arts and sciences, and reorganized the administration for greater efficiency, but desperately needed a male heir to secure the succession and prevent a fresh set of civil wars breaking out after his death. He had a healthy daughter, Mary, from his marriage to the Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon, but they had no live male child.

Henry applied to the Pope for a divorce on the grounds that the marriage was incestuous; Catherine had been married to Henry's older brother Arthur, but Arthur had died shortly after and Catherine maintained that the marriage had never been consummated. Relations with Rome became strained, and eventually Henry founded the Anglican church with himself at the head, placing all temporal and spiritual authority in England in the hands of the king. The Reformation was in progress elsewhere in Europe — in fact, Henry had earlier written a denunciation of Luther for which the Pope had given him the title "Defender of the Faith" — and Henry began the systematic destruction of Catholicism on the grounds that it could become a focus for rebellion.

Henry VIII is best known for his six marriages. After divorcing Catherine of Aragon he married the English noblewoman Anne Bolcyn; again they had a healthy daughter, Elizabeth, but again there was no male heir. Anne's fiery temper was a match for Henry's own, and after a marriage of just under three years she was tried for adultery and treason and beheaded.

Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, was a gentle and devout soul, and gave him what he had wanted for so long; a son, Edward. She died soon after the birth, however, and Henry was persuaded to marry the German princess Anne of Cleves as part of a plan for a grand Protestant alliance. The marriage was never consummated, and ended in divorce after a short while.

Now aging, Henry was persuaded into a fifth marriage by the ambitious Duke of Norfolk, who proposed a match with his niece Catherine Howard. She was later found to be entertaining a string of younger lovers and executed for adultery and treason. Henry's last marriage was to twice-widowed Catherine Parr, and according to tradition it was the happiest.

Edward V was nine years old when Henry died, and was a sickly child. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 15. He was succeeded by Mary, the daughter of Henry and Catherine of Aragon; still a devout Catholic, she married King Philip of Spain and reestablished Catholicism in England, suppressing Protestants with the same ferocity as her father had suppressed Catholics, thus earning the nickname "Bloody Mary." A group of Protestant nobles tried to put 16-year-old Lady Jane Grey on the throne, but she lasted only nine days before Mary had her imprisoned and subsequently executed.

On Mary's death, her half-sister Elizabeth — who had done well to survive the turmoil since Henry's death — came to the throne as Queen Elizabeth I. She reestablished the Church of England and suppressed Catholics once more, as

potential rebels. Her rejection of a marriage with the king of Spain insulted that nation, and led to plans for an invasion which came to fruition in the abortive mission of the Spanish Armada in 1588. She never married, remaining wed to her nation and people. Under Elizabeth's rule, England first began to explore the New World (the colony of Virginia was named after the Virgin Queen), and English privateer/explorers like Drake and Hawkins harried Spanish shipping and explored the world. Shakespeare wrote many of his plays during her reign — and most of the historical plays have been slanted to favor the Tudor dynasty.

The Stuarts

Elizabeth died unmarried and childless, and the prospect of more civil wars could not be discounted. King James VI of Scotland was one of several people with a claim on the English throne, and when he was crowned James I of England, the mainland of Britain was united under a single rule for the first time.

The Stuart dynasty was for the most part a time of growth and optimism. The merchants of London, in particular, were bringing enormous wealth into the country, and English merchants and explorers were paving the way for the later development of the British Empire.

As elsewhere in the world, this period also saw a boom in witch trials; among the more notorious were the trials of the Berwick witches, accused of trying to summon a storm to drown the king, and the Pendle witch trials in Yorkshire, which have been compared to the trials of Salem. James I wrote a slim volume on *Daemonologie* (sic), whose reprinting inspired Shakespeare to write *Macbeth* (the victorious Duncan of the play was one of James' distant ancestors).

Political trouble was brewing, for James I believed in the divine right of kings, a feudal idea which had been tacitly ignored since the thirteenth century. He insisted that he was answerable only to God, and quarrelled with Parliament on several occasions. His son and successor Charles I continued in this vein, and the result was the English Civil War.

The Civil War

From 1642 to 1652, the crown was in constant dispute with Parliament. Open war broke out between the Royalist "Cavaliers" and the Parliamentarian "Roundheads" led by Oliver Cromwell. Charles I was executed in January 1649, and Cromwell ruled as Lord Protector during the period known as the Commonwealth. His rule was harsh, particularly in Ireland where his memory is still hated. Cromwell died in 1658, and two years later the Stuart King Charles II came to the throne. There was still a great deal of tension between Royalists and Parliamentarians and between Catholics and Protestants, and a Catholic plot nearly ruined the succession of James II. In 1666, London was almost completely destroyed by a great fire, but it was soon rebuilt.

The period after the Civil War is known as the Restoration of the Monarchy, and was a time of some decadence if the so-called Restoration Comedies are accurate mirrors of society.

The Stuart kings were dogged by political instability, and in 1688 James II was faced by a caucus of nobles who invited William of Orange to invade England. James was defeated by his own troops and fled, and William married James' daughter Mary with whom he was declared joint monarch. They were succeeded by Queen Anne, in whose reign England and Scotland were formally joined by the Act of Union, creating Great Britain.

The House of Hanover

Arising from the Electors of Hanover in Germany, this dynasty consisted of George I-IV, William IV and Victoria. It was during this period that the British Empire reached its height, Napoleon Bonaparte rose and fell, the American colonies declared and won independence, and — during George III's madness when his son (later George IV) ruled as Prince Regent — the "Regency" period, a very fashionable time with an active town life, the time of Beau Brummel and the fictional "Scarlet Pimpernel," Sir Percy Blakeney.

The Victorian Era

Queen Victoria ruled from 1837-1901, the longest reign of any monarch in British history. The Victorian era saw Britain rise to its greatest power, with an empire covering one-quarter of the Earth's land surface. Immense fortunes were made, especially in industry, but wealth tended to remain concentrated in a few hands. Various attempts were made to improve working conditions and the lot of the poor, starting with the socially conscious novels of Dickens and culminating in the formation of the Labour movement.

The 20th Century

The 20th century was more or less a period of decline in Britain. The reign of Edward VII continued the glory of the Victorian era, but World War I changed British society radically. Most Victorian generals had been fighting wars which matched single-shot Martini-Henry rifles against spears and arrows, and the Crimean War and the heroic but futile Charge of the Light Brigade represented the warfare of a bygone age. Few European military thinkers had paid any attention to the carnage of the American Civil War, and at the outbreak of World War I most commanders looked back to the era of Napoleon.

The bloodshed was appalling. Improved artillery, aerial bombardment, and above all the water-cooled machine gun decimated soldiers who were ordered to advance in ranks at walking pace, and shot for mutiny if they refused. Thousands of lives were exchanged for a few yards of ground, which was won back later at a similar cost.

The brutality and senseless bloodshed of the Great War, as it was called, widened the gap between the classes. The upper classes, who formed the officer corps, became characterized as feckless, uncaring and incompetent — leading to the upper-class twit caricature which had its golden age in the 1920s. Revolution in Russia led to the fear that it would spread across Europe, while the lower classes increasingly saw their true enemy as the industrialists and officers rather than their counterparts in the opposite trenches.

After the Great War, society was changed for ever. Women had entered the workforce in significant numbers for the first time, and won the vote in Britain in 1918. Fewer and fewer households could afford servants, and domestic staffs — and consequently houses — became smaller. Industrial reforms led to a slightly more even distribution of profits, encouraged by the growth of the Labour movement after the war and events like the General Strike of 1926.

The 1920s and 1930s were a time searching for a meaning, in many ways. In the aftermath of the Great War there were many social changes, and society was feeling its way into the new order. Britain was still a major world power, but its hold was slipping; Empire began to give way to Commonwealth as former colonies began to agitate for home rule.



The euphoria of the 1920s, when the young tried to forget the experiences of the war, gave way to a different feeling as the Depression began to bite. Britons watched with a mixture of bemusement and laughter as a funny little man with a Charlie Chaplin moustache came to power in Germany. Germany's power began to rebuild, and suddenly — or so it seemed — Herr Hitler was laying down terms to the rest of Europe. People wanted to avoid another war, but after a series of broken treaties and ignored threats, it became inevitable. For Britain, World War II began in September 1939, when yet another warning was ignored and German forces invaded Poland.

The Second World War was different from the first. The lessons had been learned well, and although Germany demonstrated a better command of modern military theory and technology than its opponents in the opening years of the war, there was no repeat of the carnage of World War I. Germany continued to sweep all before her, and when France fell in 1940 allied forces evacuated under fire from Dunkirk in just about every vessel that was capable of crossing the Channel. In the words of Prime Minister Churchill, the Battle of France was over, and the Battle of Britain had begun.

For the next three years, Britain was under almost constant aerial bombardment. For the first time, civilian targets suffered significant damage as London and other cities were bombed. There had been a few bombing raids by zeppelins during World War I, but they were few and mainly for propaganda; this time it was total war. While fighting to prevent a German invasion, Britain also had to face Japanese advances in her Asian colonies, and fight Germany in Africa. Refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe came to Britain and fought valiantly, but things looked bleak. America was giving aid, but would not enter the war, and the Atlantic supply routes were patrolled by deadly packs of U-boats.

In December 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, and America entered the war. It was to be some time before US forces committed themselves to a second front in Europe, but when they arrived a new hope seemed to dawn. American bombers flying from bases in Britain enabled round-the-clock bombing of targets inside Germany, and helped cripple the industrial base of the German war machine. A vast influx of men and machines made it possible to reenter Europe, and allied forces landed in Normandy in June 1944. After a year of hard fighting, Hitler was dead and Nazi Germany had collapsed.

Britain was exhausted. Most of her major cities were in rubble, but offers of economic aid from America were declined. America had established herself as a superpower, and was gaining a strong grip on Europe in the growing cold war with Soviet Russia; like France, Britain wanted to maintain a measure of independence. The years after the war were characterized by the official word "austerity"; everyone had to pull in their belts, work to rebuild the nation, and not expect too much.

World War II also dealt a fatal blow to the British Empire. The two decades after the war saw more former colonies than ever gaining independence, and Britain tried to reconcile itself to being a minor power once more. Labour governments after the war were ideologically opposed to the idea of an empire, and there was much to do at home; the foundations were laid for a welfare state, where every citizen would receive economic and medical assistance at need from the cradle to the grave, regardless of ability to pay.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, some of the euphoria of the rock 'n' roll era spread across the Atlantic from America. Ever since the invention of moving pictures, British audiences had been firm devotees of the Hollywood dream factory, and now American music swept the nation in a big way for the first time since Glenn Miller. British music made its own way in the world, too, with names like the Beatles, the Animals, the Kinks, the Yardbirds, Cream, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and Black Sabbath arising through the '60s. An economic boom in the second half of the decade convinced people that the bad times were over and it was time to party.

The party came to a sharp halt in the mid-1970s when recession threatened once more. Economic decline hit traditional industries like coal, steel and shipbuilding, and even the normally safe havens of banking and insurance services suffered. Conservative governments were constantly thwarted by the increasingly powerful unions, and Labour governments seemed unable to avoid running up massive deficits. Even the developing exploitation of North Sea oil did nothing to change the general downward trend. The euphoria of the '60s was wearing thin, and out of the resulting frustration, hopelessness and sense of betrayal was born a fashion and music movement characterized by anger, inverted snobbery, crassness and violence. It never gave itself a name, but those who cashed in called it Punk.

In 1979 a Conservative government was elected under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first female Prime Minister. Desperate ills required desperate cures, the country was told, and things would get worse before they got better. A ruthless economic policy destroyed many "lame-duck" industries and weakened the unions; there were strikes, protests and violence as the police were deployed in force to keep order. Unemployment soared, reaching almost 10% nationally and according to some sources rising above 90% in some of the hardest-hit areas. Simultaneously, the welfare system was reduced, and people were told to look after themselves instead of expecting the state to look after them.

In 1982, Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands, a small group in the south Atlantic that still belonged to Britain. The government seized the moment, and mounted a huge military campaign to liberate the thousand or so islanders. The campaign — for war was never formally declared — briefly united the nation, and took people's minds off problems at home. Shortly afterward, the US bombing of Libya from bases in Britain and the installation of Cruise missiles in the same bases led to a wave of anti-American feeling, fueled by

the personal friendship between Thatcher and U.S. President Ronald Reagan; Britons began to wonder who ruled the country.

Those who survived and thrived in Thatcher's Britain became Yuppies; the commercial south of the country fared reasonably well, while the industrial north was hardest hit. Opposition parties were torn by internal strife and made themselves unelectable, handing the Thatcher administration a second and third term — one of the most unpopular administrations of the century, but, in her own words, "there is no alternative."

For a while, it began to look as though these desperate measures might work. Financial deregulation led to a Yuppie Revolution and an increase in wealth in the mid-'80s, but the rich got richer and the rest stayed more or less the same. Many were caught up in the materialism of the age, but the trade deficit only got worse as they bought imported prestige items. The tax system was altered to reduce the crippling tax burden which Labour governments had placed on the rich, but when local governments were instructed to enforce the Community Charge — effectively a poll tax, for the first time since the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 — there was widespread and violent protest.

When, after 10 years in power, the country was once more in much the same state as before, Margaret Thatcher was toppled by a coup within the Conservative party. Her supporters retained enough power to ensure that her nominated successor John Major became Prime Minister, and apart from a slight softening of policies very little changed.

The Kine

*God save the queen
The fascist regime
And there's no future
And England's screaming*

—Sex Pistols, *God Save the Queen*

The mortals of Britain are not much different from the mortals of any other place. They tend to be more private and respectful of privacy than other nations, and they are also more suspicious of change: rather the devil you know than the devil you don't. Pessimism and cynicism have almost become national traits over the last couple of decades, but everything is expressed in a very understated way. It has been said that the highest praise from a Brit is to say that a thing is "not too bad," while the gravest condemnation is "not much good."

The class system effectively died in the social changes that took place between the two World Wars, but its traces still remain in the way blue-collar workers and white-collar workers regard each other, and in the differences between regions. London and the southeast are largely commercial

and light industrial areas, with heavy industry — such as remains — being based mainly in the cities of the Midlands and North. To the northerner, the southerner is effete, affected and entirely untrustworthy; to the southerner, there is no civilized life north of the Watford Gap (a service station on the M1 motorway, about 30 minutes north of London).

The British Isles have a surprisingly wide range of regional accents, subcultures and outlooks for such a small area, and much of this is rooted in the old Saxon kingdoms, and in the differences between England and the Danelaw. Put an East Ender in a pub with a Geordie, and they would have to work to understand each other. Accents and dialects are not quite so pronounced as they were in the past, as contact between regions has become more widespread at all levels in the last century.

Types of Kine

Worker

Workers of most types are not too much different from their American counterparts. Britain once had a bad name as the strike capital of the world, but union-management conflict has lessened since the '70s, partly because of the fear created by constantly threatening recession and partly because of extensive legislation by the Thatcher government to weaken union power.

Police

The British police (sometimes called "Bobbies" after Sir Robert Peel, who founded London's Metropolitan Police in 1829) are best known to foreigners for the fact that they do not routinely carry firearms. Some officers are trained in the use of firearms and may be issued with them if the need arises, and there are some branches (notably the anti-terrorist and diplomatic protection arms of Special Branch) whose officers are normally armed. Most police forces — especially in urban areas — compensate for this by training their officers in unarmed combat; Shotokan Karate is a favorite.

The basic unit on the street is the two-man car (some are called "panda cars" because of their black-and-white or blue-and-white markings), and officers normally go everywhere in pairs or multiples of pairs. Mounted officers and dog handlers are used in many cities to keep order on Friday and Saturday night, at soccer matches, and in the event of riots.

Riot units are equipped with coveralls of ballistic material or other heavy cloth, full-head helmets with ear-to-ear, brow-to-chin plexiglass visors, rectangular full-body shields of the same material, and batons. Some officers may use grenade launchers to fire tear gas in extreme situations, and in the troubled province of Northern Ireland both police and the army use plastic or rubber bullets in riots.

Youth Culture



Punks may still be seen in many of Britain's cities, but they are not as numerous or as flamboyant as they were in the late 70s and early 80s. In London especially, they exploit their newfound status as tourist attractions, sometimes begging money in exchange for allowing themselves to be photographed.

Skinheads are a small but constant presence, but are not as politically motivated or well-organized as they are in many parts of the United States. Some have links with racist groups — especially the right-wing National Front Party — but many are just in the movement for the fighting, especially at soccer matches.

Headbangers are a growing part of Britain's youth culture; they've been around since the 70s, but the rise of thrash, speed and death metal during the late '80s and early '90s has led to something of a rebirth. Bands like Anthrax and Napalm Death are favorites. More mainstream heavy rock has a smaller but equally loyal following. Apart from music and the rock 'n' roll lifestyle (i.e. sex and drugs and...), little unites this group; they will only normally come together to organize a party, and have few political or other interests.

Hippies have seen something of a rebirth in the latter part of the '80s, with the growth of environmental concerns and the rise of the New Age movement. Ripped military pants, heavy military boots, greatcoats, tie dyes and wild, matted hair (sometimes shaved high at the sides) are the current uniform. This group has a large anarchist contingent, and was at the forefront of many of the Poll Tax riots.

Gothicks, Goths or Goth-punks are the youth culture of most interest to the world of *Vampire*. Most dress in stark black and white, and both sexes wear heavy makeup most of the time. Big hair, normally dyed jet black, is the main trademark. They are at their most impressive when they go out for the evening — even the dowdiest of them could outshine the photo-session outfits of their musical idols the Damned, the Cure, the Sisters of Mercy, and so on. The tabloid press occasionally writes sensationalised stories of behavior in this group which closely mirrors that of the Blood Dolls of the states.

A group which attained some notoriety in the late 70s and '80s were the so-called Hooray Henries. These are the offspring of wealthy families, often around college age, whose parties have an unfortunate tendency to dissolve into drunken hooliganism and destruction of property. They are quick to offer to pay for damage, and seem to think that this takes care of everything — indeed, many of them insist that they have a perfect right to behave as they wish so long as they are prepared to pay, and accuse those who disagree of having no sense of humor. Many '80s Yuppies — especially those in high-pressure, high-income jobs like currency dealing — behaved in much the same way. This group has become less visible since the end of the '80s, but can still be found in any of Britain's more prestigious universities, especially Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and Bristol.

Minorities

Perhaps the most lasting legacy of the days of Empire is the ethnic mix which has turned most of Britain's cities into cultural melting pots (and, occasionally, powderkegs).

Immigration was not common before the end of World War II. In the 19th century there were Chinese communities in London, around Soho and Limehouse, and in Manchester, with smaller communities elsewhere. But it has been in the latter half of the 20th century that Britain has seen the most immigration. After World War II, people flooded in from the Indian subcontinent and from the Caribbean. Indians, Pakistanis, Bengalis and Sri Lankans constitute Britain's largest ethnic minority, with West Indians (or Afro-Caribbeans, to use the official term) a close second. Most of Britain's larger cities now have at least one mosque, and Islam is the country's fastest-growing religion. In West Indian communities, Rastafarianism is the religion/culture of choice for a large part of the younger population, although American rap and street culture are much copied, especially among teenagers.

The Midlands have a small but appreciable Eastern European population, founded mainly by refugees from Nazi invasion in World War II. Other ethnic groups include Arabs and Persians (mainly concentrated in London's West End), Irish (London and Liverpool have the largest communities), and — especially in London — a dash of every other nation on Earth.

Race relations in Britain are normally peaceful (if somewhat reserved), but a flareup is never far away, especially if there is a confrontation with the still predominantly white police force. In the early 80s, many of Britain's cities were rocked by riots that exploded in minority areas after brutal, tactless or just plain unfortunate incidents involving the police. Britain has a body of well-intentioned race relations legislation that never quite seems to work as well as it was planned to, and as much as ever things are down to the personal attitudes and prejudices of the individual. Anti-Semitism is comparatively rare in Britain; the Jewish population is largely integrated with the white Anglo-Saxon majority. The bulk of racial attacks since the 1970s have been directed at the Indo-Pakistani population.

Transportation

American characters will find driving an interesting experience in the British Isles. The most obvious difference is that the British drive on the left, but there is far more. The motorways are kept in reasonable repair, but are much more heavily used than most American highways — except possibly those around the great eastern cities and the Greater Los Angeles area. British drivers move faster (the speed limit on most roads of any size is 70 mph, and the average speed is around 85 mph) and are less courteous than many of their American counterparts. Drivers from the eastern cities will feel right at home.

Minor roads tend to be narrow, with just enough room for two compact cars to pass each other, and especially in the countryside they wind constantly and are often fringed by dense hedges eight or more feet high — the result being that forward visibility is rarely more than 30 yards or so. This generally does not discourage both locals and strangers from going everywhere at a minimum speed of 60 mph. In London — and increasingly in other large cities — the overlogged roads reduce traffic to around 15-20 mph, much the same speed as was attained by the horsedrawn transportation of the Victorian era. Parking in London is an absolute nightmare, even if one survives the traffic, and the best way to get anywhere in London and the southeast is by train.

Like most European nations, Britain has a railroad system which is far superior to anything in the New World. Although Brits delight in moaning about the delays and irregularity of the trains, it has to be said that on average they are only a few minutes late and every community of any size in the whole of the United Kingdom has its own railway station. Note the word "railway"; railroads are an American invention, and *quite* different. Some cities also have internal rail transit systems — the London Underground or "Tube" and the Tyneside Metro of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne are the two best-known.

Most of the larger cities have regional airports, and London has three. Heathrow is the best-known, and still handles the majority of Britain's air traffic; Gatwick is growing fast, but is hampered by the fact that it has only one runway and the development of surrounding housing has left little room for growth. Stanstead is small compared to the other two, and is used mainly by charter operations, package tour operators and private aviation. A London Docklands airport was opened in the heart of the city as part of an effort to rejuvenate the declining Victorian dock areas and turn them into a Yuppie paradise, but it is severely limited in the size of aircraft it can handle (30-odd-seat commuter jets like the de Havilland Dash-7 are the upper limit), and by noise abatement regulations in the densely occupied surrounding area.

The Kindred

Sure, it's crap. It's fallin' apart. Everyone hates everyone else, people play pass-the-parcel pushin' the blame around, and no one does nuffink to solve the problems. But it's still home, innit?

- Andy, Caitiff Anarch

Britain is a realm in conflict, and the struggles among the Kindred have occasionally made themselves felt in the mortal world, especially over the last two decades. The British Isles are small and relatively densely populated, and there is friction between fiefs as well as between Clans.

Endless Conflict

London is racked by a power struggle between the Ventrue and Tremere, which constantly threatens to spill over into the rest of the country.

As far as anyone knows, the rivalry between Tremere and Ventrue dates back to the late 13th century — the time, some say significantly, when the first Undead Tremere came to the island and the fief of Winchester moved from Glastonbury. Glastonbury had been the center of the Tremere migration, and the powers attributed to that fief's leaders are immense. However, no direct connection has ever been proven between the mysterious fief of Winchester and events in London.

The growing power of London over the rest of the country, through Ventrue control of the monarchy, led to various of the smaller fiefs sponsoring the Barons' Revolt of 1258. Efforts to circumvent the effects of Ventrue power over the king — of which the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 was one by-product — had come to nothing, and although the revolt was not planned or orchestrated by the lesser fiefs in concert, one by one almost all of them encouraged their mortal pawns to join in. The institution of the English Parliament by the Brujah-inspired Simon de Montfort was a clear message to the Ventrue of London that expansion would not go unchecked.

The Black Death of the mid-14th century, coming so soon after the arrival of the Tremere, helped create more distrust among the Kindred. The Ventrue leader Mithras and his followers had already decided that the Barons' Revolt was a nationwide conspiracy against London, and rumors that the plague had been created deliberately by an unholy alliance of Tremere and Setites raised Ventrue feelings in London to the pitch of paranoid hysteria.

The situation became even worse when it was discovered that the Black Death could affect the Kindred directly, as well as threatening their food supply; the ninth and 10th Generations in London were all but wiped out when they caught the plague by feeding on tainted mortals. Few of earlier Generations also succumbed, for the thinner, younger Blood was more susceptible. As the country's largest city, London was naturally hardest hit by the plague, and reports of extensive damage in other fiefs were largely ignored as conspiracy panic ran wild.

Mithras seized the opportunity to rid himself of an obstructive Tremere presence in London, and through pawns he orchestrated a popular outcry against the Tremere. In a major military and political coup, Ventrue agents captured the head of the London Chantry and made an example of him for allegedly causing the plague. A round of witch trials robbed the Tremere of most of their mortal agents, and although appeals for aid were sent to Vienna, the Elders did nothing. For a century or so, the Tremere of London went into hiding; some, it is said, made their way to safe exile in Winchester.

For the next couple of centuries, the Ventrue grip on London — and thus on much of England — was secure. The Tremere were too weak and scattered to fight openly, but they followed the example of the rest of their Clan in Europe by subtly gaining control of a number of important trade guilds as the middle classes rose in power. Their most notable success throughout Europe was with the stonemasons. The Ventrue had concentrated their efforts on the throne and the nobility, and as the feudal system declined they found the economic power of the middle classes an ever-present annoyance. The Tremere continued to shape the craft guilds into more flexible organizations, creating a potent political weapon as guild membership became instrumental in selecting the Lord Mayor of London and various other mortal dignitaries. Eventually, the power of the crown and nobility in London was effectively curtailed.

In mainland Europe, the Reformation was in full swing as nation after nation broke from Rome and embraced Protestantism. Henry VIII of England did so for his own reasons and without any Kindred involvement, although elsewhere in Europe the Reformation was encouraged as a means of beaking free of a growing Ventrue stranglehold on power, articulated in the breathing world through Church leaders. London Brujah seized the chance to remove a number of Ventrue and their mortal pawns, and strip others of their power, through the Act of Supremacy which made the king — ironically now abandoned by the London Ventrue — head of Church and State at once, and held Catholic sentiment as reason. European connections were also held to be suspect,



weakening the Tremere further as all hope of aid from Vienna was cut off. In the following decades, it is rumored, a powerful coterie of Ventrue in Spain made moves to aid Mithras and his followers, but without effect.

A further dimension was added to the turmoil as Toreadors formally entered the fray. With London's Ventrue weak, local Toreadors recruited help from their traditional stronghold of Edinburgh; as Brujah and Ventrue fought each other to place their mortal pawns on the throne, the matter was suddenly settled when James VI of Scotland became James I of England. Both Brujah and Ventrue suspected each other of complicity in this move, but it was simply a naked move for power by the Toreadors.

The Toreador coup had been well-planned, and for a while all was comparatively peaceful. The Ventrue lay low and regrouped, while the Brujah were divided by suspicion and recrimination and briefly lost all unity and cohesion. Fresh witch trials, fueled by an anti-witchcraft tract published under King James' name, held the Tremere down, although the Catholic Gunpowder Plot of 1605 is believed by many to have been backed by the Tremere. Several prominent Tremere set out for the newly discovered western colonies, but they were pursued even there and their attempts to build a power base received a sharp setback in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Toreador rule came to an end mainly because of political naiveté. Clinging single-mindedly to their control of the king, they found themselves outmaneuvered and isolated by a popular anti-royalist movement. The Ventrue had learned the bitter lesson about the power of the commons, and were able to deal Toreador power a severe blow with the execution of Charles I and the rise of Cromwell's Roundheads.

The English Civil War was fought by night as well as by day. Ventrue specialists had created a near-unstoppable force in the New Model Army, and in the person of Oliver Cromwell they had their most effective mortal agent for some centuries, though their control over him was never a sure thing. The Toreadors continued to fight for the throne, and the flamboyant Royalist Cavaliers reflected their idea of an army as much as the Roundheads reflected the Ventrue preference for effectiveness at any cost. A decade of struggle ensued, with early Ventrue gains being effectively consolidated until the death of Cromwell in 1658.

The Toreadors — now said to be backed by the regrouped power of the Tremere — were able to restore the monarchy after a series of tense peace negotiations with the Ventrue, but the peace was fragile and conspiracies were exposed among Kindred and kine alike. The Great Fire of London in 1666 may have been the work of Anarchs, but is thought by many to have been Tremere-inspired. The plague which swept the city in the previous year raised the spectre of a Tremere-Setite alliance. Both Toreadors and Ventrue were weakened by the events of the past century, and the time was ripe for a coup. It was the Ventrue, however, who prevailed with the founding of the House of Orange, and the Act of Union which joined

Scotland to England and Wales and created the United Kingdom was a clear signal to the Edinburgh Toreadors that London was not to be trifled with.

The 1693 Treaty of Durham will not be found in any mortal history books, but was a turning point for the Kindred of the British Isles. The Toreadors were effectively routed, and in exchange for Ventrue guarantees not to attack their stronghold in Edinburgh they agreed to seek no power in London beyond the Elysium, and never to conspire with or offer support to the Tremere. The Toreador presence in London was held by the treaty to have the status of hostages to guarantee the treaty, and a smaller number of Edinburgh Ventrue were likewise agreed to stand surety against any Ventrue attack or encroachment. The Tremere were thought to have been broken by the witch trials of the previous century, and the crowning success in the New World demonstrated to all that London's reach was long and its vengeance devastating.

But there were factions within the Toreador chafing at the humiliation of this forced treaty, and in 1715 several Edinburgh Ventrue were slaughtered and a Scottish uprising sought to put James Stewart, "the Old Pretender," on the throne of England. This rising failed, but the Toreadors tried again 30 years later and came closer to success with Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745. The Ventrue of London had their hands full at this time, trying to repair an incident two years earlier in which an Anarch named Rutherford had made a misguided attempt to take over a prominent Masonic lodge by openly revealing himself and a certain amount of Kindred lore. While the uprisings were put down, London made no move against Edinburgh, and although a few of the Toreador hostages in London were destroyed in reprisal, most renounced any attachment to Edinburgh and some even voluntarily Bound themselves to Mithras.

The end of the century saw a great influx of French Kindred into London. The French Revolution was decimating the mortal aristocracy, and the chateau Havens of many French Kindred had been destroyed. Most of the refugees were Ventrue, and willingly swore allegiance to Mithras, strengthening the Ventrue in London even further. With Mithras in undisputed command of London, a period of stability began which was to last almost until the end of the 19th century. The growing industrial towns of the north developed into lesser fiefs, and many looked to London rather than nearby York for a lead; some were even colonized from London by Mithras' own Progeny. Britain reached the height of its imperial power, and Mithras became one of the most respected Kindred in the world. The Anarchs were growing in power throughout the islands, but their main strength remained in the industrial north, where they had a part in the early history of the Labour movement, cashing in on the disruption caused by the Luddite and Chartist movements. London was largely untouched.

Though cowed, the Tremere were far from defeated. Dee, who had joined the Clan at their darkest hour, had become its

leader in London as much by the feat of surviving as for any other reason. On the advice of the Elders in Vienna, he had kept a low profile for the last couple of centuries, laying plans and waiting for the right time. In the latter part of the 19th century, there was a surge in popular interest in spiritualism and other occult matters, which Dee did much to encourage. Table-rappers and palm-readers flourished, and so many small organizations grew up that it was impossible to tell the genuine from the charlatans, much less discover which group — if any — was Tremere-sponsored. This effective smokescreen kept the genuine Tremere operations largely safe from Ventrue agents, and before long Chancies were established in all but the smallest of the new fiefs.

Mithras was enraged by the resurgence of the Tremere, and frustrated by their tactics which made his agents search through hundreds of suspects without finding a trace of Tremere involvement. After a few abortive actions in which it was clear that the Masquerade would fall before the Tremere did, Mithras changed his tack, and used a Malkavian pawn to Embrace a rebellious occultist named Aleister Crowley. Convinced that he belonged to a Clan of Vampires called Tremere, Crowley ran wild, appalling mortal society, threatening the Masquerade at every turn and sickening the Kindred of Britain. His actions seriously embarrassed the Tremere, and weakened their political position severely.

The occult revival was stalled, and even after the truth of the matter was discovered, the ruse had done its work. The Tremere ceased most of their activities, and by the end of World War I they were once more almost invisible.

The rocky economic history of the inter-war years was entirely a mortal phenomenon, but it had an effect on the Kindred in most parts of the world. The Ventrue tried to maintain their grip, but Anarchs saw their chance and staged an impressive show of strength which left the Ventrue unable to stop the General Strike of 1926. Over the next decade Mithras tried to reverse the trend, but by the outbreak of World War II London was torn by dissension. The Ventrue suspected that the Tremere lay behind the Anarch gains of the last 20 years, but were unable to find evidence of direct involvement.

London suffered terribly in the war, being not only the capital but the largest industrial city within range of German bombers. Much of the heart of the city was razed, and Mithras has not been seen or heard from since the bombing began. Some think he was destroyed in his Haven, while others suspect that he is lying in wait, ready to pounce when the Tremere reveal themselves openly.

Since the war, London has been ruled by Lady Anne, a Progeny of Mithras who is backed by a slight majority of Ventrue. Her position is far from secure, for there are would-be Princes among her Ventrue Kindred as well as in other Clans. The Queen of London, as she styles herself, is desperately trying to consolidate her position and restore some kind of order to the fief. After some initial setbacks, the Ventrue have reestablished their control of most of the city's gov-

ernmental and commercial apparatus, but the damage done by Anarchs has been considerable.

The Anarch movement has become extremely strong in London, and is so well-organized that if stamped out in one place it immediately springs up somewhere else. At the same time, the Tremere have established a measure of control in the police forces and judiciary of London and other fiefs through their infiltration of the Freemasons; while they themselves are elusive, the Tremere can pull strings to reverse Ventrue gains and embarrass Ventrue interests.

Theme and Mood

The overall mood of the setting is uncertainty/instability. The former Prince has disappeared, several factions are struggling with each other more or less openly, order is breaking down, and there are other threats which are not completely understood, such as Black Annis and the Hunt Club.

Themes which might be developed within this setting are many. Searching for Mithras (or for evidence of what has become of him) is one possibility, and other search/investigation themes might involve Black Annis, the Hunt Club, the Nosferatu (can there really be none of this Clan in the British Isles?), the Gangrel (where are they, what are they doing — and are they really as friendly with the Lupines as rumor has it?), the Assamites who are rumored to have established a base here, or a group of Malkavian terrorists who may or may not be connected with Crowley.

Rebuilding relations between the warring Clans will not be easy, but would provide a very challenging theme which could last through an entire Chronicle.

In the absence of Mithras the throne of London is not vacant, but several lesser Ventrue have their eyes on it, as do the more cautious Tremere. Even so, a strong, skilled and determined individual or coterie might be able to take London and hold it, and then try to keep the troublesome fief under control while making moves to extend their authority to neighboring fiefs. Unifying London and Birmingham under a single Prince would create a fief of enormous power, and once Birmingham is taken the way is open to expand control to York, and ever onward. Mortal kings spent their lives trying (and failing) to unify the British Isles under a single stable rule; why should some ambitious Cainite not try the same?

If this is too tall an order for Neonates, then they might become involved as soldiers or emissaries, and uncover more than they expected. No one truly knows what goes on in the mysterious fief of Winchester, but it is recognized by those in the know to be ancient and powerful. Certainly no one has disputed its exclusive claim to its hunting grounds in Portsmouth and Southampton and survived to tell the tale. And then there is the feud between Ulster and Connachta, which has been going on for more than 2000 years. And the ambitious fief of Bristol, with its designs on Wales.

With the Ventrue, Tremere and Malkavians locked in a three-sided civil war, there is an incredible range of plots, flareups and other incidents which can embroil an incautious group of Neonates. The Masquerade is wearing very thin in many places, and even the most cautious of characters can find themselves implicated in some outrage, and having to fight or flee for their very existence. In this war, you need to be strong and lucky to stay neutral.

And what of the Sabbat? With the Clans of the Camarilla in almost complete disarray, the Black Hand will surely be moving operatives into the British Isles. Some may have been in place for some time, waiting for the right moment to strike. Desperate and unscrupulous Ventrue leaders might also fall prey to the temptation of creating a Vampire army to destroy the Tremere, and might try to foist the blame on the Sabbat, down to convincing the Neonates that they are of the Black Hand rather than the Camarilla.

Neither the Kindred nor the kine of the British Isles exist in a vacuum — however much they might like to think so. Events there affect the rest of Europe, and eventually the rest of the world; if anything, this is more true of Kindred than kine. The Tremere Elders in Vienna will be keeping a close eye on the course of the war, and so will other interested parties. One or more Archons — and perhaps even a Justicar — will have been sent during the last few decades to investigate



the disappearance of Mithras and try to bring the warring Clans back into line. The Inconnu, too, will at least have Monitors in place, keeping track of the situation. They may even be taking action themselves if their members or interests have been threatened.

The Fiefs

London

London is by far the largest fief in the British Isles, and many Kindred think of it as the oldest. In fact, the small fief of Winchester is older. London has a resident population of over 1.5 million kine in its 610 square miles, and a commuting population which also numbers in the millions. Founded, according to legend, in Roman times, the fief of London regards itself as the most important (indeed, the only important) Kindred community in the British Isles. The Prince of London used to be one of the most powerful Cainites in the world, but over recent years the fief has been torn by instability and strife.

For reasons of space, only London is examined in any detail here; brief summaries of conditions in the other fiefs of the British Isles are given below. Hopefully they provide a starting point for any Storytellers who want to set some action outside London.

Birmingham

Britain's second largest city in terms of its mortal population, Birmingham is a comparatively modern fief, and its Kindred are regarded as upstarts by their cousins in London — many of whom can remember the days before the Industrial Revolution when Birmingham was a village with pretensions to being a local market town. It is a little more peaceful and better-organized than London, and the rapid growth of its mortal population over the last century, together with careful regulation by its Prince, has helped Birmingham avoid the pressure on the kine which has led to unfortunate incidents in London.

Birmingham is currently in the throes of an establishment crackdown organized mainly by the Ventrue. Unwilling to allow a civil war to arise as it has in London, the Prince of Birmingham is taking active steps, with the full support of his small Primogen, to crush any dissent and instability. An attempted Anarch rising in the early '70s was ruthlessly put down, and the city has been ruled by an iron hand ever since. Small, isolated cells of Anarchs still plot and fret in various parts of the city, but all are too nervous and distrustful to organize effectively.

Manchester/Liverpool

Originally separate and very small fiefs, Manchester and Liverpool united in the mid-1970s, when it became apparent that they would shortly become one continuous urban sprawl. Unifying the two fiefs was a major political coup, creating a

new domain with a sufficient population of Kindred to be reckoned with.

Liverpool is exceptional — some say unique — in the fact that its Prince is from the Brujah Clan. The Ventrue presence in the city has always been small and weak, and many Ventrue have chosen to leave the fief, seeing no possibility there to further the interests of their Clan. This has had a deep effect on the character of the city, on both sides of the sunrise. Liverpool has always been an eclectic, creative and free-wheeling city, and it has also been wracked by tremendous internal conflicts from time to time. Practically ignored by the authorities "down south", Liverpool has had to make its own way in the world, and has developed a strong personality in the process. Its people — "Scousers" to the rest of Britain — are known for their quick wits, eye to the main chance and sly humor.

Manchester grew up as one of many northern industrial cities in the 19th century, and is still seen as a city of factories. It has one of the largest Chinese populations in Britain, with an extensive Chinatown which would not look out of place in San Francisco. For some time the city was a free domain; without a Prince or Primogen, Kindred could come and go there as they pleased. By the end of the 19th century, though, so many Cainites had been attracted by the city's growing mortal population that some kind of organization was necessary. The freedom of the city had attracted a large Brujah contingent from all over Europe, and while Princes of various Clans came and went, they always ruled at the pleasure of a Primogen which was largely Brujah-controlled. This Brujah dominance was one factor which made the unification of Manchester and Liverpool a comparatively peaceful affair, and the fief now attracts Brujah and Anarchs from all points of the compass.

Edinburgh

Once powerful, Edinburgh has declined over the last few centuries as more and more power has become concentrated in London. Today it is more or less a ghost town, and only the Toreador remain present in any strength. It has earned the contemptuous nickname "City of Elysium" among the Kindred of other fiefs, but this is not entirely fair. Toreadors from across the British Isles look to Edinburgh for leadership, and although both Ventrue and Tremere have tried to force their rule on the city over the years, the Toreadors have maintained their grasp on power and their independence.

While not as free-wheeling as the new Liverpool-Manchester fief, Edinburgh encourages any freedom which does not threaten its independence. The fact that the Toreador Prince of Edinburgh is apparently secure enough in his power to allow Anarchs to reside openly in the city is taken as an indication that any trouble could be crushed swiftly and effortlessly.

The Toreador domination of Edinburgh has created a remarkable effect upon the city's kine. While Edinburgh's extensive Elysium fosters a cultural life which can be com-



pared favorably with that of any city in Europe, there are tremendous social and political problems in many parts of the city. Ventrue have been known to comment smugly that Edinburgh is a classic example of Toreador values in action.

Glasgow

Founded in the 19th century by a breakaway group from Edinburgh, Glasgow achieved a short-lived prominence before being effectively destroyed. The daylight city grew up largely around the industry of shipbuilding and heavy engineering, attracting a mortal population which in turn attracted Cainites. With no apparent way to break the Toreador hold on Edinburgh, ambitious elements of several other Clans were attracted to the growing port city. The fief's history consisted mainly of power struggles between Brujah and Ventrue, in which both sides were careful not to let their conflicts spill over into the breathing world and jeopardise the city's health. Finally, the frustrated Ventrue used government contacts to weaken and then destroy the industries on which Glasgow depended.

York

The fief is still called York, and it is one of the oldest in the land. Effectively, though, it has shifted to the Leeds/Bradford metropolitan area, following the expansion of the mortal population there. The fief of York was founded, according to tradition, less than a century after London, as the Roman fortress-city of Eboracum began to attract a large population. Once briefly the capital of the Western Roman Empire, the

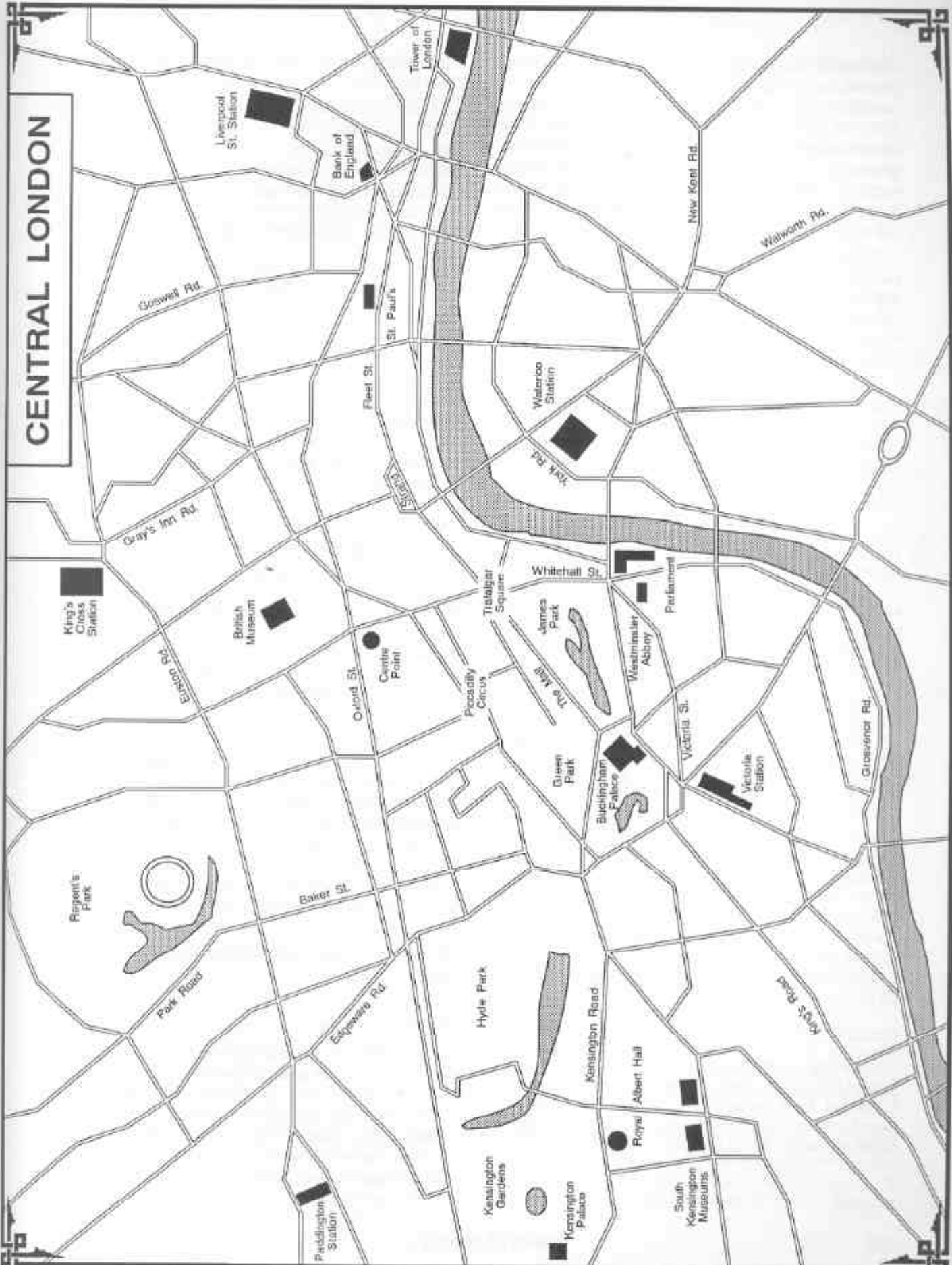
city was one of the few Roman settlements to survive into Saxon times — as Eoforwic, a thriving riverport. When the Danes took over northern England, this port was a natural choice for their capital, although they had trouble pronouncing the Saxon name and changed it to Jorvik. After the fall of the Danelaw, York continued in its prominence — the second archbishopric after Canterbury, and the capital of the powerful county of Yorkshire.

The Kindred of York strove constantly to live in harmony with the fief of London, while maintaining their independence. One local tradition maintains that the Danes were invited to York as a buffer to the Ventrue-sponsored expansion and consolidation of the southern Saxon kingdoms. Through the Middle Ages, the two fiefs of London and York were the main powers in the land, and the others — save Winchester, of which more will be said later — always looked to them for a lead.

Even today, York is a fief of considerable influence, blessed with a stability which dates back centuries. To some, York is conservative — even reactionary — but it prides itself on having weathered almost two millennia without serious strife. The Ventrue Prince of York has achieved a masterful balance and harmony with the city's Primogen, and so far each Clan has been able to pursue its interests in harmony with all the others.

Industry and security are almost exclusively in Ventrue and Tremere hands, with a significant Toreador contingent — mostly residing in the "old city" of York — busying themselves with all manner of artistic events. Gangrels are said to have the run of the extensive and beautiful countryside

CENTRAL LONDON



of the region, and there are even rumors of a non-aggression pact with the Lupines of the area. The Malkavian population is small and for the most part easily amused, and in a major diplomatic coup the Brujah of York are in full support of the established system, acting as tribunes to check any unseemly growth of power in any faction, and as guardians to prevent outside problems coming in. Anarchs are not welcome in York, and even the younger Kindred are more or less in agreement that the system works and should not be changed.

York is seen all over Europe as the embodiment of the Camarilla ideal — a Cainite Utopia. As such, it has been targeted from time to time by the Sabbat (and some say Setites), but such is the goodwill and mutual trust of the city's Kindred that these disturbances have always been put down almost as soon as they start.

Some believe Assamites have established a base somewhere in the fief, probably sheltered by the area's large Indo-Pakistani population; some are worried by this news, but others believe that the Assamites were invited here by the Primogen to help maintain the fief's stability.

Ulster

The largest fief in Ireland has been torn by terrorism and civil war for over two decades, and the roots of the crisis go back far deeper than mortal historians imagine. Much of the troubles are of mortal making, though, and the Kindred of Belfast spend as much time trying to control situations as they do vying for power amongst themselves and prosecuting their millenia-old war against the fief of Connachta.

It is said that this war started around the first century AD, but others believe it goes back to the time of the mythical Invasions; this latter theory is strengthened by the Prince of Ulster's adoption of the name Milesius, but there is little actual proof. Those who would remember have nearly all been destroyed in the centuries of fighting, and many others are said to be in hiding.

Appeals for help from London have largely backfired, splitting the Kindred of Ulster into two violently opposed camps and leading to an attempted takeover of the fief by Mithras. Fighting Connachta one the one hand and London on the other has all but exhausted Ulster, and the conflict has reached such a pitch recently that the Masquerade is almost constantly threatened. Some say a significant Sabbat presence is already inside Ulster, fanning the flames and preparing for the fief's eventual fall.

Connachta

Confusingly to mortal perceptions, the fief of Connachta is based in the city of Dublin rather than the Irish county of Connaught, far to the west. The older Kindred of Dublin moved to the city in the ninth century, attracted by its growing mortal population; they kept their traditional name partly out

of habit, and partly (it is said) lest their traditional enemies of Ulster should think they were trying to hide from them.

The fief is deceptively peaceful, considering the turmoil in Ulster. An attempted takeover by London was thwarted in 1918, and since that time Connachta has been able to prevent outside interference and carry the war against Ulster right into the enemy camp. The Primogen of Connachta is ruled by an alliance of Brujah and Toreadors — strange bedfellows, it may seem, but the arrangement has worked for almost a century.

Severn

Another recent fief, Severn embraces the mortal cities of Bristol, Newport and Cardiff, and effectively controls the lesser fief of Swansea. Acid comments are still made about the would-be "Prince of Wales." The fief is expanding its influence, although like most others it has been weakened by recent strife. The Prince of Severn is rumored to be a Progeny of Mithras, although this is hotly denied in the fief. The Primogen is Ventrue-dominated, with a small but growing Torcador contingent.

Winchester

The oldest fief in the British Isles is one of the smallest. Estimates vary, but it is thought that the fief of Winchester currently numbers no more than seven Kindred. The fief moved to Winchester from Glastonbury in the 13th century, and in the last century has declared the nearby cities of Southampton and Portsmouth to be its exclusive hunting park; Kindred who have hunted there in defiance of this decree have found themselves watching the sun rise while staked and chained to the quayside.

The Prince of Winchester has declined to become involved in the civil war in London and elsewhere; the fief keeps so much to itself that many rumors are current about what actually goes on there — ranging from tales of a coterie of Antediluvians to wild reports of institutionalized Diablerie. Although it is not known for certain, it is thought that the Prince is a powerful Tremere, ruling with a Primogen of Tremere, Gangrels and Malkavians; whatever the truth may be, it appears that this Cainite is old and powerful enough to guarantee that the neutrality and privacy of the fief is respected.

The Clans

Brujah

Despite their claim to revel in anarchy, recent events have left the Brujah scattered and disorganized — they do not even trust each other any more. Always ready to fight authority and often politically naive, the Brujah have been used time and again as pawns and patsies by the Tremere, the Ventrue and others. Routed in the miners' strike of the '80s which failed to bring down the Thatcher government (many believe

this was the Tremere using them as a diversion), they regrouped briefly for the Poll Tax riots of '89-90, but this was just an act of spite, undirected by any plan. At present the Brujah exist in small, isolated groups, paranoically suspicious of outsiders.

Liverpool is the safest place to be Brujah, and many of the other northern fiefs have a strong Brujah presence. Through their sponsorship of the Labour movement and other social reform groups, they have done a great deal for the kine of these areas. In London, though, the Brujah are still reeling from the Ventrue backlash which the kine called the Thatcher years. Small groups exist, but they move in secret and trust almost no one. A Brujah Neonate in London will find the world a hostile and frightening place.

Gangrel

The increasing urbanization of Britain over the last 150 years is not to the Gangrels' taste, and the strongest groups of Gangrels are in the north — especially Yorkshire, Northumberland and the Scottish Highlands — and in the southwest, around Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Brecon Beacons. Several prominent Gangrels have contacts among the Lupines, and are regarded at least with neutrality by them. While not formally organized, Britain's Gangrels keep in contact with each other on a more-or-less regular basis, and messages pass quickly among them by word of mouth.

Gangrel characters in London will probably be visitors rather than residents, although it is rumored that the Clan maintains Havens in at least a couple of the city's great parks and in Regent's Park Zoo. Some Gangrels inhabit the leafier parts of London's commuter belt, and these are the best potential Sires for a Gangrel character.

Malkavian

The Malkavians are as much victims in the present situation as the Brujah, but for a different reason. Pursuing their own agendas with their own (often incomprehensible) reasoning, many Malkavians have been suspected of siding with one faction or the other in the current civil war. Both sides suspect the other of having a secret alliance with the Malkavians, but they have remained neutral — or at least, harmed the interests of both sides equally. Periodic murders and blood hunts arising from these suspicions have forced the Malkavians of the British Isles more closely together than is the case elsewhere, and they now make terrorist raids against both sides — usually tinged with characteristic Malkavian weirdness. This, of course, reinforces the hostility and suspicion on all sides, and fans the flames even higher.

A Malkavian Neonate will find the world of London to be made of lies and deceit, attack and revenge. There are Malkavians in most of London's larger hospitals, as well as in the richer areas where they can rely on middle-class privacy to pass as English eccentrics. According to one unsubstantiated rumor, there are even Malkavians placed in the nation's government. A Malkavian Neonate can come from almost any background in London, and may well be

Embraced into a close-knit "cell" engaged in random attacks on both Ventrue and Tremere.

Nosferatu

The Nosferatu of London have gone underground to ride out the civil war, hiding from both sides and observing unseen when they can. Blake, the oldest Nosferatu known to be in the British Isles, is said to have gone into Torpor to ride out the times, and other rumors link the Nosferatu with a suspected Inconnu presence in the islands. A Nosferatu Neonate in London will be part of a highly secretive network, observing and passing on information on the activities of other Kindred. There may be visits to other, calmer fiefs for conferences with Clan Elders.

Toreador

The Toreador take little part in politics. The situation is so unstable and confusing that there is just too much to lose. Their consistent refusal to help either side has led first to hostility and then to respect, and on rare occasions prominent Toreadors have been asked to assist with negotiations in the role of neutral brokers. Mainly, though, they concentrate on looking after themselves and their interests. The Toreador control the Elysium throughout the land, and will normally exert themselves only to ensure its sanctity. In London, they have uncontested mastery over the South Bank arts complex (comprising the Royal Festival Hall and its smaller brethren, the National Theatre, the National Film Theatre, the Hayward Gallery and the Museum of the Moving Image), the West End theatre district, and the museum districts of Bloomsbury and Kensington.

A Toreador Neonate in London will leave behind the ugly, brutish mortal world for the heady atmosphere of the Elysium. In this half-real world, even the conflict among London's Kindred is left behind, and a carefully nurtured air of serenity prevails, more redolent of the 19th century than the 20th. The Toreador's only care — apart from maintaining status and planning divine parties and opening galas — is in preserving the sanctity of the Elysium. This involves keeping an eye on the activities of both Ventrue and Tremere, without embroiling the Clan in their battles.

Tremere

The Tremere are at the head of one of the warring factions, fighting for control of the British Isles with an opposing faction led by the Ventrue. Despite representations by high-ranking visitors from the Camarilla, the Tremere show no inclination to stop the war, claiming that they are merely defending their traditional domain from encroaching Ventrue. The Clan Elders in Vienna have made no comment, and do not seem inclined to take action at this time.

A Tremere Neonate in London is effectively drafted into the civil war, and is expected to use every resource to further the Clan's interests. Obedience is required; understanding is not. Even the most straightforward of Tremere strategies

becomes insanely Byzantine by the standards of other Kindred, and very few of the lower-ranking Tremere understand much apart from their part in the struggle — it is said that only Dee knows the full picture.

Ventruue

Locked in civil war with the Tremere, the Ventruue are desperately trying to keep control of a situation which constantly threatens to tear the Masquerade to rags. They currently take the position that anyone who is not with them is against them, and scarcely a week goes by without the announcement from London of another Blood Hunt.

A Ventruue Neonate in London is born into a world of turmoil. The Clan is riven by internal dissension, although it is careful not to show this to the outside world. Various factions are building their strength; Lady Anne is holding onto the fief by main force, but there are many who would topple her if they could do so without simultaneously causing the Clan itself to fall. Almost everyone in the Clan is suspicious of strangers; fear of Tremere infiltration is widespread, and Anarchs are regarded with unremitting hatred. Some voices within the Clan support a drastic temporary solution of creating a great number of Neonate "troops" — a well-known

Sabbat tactic — fighting the civil war to a conclusion, and dealing with the consequences afterward. Others are still trying to preserve the Masquerade, and have taken to destroying Neonates in order to prevent rival factions building strength.

Caitiff

There are very few good times and places to be a Caitiff, but this is one of the worst. The clanless are regarded as spies and saboteurs by some, and as disposable pawns by others. It is possible to be Embraced, betrayed and killed all in the same night, without ever knowing why.

The Sabbat

No one knows for sure, in the present state of chaos, whether the Sabbat are active in the British Isles, and if so what the extent of their involvement is. Some claim they are playing both sides in the current civil war, hoping to fuel the conflict to such a pitch that the Masquerade will be irreparably broken and planning to step in at that point and impose their own rule. Others maintain with irony that the Sabbat is not active here because it has no need to be; the Camarilla Clans



of the British Isles are doing a fine job of destroying themselves without anyone's help.

Assamites

In such a fluid and confused situation, it is perhaps not surprising that each side accuses the other of using Assamite assassins, but the truth is almost impossible to establish. A persistent rumor claims that a small group of Assamites have set up a secret base in one of England's fiefs — London, Birmingham or York, according to whom one listens to — but most Kindred discount these rumors as hysterical imagination.

Setites

The Followers of Set have been all but driven from the British Isles. In the 1960s they made a concerted effort to establish themselves in London, but after initial success they merely caused the Tremere and Ventrue to combine forces briefly to expel them. There are said to be Setites still remaining in London among the Afro-Caribbeans, and perhaps in other fiefs as well, but they are few, scattered and

frightened. Both Tremere and Ventrue now accuse each other of having made alliances with the hated Setites.

Other Clans

There are no other Clans who are believed to be active in the British Isles at the time of writing.

The Giovanni are still in correspondence with certain of the British Tremere, but have shown no inclination to become involved in their struggle. They are an inward-looking Clan, with very little interest in the rest of the Kindred. Some are known to have become involved with England's banking industry, but not as extensively as they are on the continent.

The Ravnos have been known to travel through Britain from time to time, but most if not all have now left in the face of the current turmoil. There are rumors of a small group which occasionally crosses from Ireland, but that is all.

Kindred and Coteries

This is not intended to be a complete listing of the Kindred of the British Isles — there were said to have been over 200 Cainites in London alone, before the present flare-up. Instead, this section presents a few of the most notable personalities, and is intended to be read in conjunction with the brief notes on Clans above.

Aine (Black Annis, Gentle Annie)

Once, a long time ago, Aine was important. People were good to her, and she would walk out among their huts and their fields and their crops and their stock and their families, and the people would ask her to bless them. And the people would bring her goats and sheep and chickens and wheat and lots of other good things — they would bring them right to her hut, in the beautiful glade where she lived. And they would watch as she gave these things to the Three Mothers, and be happy that all would be well with them.

Sometimes, after there had been a battle, the warriors brought their dead to her, and the heads they had taken, and the prisoners they had captured. She would give all these things to the Great Queen, the Hard Mother, for she had helped the warriors win their battles. She had even given the Great Queen some of the Iron Men with their lobster bodies. They were strange, but they were poor warriors. They cried and screamed in their strange speech as they went to the Great Queen, and she could not have been pleased with them.

Then the Iron Men came and burnt her glade and her hut. The warriors could not stop them, for the Iron Men did not know how to fight properly so the warriors could do nothing against them. Aine and her people had hidden in the forest, waiting for the Iron Men to go away. They knew the Mothers would be angry with them, for they had let the glade be burnt.

It was in the forest that the Fomior came to Aine. She knew that was what it was, for nothing else could be so ugly. It said its name was Noisavair, or something like that, and it said it could give her strength to beat the Iron Men. But Aine knew



the Foimor was lying; they were evil, and never helped anyone. The Great Queen must have sent it to her as a punishment for letting the Iron Men burn the glade. She knew she was right when the Foimor twisted her neck and began to eat her.

When Aine woke up, she felt very sick. She was sure she was not in the Isles of the Blessed, but then again she was sure that the Foimor had eaten her and she was dead. Perhaps you do not go to the Isles of the Blessed if a Foimor eats you. Then the Foimor came back for her, and told her that she was going to be Noisavair like it was. Then she knew she wasn't dead. Her punishment was far worse, for the Great Queen had ordered the Foimor to turn her into another Foimor.

The Foimor made her drink its blood, and although she felt sick at first the Foimor's blood was the most beautiful thing she had ever tasted. She fell into a deep sleep, and when she awoke she ached all over and the Foimor had gone. She found it later, with one of the Iron Men's spears through its body and burnt almost to death. It begged her to help it, but she drank its blood and left it dead, for she knew that Foimor are evil and never help anybody, and she was a Foimor now.

Aine hid for a long time in the forest, and was sick again because she could no longer drink the blood of the Foimor. She tried drinking her own blood but it did no good. The daylight hurt her, and she hid all the time until it was dark. Her eyes got used to the darkness, and one night she saw her reflection in a pool in the moonlight. Then she realized what had truly happened to her.

Although she looked a little like the Foimor she had met, she was not quite so ugly — in fact, she looked exactly like the way the old women had described the Great Queen. She had not been punished after all. Instead the Great Queen had made her a part of herself, so that Aine could punish the Iron Men who had burnt the glade and all the weak and silly people who had let them burn it. She was the Macha, the destroyer.

Sire: Bhallaire

Clan: Nosferatu

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Deviant

Generation: 6th

Embrace: AD 47 (born AD 19)

Apparent Age: Indeterminate

Physical: Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 7, Brawl 7, Dodge 6, Intimidation 4

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Melee 6, Stealth 6, Survival 3

Knowledge: none (see Flaws below)

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Obfuscate 6, Potence 4, Protean 3

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 1, Courage 5

Merits: Light Sleeper, Danger Sense

Flaws: Uneducated, Monstrous

Humanity: 0

Willpower: 6

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 30/6

Derangements: Vengeance, Delusion of Grandeur (divine avatar), Arrogance, Obsession (killing)

Notes: Aine has lost all her Humanity, and become a Beast. In addition, she is completely insane. Once a Celtic priestess, she became a Nosferatu during the Roman conquest of Britain, but never found out what that meant. She believes herself to be an avenging avatar of the Celtic war-goddess Morrigan. She certainly does not think of herself as a Vampire; indeed, it's doubtful if she knows what a Vampire is. She simply knows that she must slay and slay. She drinks blood because she likes the taste, and has not noticed that she takes no other sustenance these days.

Although she has undoubtedly lost her mind, Aine has developed a powerful cunning in order to survive. As a divine instrument of vengeance, she makes a point of only being seen by her intended victim, and used her considerable Stealth, Obfuscate and other abilities to ensure that others are never aware of her. Once she appears, though, she becomes



a frenzied killing machine, often tearing a victim apart with her bare hands. Her killing has not gone unnoticed — the Romans called her an evil spirit, and the Saxons called her Black Annis and thought of her as a kind of troll-hag. In the Middle Ages she became known euphemistically as Gentle Annie, and in later times her activities were thought to be those of wild animals. Most recently, people have started to talk about ritual mutilations and serial killers, but the public is generally kept uninformed.

Most Kindred suspect that the mutilation killings in the rural north are the work of some supernatural creature, but no one is sure what it might be. Several Kindred who set out to track the thing have never returned.

For theological reasons to do with what she thinks she is, Aine is only active for about half the year; from May Eve to Hallowe'en she sleeps in the earth, and she believes that to come out at that time would destroy her. She chooses her victims according to an insane scale of judgement known only to her; to all other minds her killings are entirely random. The Storyteller should use Aine sparingly; she does not kill every night, or even every month.

Image: A rangy, raw-boned female Nosferatu, almost six feet tall, with an incredibly ugly face even for a Nosferatu. Her features are twisted into a permanent mask of violent hatred, and her wild, tangled hair flaps about her with the rags of her clothing. In some lights, her skin appears to be pale blue.

Haven: None. Aine moves at will through the hills and dales of the rural north, finding what shelter she can at dawn and relying on *Obfuscate* to hide her.

Roleplaying Hints: You are Macha, the destroyer. You are one with the goddess and you exist to slay for her. You could probably speak if you really wanted to, but a terrifying keening wail is the only noise you've made for several centuries. Few mortals speak anything like Celtic any more, and besides, your task is to destroy, not to make conversation. You are lost in the ecstasy of killing, completely at one with the Beast.

Influence: None.

Mithras

He had been a soldier in the army of a king, sent into the mountains to deal with a rebellion. The rebels were backed by magic, and it took many days and many lives before he could prepare to return with the heads of the leaders — all but one, who had escaped.

The night before the expedition was to return, he received a visitor. He tried to cry out, but was unable to move or speak. He could only listen as the stranger spoke.

The stranger, he soon discovered, was the rebel leader who had escaped. But far from wanting revenge, he was impressed with Mithras and wanted to make him an offer. Those who had died in the fighting were inferior, he said — made to be thrown away in a greater cause. But he could give Mithras the

gift of everlasting life, and a place of honor in an army such as he had never dreamed of. Or, he could kill him where he lay.

Mithras remained in the hills for a few years, gathering strength and learning about his new life. Then, with certain companions, he went to the city of the king he had formerly served. It was a small matter to convince the people that they were entertaining gods, and soon the old temples were torn down and offerings of every kind were laid before the newcomers.

Centuries came and went, and kingdoms rose and fell. The balance of power shifted westward, and the companions found it well to move to a growing city between two great rivers. Directed by their wisdom, the city became the capital of a great empire, but as the centuries passed, another empire arose among the barbarians of the west, and its soldiers came to give battle.

Mithras was impressed by these barbarians. Their leaders were able, and their soldiers each did their part without question, like ants ensuring the success of their colony. Their armies were almost a living thing. Their equipment, too, was interesting — every piece was designed for its function with great care and thought, and helped make the army an integrated, highly efficient whole. Nothing could stop the barbarians from conquering the whole world.

Mithras left his companions secretly, and went with the barbarian armies. As a soldier himself, he knew what soldiers wanted of their gods, and soon there were images of Mithras in every army camp throughout this Imperium Romanum. He who rules the soldiers rules the empire, Mithras knew — and with such power among mortals he would command great respect from the others of his own kind.

He traveled throughout the empire, turning things to his liking as he went. Because daylight troubled him, he would rest in the day and wake by night; his followers wondered at this, until he told them that by day he was guiding the sun through the heavens. The irony pleased him, and the mortals believed every word.

At last, he came to a small, gloomy and troublesome island at the edge of the world. The soldiers had been sent there to conquer it, but the fighting was hard. Mithras encouraged and advised them, and found the place much to his liking. There was little sun, especially in the far places where the fighting was, and he was far from rivals who had begun to seize control of the empire. At several of the stone frontier forts, he had temples constructed for his use — half underground, and out of reach of the sun. His followers served him with rituals of a false death and rebirth, and this pleased him. He would build his strength among these armies of the frontier, and wait his time. The rituals also allowed him to stay in touch with his own nature, which was important. A god should never believe the same things as his followers.

The empire fell, but Mithras remained secure on the northern frontier. The soldiers were called away, and he did

not stop them. The time was not yet right; there was too much confusion in the world. He sank into the earth and rock, and rested.

The clash of arms disturbed his dreams, and he awoke more than once. Barbarians from across the sea to the east came in ships; they slew and burnt, and then made farms of their own. Petty kings came and went, until one strong man was able to force his rule on most of the island. One of his descendants made further conquests, and armies began to march north across the old frontier.

Waking, he made his way south, to a temple he had used in the island's largest city. The city was very different, but he found the temple by the stream easily enough. He acquainted himself with the times, and discovered that the empires he had known were lost forever. Barbarian soldiers had forged new kingdoms, trying to recapture the old glories.

There were others of his kind in the city, too. When he tried to reopen his temple, they had his followers destroyed by fire. There was only one kind of temple now, and only one god.

Mithras moved around the country, never staying long in a place for fear that these others might destroy him. He tried to throw them off the scent by encouraging mortal nobles to fight each other for the throne. One by one, he was able to divide his enemies and destroy them.

When he returned to the city, it was to place a mortal servant on the throne. None remained with the strength or inclination to resist him, and visitors came from abroad naming him Prince. For a while he ruled in peace, and the island nation grew steadily in power. It threw off the rule of foreign priests, and became its own master.

There were others of his kind, he discovered, who had ambitions to be gods. They had been scholars rather than soldiers, and relied on their books full of mumbo-jumbo. They were organized, too, exchanging information and forming alliances over the whole world. The Tremere, as they called themselves, seemed intent on ruling everything. It was necessary to suppress them, destroying them and their followers by fire as others had once done to him. But the witchfinders could not root out all of them.

The war dragged on, sometimes involving mortals and sometimes completely unknown to them. There was fire and gunpowder, rebellions and plots, but slowly the tide of battle turned. The growth of science and industry undercut the support which the Tremere had gained among the superstitious. With a strong coterie of lieutenants and some astute political maneuvering, Mithras ruled London through the height of Victorian magnificence.

The bombing of World War II destroyed many havens and brought many of London's Kindred to the Final Death. Mithras has not been seen or heard from since, and some are beginning to think that he has been destroyed. Others claim that this is just a ruse to bring Tremere sympathizers into the open.

Sire: Veddartha

Clan: Ventrue

Nature: Autocrat

Demeanor: Architect

Generation: 4th

Embrace: 1258 BC (born 1235 BC)

Apparent Age: mid-20s

Physical: Strength 9, Dexterity 7, Stamina 8

Social: Charisma 8, Manipulation 9, Appearance 7

Mental: Perception 9, Intelligence 9, Wits 8

Talents: Alertness 8, Athletics 7, Brawl 8, Dodge 7, Intimidation 7, Intrigue 7, Leadership 9, Seduction 6, Sense Deception 7, Subterfuge 7

Skills: Archery 5, Carousing 4, Drive 4, Etiquette 6, Hunting 5, Firearms 4, Melee 9, Security 5, Stealth 6, Survival 5

Knowledge: Area Knowledge (London 9, British Isles 5), Bureaucracy 8, City Secrets (London) 8, Computer 2, Economics 4, Finance 1, Investigation 1, Kindred Lore 7, Law 3, Linguistics 4, Occult 5, Politics 6, Science 1

Disciplines: Dominate 9, Fortitude 6, Potence 5, Presence 8, Quietus 4

Background: Allies 7, Contacts 7, Generation 9, Herd 4, Influence 7, Resources 5, Retainers 6, Status 8

Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 8, Courage 9

Merits: Concentration, Light Sleeper, Iron Will

Flaws: Overconfident, Clan Enmity (Tremere)

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 8

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 50/10

Derangements: none

Notes: Mithras feeds only on followers of his own cult — in Kindred slang, he is an Osiris. Missing since the Blitz when German bombs destroyed much of London, Mithras may have been destroyed, or he may be in Torpor, or he may simply be in hiding, waiting for his enemies to show their hand. Rumors abound, but no one in London has seen him for almost fifty years — no one who will admit to it, that is. In fact, Mithras was forced into Torpor when his haven was destroyed by German incendiaries in 1941. Loyal followers have moved him to a secondary Haven, in a forgotten cellar which is now part of the foundations of the Centre Point office building near the junction of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road. The building has been kept empty by various subtle means, and Mithras recovered his strength while his trusted pawns relayed information and orders back and forth. His Torpor has been over for a little less than a year, but for now, it suits him to have the world think he was destroyed; he is learning about the factions and dissension within his own Clan as well as hoping to tempt the Tremere into the open.

Image: Medium height, compact, slightly muscular build, swarthy skin for a Vampire, classically handsome features, dark eyes, dark hair worn shoulder-length in loose curls. Mithras normally wears a soft cloth hat of some sort, preferring the ancient Persian "phrygian cap." He likes loose clothing which does not impede movement.

Haven: Hidden cellar beneath Centre Point office building.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a seasoned staff officer and field commander. You are also a god of soldiers, at least in some times and places. Move with the grace and economy of motion of a martial artist, with no flashy or unnecessary movements. Look others in the eye at all times, and try to hold their gaze long enough to make them uncomfortable. Speak with quiet authority and in a tone which denies any possibility of question.

John Dee ('Doctor', 'Master')

One of the foremost scholars of his day, Dr. John Dee was a mathematician, astronomer, astrologer, alchemist, and many things beside. There were few areas of human knowledge which did not draw him, and the science of his time made no distinction between the occult and mundane sciences. Queen Elizabeth I consulted him as an astrologer, and used his services in other matters of state. The mystical formula 007, by which he signed some of his secret dispatches, would later become the trademark — much to the good doctor's amusement — of another hunter after secrets.

Like most of the scholars of his time, Dee maintained a voluminous correspondence with like minds all over Europe. He was a member of several societies dedicated to preserving arcane and forbidden knowledge, and keeping this knowledge from falling into the wrong hands. He had traveled widely in Europe, and an invitation to visit Vienna in 1607 appeared to be nothing out of the ordinary. Once in Vienna, Dee was shown a world of knowledge and power which he had never even suspected, and willingly accepted the invitation to become part of it.

Returning to London, it was a simple matter to stage his own death and make the necessary arrangements for his new existence. His contacts and societies provided resources and assistance, and were sufficiently accustomed to mystery and ritual that no questions were asked. The Clan was among lean times, as he had been told in Vienna, and great care was needed to avoid the Clan's enemies and rebuild. In time, Dee was able to groom a number of initiates for the Change, and form a strong Tremere Chantry in London.

The organization of the Chantry, and its steady growth, drew the attention of Prince Mithras, who made it known that he had always disliked the Clan's attachment to a group of foreign Elders, and demanded that Dee and his followers renounce all allegiance to Vienna. Negotiations were constantly hampered by the Prince's insistence on being the sole authority, and offers of compromise were consistently spurned. Finally, government-authorized "witchfinders"

began to harass the Tremere and their mortal allies, and the Chantry was forced into hiding.

Since that time, a virtual state of war has existed between the Ventrue and the Tremere of London, and much of it has spilled over into the other fiefs of the British Isles. Puritan witch hunts were countered with plots to undermine and destroy the system of government on which the Prince based his power; religious differences were used to draw mortals into the conflict, and among the effects of the struggle on the Canaille were civil war, fire and the attempted destruction of Parliament. After a century of violence, with the Masquerade constantly at risk, Dee received instructions from Vienna to withdraw from the conflict. Certain pawns were sacrificed, and the Ventrue were allowed to believe that the Tremere had been destroyed.

Over the following two centuries, the Tremere quietly regained their former strength, and laid their plans. Subtly influencing the fringes of science, they began to foster the popular spiritualism of the Victorian era. This movement was so widespread, and yet so bereft of apparent significance, that the Ventrue dismissed it as a mortal fad and overlooked it for a time; however, when societies and secret orders began to form once more, they became alarmed. There was such a profusion of orders, societies and individual mystics by the turn of the 20th century that the Ventrue knew not where to look for the hand of the Tremere; so many were fronts, blinds and pure coincidences that Mithras found himself chasing shadows, always too late or in the wrong place.

To take direct action against such a large proportion of the mortal population would surely destroy the Masquerade, and the Prince still stung from the preemptory orders to desist which he had received a century earlier. Instead, he determined to fight fire with fire, and fostered a group of his own, using the Malkavian Clan as puppets. His idea was to let a Malkavian-sponsored secret order grow up, and become so wild and unpleasant that the kine would be appalled by it and the whole of the spiritualist and occultist movements would be stamped out, leaving the genuine Tremere activities exposed.

Driven underground once more, the Tremere planned and waited. Mithras' disappearance in the bombing of World War II has left both sides confused and unsure; after waiting for two decades, a few tentative steps were taken to use another popular movement as a cover, but the Flower Children were sabotaged by angry Malkavians, who now hated Tremere and Ventrue equally. Similar events were taking place throughout Europe and North America. This plan was abandoned, and the Tremere began to subvert the police force — one of the main Ventrue tools — through their control of the Freemasons. This, too, was discovered and stopped. At present, the two sides are watching each other, but taking no action.

Sire: Tremere Elders

Clan: Tremere

Nature: Plotter

Demeanor: Director

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 1608 (born 1527)

Apparent Age: 70s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 7

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 8, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 7, Intelligence 8, Wits 7

Talents: Alertness 6, Diplomacy 4, Empathy 3, Intimidation 2, Intrigue 8, Leadership 6, Sense Deception 5, Subterfuge 8

Skills: Drive 2, Bribery 5, Debate 7, Etiquette 5, Firearms 2, Hypnotism 5, Masquerade 3, Meditation 6, Melee 2, Music 4, Research 8, Security 3, Stealth 2

Knowledge: Alchemy 5, Astrology 5, Astronomy 4, Biology 3, Bureaucracy 3, Chemistry 4, City Secrets (London) 7, Computer 3, Cryptography 3, Finance 2, Geology 2, Investigation 4, Kindred Lore 7, Law 4, Linguistics 6, Lupine Lore 5, Magus Lore 6, Mathematics 7, Occult 8, Politics 5, Science 5, Spirit Lore 5, Theology 4, Toxicology 3.



Disciplines: Auspex 6, Dominate 5, Thaumaturgy 8 (Spirit Thaumaturgy 5, Elemental Mastery 5, Blood 5, Telekinesis 5, Fire 4, Weather Control 3)

Rituals: Any he needs

Background: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 3, Influence 4, Mentor 5, Resources 5, Retainers 5.

Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 5, Courage 3

Merits: Common Sense, Concentration, Light Sleeper, Natural Linguist, Fast Learner, Occult Library, Reputation, Mansion, Police Ties, Corporate Ties, Political Ties, Judicial Ties

Flaws: Enemy (Mithras), Clan Enmity (Ventrue)

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 9

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 40/8

Derangements: Total Restraint, Intellectualization

Notes: With Mithras missing and Aine not known to be Kindred, Dee is the most powerful Cainite in the British Isles. The Clan wars, which are not entirely over, have increased his natural caution, and he is unwilling to do anything to risk the Tremere. His current plans for the Clan involve subtly permeating every aspect of mortal society, and he is making use of the New Age movement and other opportunities. This strategy nearly succeeded in the last century, and Dee is slowly working on perfecting it.

Image: Medium height, wiry build, medium brown hair and eyes. Dee wears his hair slightly shorter than collar length, and normally has a neat goatee beard. Combined with modern clothes, this makes him look more like a beatnik than the Tudor gentleman he is. He likes robes and voluminous coats — normally in dark colors — and jackets or cardigans with many pockets.

Haven: Dee's main Haven is a large Victorian house with a walled garden in the London suburb of Richmond. He has several alternative Havens, including one in the Temple, the legal preserve in the heart of London's court district, and another in a secret basement level of a small hotel in Bloomsbury, not far from the British Museum.

Roleplaying Hints: Time is too precious to bother with the ignorant, so feel free to ignore those who do not impress you intellectually. Sprinkle your speech with arcane terms in various languages, since anyone who is worth speaking to will surely understand them. On the whole, speak little, and make use of long, thoughtful silences. Let your eyes become a little unfocused, steeple your fingers in front of your face, and spend a few minutes in abstracted thought before speaking. When you do speak, bring in as many arguments and alter-

natives as you can — you have considered every angle with the utmost thoroughness.

Anne Bowesley ('Lady Anne')

Anne's family — one of the most prominent in Warwickshire — had surprised many people by siding with Cromwell. The fact was, they would not support a king who claimed a divine right over the nobility, especially when most of the noble families were older and more distinguished than the upstart Stuarts. Let Cromwell bring Parliament to unrivalled power, then — and then let the nobility rule Parliament. Her father and his friends met in secret, and called themselves Optimates — Anne absorbed enough education from her brothers to recognize the term and know what it meant. Once the struggle was over, her family would be part of the ruling elite.

Cromwell died, and his son died too, and back came the monarchy. Anne's father died without seeing his dream realized, and her brothers followed the herd and became fawning courtiers and town fops. But Anne never forgot. Her father had made her a good marriage, and although she never loved her husband, she found him useful for his wealth and contacts. Soon she was introduced to a group of nobles who had friends in the Netherlands, and an idea that her father would surely have approved. If England must have a king, let it be a king who could be ruled by Parliament — the group had

already sounded out a Dutch prince who seemed ideal for the task.

In 1688, William of Orange landed, James faced a mutiny among his own troops, and the following year William became king, married to James' daughter Mary as a precaution against pretenders and rebels. That year, Anne became married in a way, for her planning and executive skills had impressed one of the nobles deeply. His name was Valerius, and he had made more kings than the Earl of Warwick.

Anne's family believed her lost at sea while on an embassy, and she installed herself in London, rapidly discovering the true powers and events behind the civil war. She learned of enemies — rebels and sorcerers — and applied herself to thwarting them. Her rise within the Clan Ventruue was rapid, and she dealt with rivals as she dealt with enemies. Woe betide the fool who thought her frail because of her sex.

She began attending the Prince, and her natural ability led him to give her charge of Parliament. If only her father had been alive to see it. Through two centuries, she built Parliament into the ruling force of the nation, and made it a powerful weapon against the Prince's enemies. She rose in power along with her Clan, her Prince, her fief and her country, until it seems that there could never be a rule so glorious.

Wars came and went, on both sides of the sunrise. Plots were discovered and crushed. Then events in Europe led to conflict among the kine. Bombs rained down on London, and fire was everywhere. The Prince was missing. Anne did not think twice. Her followers quietly removed a few prominent rivals — many of whom were also thought to have fallen to the mortals' bombs — and she announced her succession. Not liking the male term "Prince", she gave herself the title "Queen of London."

Her rule was not unopposed, nor had she expected it to be. Still in control of the mortal Parliament, she took advantage of the ruin and economic disruption that the war had caused and used them to starve her new subjects of resources. Thus weakened, they were unable to resist a series of crackdowns and assassinations which left her rule somewhat more secure.

While opposition within her own Clan had effectively been stifled, there was trouble from without. The Anarch movement was on the rise once more, and in London it had been backed by the skulking Tremere. They never acted openly, but she had learned to read their hand in their actions. An increase in mysticism, coupled with a growing lack of respect for authority — they may call themselves "Flower Children", but they were pawns. For a while, she let them be, remembering the situation her Prince had faced a scant few decades earlier. She would not make herself look foolish by chasing shadows, and in time the enemy would surely show themselves.

Her response was subtle and indirect, again using Parliament as her weapon. Under the guise of social reform, she sowed the seeds of ruin in the nation's recovering economy,



aiming to cut away the basis of her enemies' power as she had done before. The Age of Aquarius ran out of money, and collapsed in a sea of recrimination. She placed a pawn — one whom she regarded almost as a daughter — in charge of Parliament, and kept up the pressure on the economy. The smaller fiefs had become less obedient of late, and the destruction of their economic base would teach them their place.

Meanwhile, London must learn to be ruled, willingly or otherwise, and Anne took steps to keep the Primogen weak. Upon her succession, she had filled the Primogen with Ventrue faithful and Toreadors whose neutrality she bought by extending the Elysium. The Tremere who had sat on the Primogen were either destroyed or missing, and the few Brujah were soon manipulated into withdrawing in protest. Mithras had kept the Primogen weak, and it was an easy task to fill it with her supporters. She no longer feared the Anarchs' voices — let them howl and rage, so long as they were powerless.

A revolt among the northern fiefs was put down with the help of allies, and although relations with York were strained, London was once again in control of Britain. But Parliament was slipping away from her. Her pawn had succeeded almost too well, and despite careful sabotage of any rivals her leadership of Parliament was in jeopardy. The kine were becoming restless, and the frustrated Anarchs were setting about harnessing that frustration. Anne's pawn became the focus for all discontent, and regretfully she had to remove her from power.

She now faces a dilemma, as criticisms of her rule are growing even among her own Clan. Two decades of harsh rule have failed to extinguish the Tremere threat and have apparently given the Anarchs more support instead of starving them into submission. Rivals are jockeying for power, and the crown feels loose upon her head. Is there any way to hold onto power without another series of purges? Has she the power to undertake such purges, or will she fall to a coup which may even now be brewing?

Sire: Valerius

Clan: Ventrue

Nature: Director

Demeanour: Autocrat

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1688 (born 1635)

Apparent Age: 50s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 7, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 6, Brawl 3, Diplomacy 5, Dodge 6, Intimidation 4, Intrigue 7, Leadership 6, Sense Deception 4, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Bribery 5, Dancing 3, Debate 5, Drive 3, Etiquette 4, Fast-Talk 4, Interrogation 4, Masquerade 5, Meditation 2, Police Procedure 3, Public Speaking 5, Speed Reading 3, Stealth 4, Style 3

Knowledge: Area Knowledge (London) 5, Bureacracy 6, City Secrets (London) 5, Economics 4, Finance 6, Investigation 4, Kindred Lore 4, Law 6, Linguistics 4, Magus Lore 5, Occult 7, Politics 7, Psychology 4

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Dominate 6, Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 4, Presence 7

Background: Allies 5, Contacts 6, Herd 4, Influence 7, Resources 6, Retainers 5

Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 6, Courage 4

Merits: Concentration, Self-Confident, Charmed Existence, Political Ties

Flaws: Enemy (Tremere), Magic Susceptibility

Humanity: 9

Willpower: 8

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 30/6

Derangements: Intellectualization

Notes: Allies, Contacts and Herd are all in Parliament; Lady Anne feeds exclusively on politicians. Her retainers are mostly Ghouls.

Image: A slightly built, brown-haired woman whose blue eyes betray enormous force of personality.

Haven: In a hidden cellar beneath the Houses of Parliament. Subsidiary Havens include a huge and impressive mansion on the outskirts of the city, which is normally used for receiving visitors.

Roleplaying Hints: You are in charge — let no one mistake that. You are brusque and peremptory with underlings, but charming with equals and those you wish to influence. Your main motivation at present is to let no one know how slight your grip on London has become. Exude relaxed self-confidence as much as possible.

Aleister Crowley ('The Great Beast')

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law" — that was always Crowley's favorite saying, and it guided his life from the very beginning. Rebelling against the stifling social and moral conventions of the Victorian English middle classes, he scandalized society in the early decades of the 20th century by his behavior. Crowley was also a serious student of the occult, and a prominent member of the Order of the Golden Dawn. After an argument, he broke away and founded his own Order of the Silver Star. Said to have broken every

judicial and moral law, he has been accused of cannibalism, ritual murder and worse crimes, but none of his followers could be persuaded to testify against him, for fear of magical vengeance. He filed his teeth, claimed to be the Antichrist, and revelled in his reputation as the most wicked man in the world.

All of this made him a natural candidate for the Malkavian Clan, and a perfect tool for Mithras to use against the Tremere. By dint of some astute maneuvering and a little Domination here and there, a lesser Malkavian was induced to Embrace Crowley, promising access to greater secrets and greater ecstasy than he had ever known. For a while, Crowley was convinced that he had been adopted by a powerful Vampire Clan called Tremere, and as Mithras had hoped, his excesses shocked Kindred and kine alike, threatened the Masquerade on numerous occasions, and caused deep embarrassment to the Tremere, both in Britain and throughout the world. He continued to live openly as the leader of various cults and covens, and his daylight appearances confused and worried the whole Kindred — had he found some way to survive daylight, or had he arranged for a Ghoul or Canaille lookalike to stand in for him?

Crowley received a visit one night from three soberly dressed men, who claimed to represent the Clan Tremere. What followed left Crowley severely weakened and several of his followers hopelessly insane, but the attackers were driven off. Crowley went into hiding, and spent some time trying to locate his Sire. At first he wanted protection, but then he began to realize that he had been duped in some way, and demanded the truth. He had earlier mastered the art of riding a Frenzy, and used his full terrifying power to overcome his startled Sire. After discovering the truth, he destroyed his Sire and drank his Blood — an act of pure spite, since he knew nothing of Diablerie, but one which increased his power considerably.

Seeking out his newfound family among the Malkavians, Crowley managed to bind them together enough to fight off Tremere attacks. For the last 40 years, he has devoted himself to vengeance against both Ventrue and Tremere. The Malkavians are more difficult to manage than any of his mortal followers, though, and Crowley himself sometimes becomes distracted by other matters, so their campaign is inconsistent and often bizarre. One of Mithras' last acts before his disappearance was to call a Blood Hunt against Crowley; some nervously wonder if Crowley managed to destroy the Prince.

In fact, Crowley has no idea what happened to Mithras, although he enjoys enormously the fear and uncertainty that now surrounds him. He found it expedient to arrange his own death a few decades ago, and now lives an underground existence (metaphorically speaking), dividing his time between pseudo-occultist orgies and acts of terrorism against the warring Ventrue and Tremere. Both Clans now suspect the other of having control of the madman, and some even wonder if the Beast has entirely taken him over.

Sire: Achadramenos

Clan: Malkavian

Nature: Rebel

Demeanour: Deviant

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1930 (born 1875)

Apparent Age: 50s

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 7, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

Talents: Acting 3, Athletics 3, Alertness 4, Intimidation 6, Intrigue 3, Leadership 5, Seduction 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Drive 2, Debate 3, Fast Talk 4, Herbalism 2, Meditation 3, Research 3, Stealth 4

Knowledge: Astrology 4, City Secrets (London) 3, Investigation 2, Kindred Lore 6, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Magus Lore 5, Occult 7, Spirit Lore 5, Theology 4

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Obfuscate 2, Dominate 5, Presence 6, Thaumaturgy 4 (Blood 4, Fire 4, Spirit Thaumaturgy 4, Conjuring 2)

Background: Allies 2, Contacts 2, Fame 3, Herd 3, Resources 4, Retainers 2, Status 3

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 1, Courage 4

Merits: Berserker, Occult Library, Unbondable

Flaws: Vengeance (Ventrue and Tremere), Enemy (ditto), Notoriety

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 10

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 30/6

Derangements: Blood Frenzy, Arrogance, Vengeance, Power Mad

Notes: Allies, Contacts and Herd are all in the occult world; Herd represents a current cult or coven which Crowley has gathered around himself. Among Crowley's retainers is a lookalike whom he has made into a Ghoul; this is how he manages the daylight appearances which so worry Kindred observers.

Image: A heavyset man in late-middle age, strong-looking but with unmistakable signs of a dissolute life. There is something terrifying in his eyes — Dee once said "The sight of Crowley's eyes disquiets me more than the sunrise."

Haven: Crowley maintains several hidden apartments in the homes of his wealthier followers, and several more in the abandoned ruins of a number of houses of former followers. Many of these properties were left to one or another of the mystical Orders Crowley founded, and have been left abandoned for want of instructions or so thoroughly tied up in trusts and other legal arrangements that nothing can ever be done with them.



Roleplaying Hints: You love to shock for its own sake, and you also love to watch another person throwing off the bonds of convention for the first time. You speak in moderate and cultured tones, but with the most graphically obscene language and ideas. Others must acknowledge your absolute power and bend themselves to your will, or get out of your sight.

Lianna (Leanan)

She was always the prettiest girl in the village, and when the farmers would bring their livestock in to market all the lads would compete for her attentions. She loved it. They said that one day she'd take the eye of a lord and end up being a great lady in Dublin or even London. Her mother said she'd end up ruined and in shame and poor for the rest of her days, but she paid no mind, she knew that greater things would come her way — and one day, they did.

The stranger appeared one winter, and said he was a sailor just returned from the Indies. He thrilled her with his talk of faraway places, glittering palaces and dazzling balls, and the two would often stay up until dawn talking — for he had business during the day, and never appeared in her father's ale-house until dark. He would slip in unseen, and tip her a wink — that was how she knew to meet him when the tavern closed. He didn't much care for the company of other people — too ordinary, he said — and few there were in the village who even remembered having seen him.

Then the stranger told her he was leaving, as he had business elsewhere. Her head was so full of his stories that she could no longer bear to stay in the village, and she begged him to take her, and show her all the wonders of the world. He thought for a while, and then he agreed. He would be gone for two days, he said, but he would surely be back on the third day, and she should be ready to leave that night.

She could barely stand the drudgery and boredom of the next two days. She put her few good clothes together, with some other things for the journey, and hid them in a bundle under her bed. As darkness fell on the third night, she could hardly remember her duties for watching the door of the ale-house and waiting for the stranger to appear — but he never did. She went to bed that night in tears, her heart broken.

That night, she had a strange dream. She dreamed that the stranger came to her as she lay sleeping, and told her to get ready to leave. She felt very strange as they crept out of the door and down the street, so weak she could hardly stand. Her stomach felt unsettled and she felt hungry and thirsty all at once. She put this down to nervousness, though, for she was leaving her whole life behind and would never return.

The two travelled together for almost a century, seeing all the splendors of the world. Paris, Berlin, Alexandria, Bombay, Peking, and many places beside — they never did get to Dublin, although her companion assured her that these places were grander. She found out all about the world, and about the great lords and ladies who called themselves the Kindred.

When her companion left her, she did not mind. She knew her way about the world now, and there were so many things to see and do that she never missed him. She was now able to take companions of her own, which she thoroughly enjoyed. The artists and musicians of the world had so much more about them than the boys of her native village, and she enjoyed having them dedicate to her the beautiful things they made. She also enjoyed leaving them alone to pine for her, for she knew that this was the truest and purest sign of love.

She returned to London in the 60s, to the bright colors and the endless parties and the art and optimism which no one thought would end. Harder times and other changes hit the mortals, but the Kindred protected themselves from hardship in their Havens and palaces, and did what they could to prevent the gloom and depression of the times from affecting the places they loved. But the dreariness of the mortal world is still permeating the Elysium, and she thinks she might move on for a while — if she can find a place where people still know how to have a good time.

Sire: Pascoe

Clan: Toreador

Nature: Bon Vivant

Demeanor: Gallant

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1645 (born 1628)

Apparent Age: early 20s

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 6

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Artistic Expression 2, Empathy 5, Poetic Expression 2, Seduction 6, Singing 2

Skills: Carousing 6, Drive 2, Etiquette 5, Masquerade 4, Music 2, Meditation 2, Style 6

Knowledge: Art History 3, City Secrets (London) 3, Kindred Lore 3, Linguistics 2, Literature 3

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Celerity 2, Chimerstry 3, Dominate 2, Fortitude 1, Presence 4

Background: Allies 2, Herd 2, Resources 4

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

Merits: Calm Heart, Charmed Existence, Baby Face

Flaws: Uneducated, Allergic (aspirin)

Humanity: 7

Willpower: 5

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 20/5

Derangements: Obsession (partying, seducing artists)

Notes: Lianna is extremely skilled at seduction, and revels in the effect she has on her mortal "companions." She loves to play the Muse, inspiring her lovers to produce greater and more wonderful works than ever before, neither eating nor sleeping in a whirlwind of creativity. Sometimes she will even allow her victims to drink a little of her Blood, temporarily granting them the advantages of being Ghouls for as long as they continue to create. She also loves withdrawing her favors from an artist who has begun to bore her. She can manage things deliberately so that the artist begins to pine for her, and is left burnt out by his endeavors to please her. If the Storyteller feels the need for a mechanism to reflect this, then the artist might be required to make a Self-Control roll on being seduced, and another on being abandoned. Failure does not result in Frenzy, but as with Frenzy rolls the artist may pick up a derangement — Obsession with creating upon being seduced, and Depression upon being abandoned.

Lianna regards herself as an artist, using the emotions of mortals as her instrument. She has had great success even with the Kindred, leading one Ravnos to be her protector and teacher for years.

Image: A stunningly beautiful young woman, with perfect bone structure, long strawberry-blonde hair and enchant-



ing, laughing green eyes. Generally dresses in flowing evening wear, favoring the soft, romantic styles of the late 60s.

Haven: Lianna's main Haven is an unmapped space in the foundations of the South Bank arts complex, with secret tunnels connecting to the maze of passages beneath Waterloo station.

Roleplaying Hints: You are beautiful and charming, and you know it. Your appeal lies not in obvious sexuality, but in the perfection of your beauty, the bewitching quality of your eyes and a laugh which has been described (by a besotted mortal) as sounding like liquid sunshine trickling down a brook. You aim straight for the heart and mind, and leave the lower regions to others — you are an enchantress, not a whore. You speak with a soft Irish brogue, with a lilting rhythm that can make a comment about the weather sound like poetry.

The Hunt Club

The Hunt Club is a flamboyant group of Diabolists. Some believe they are Anarchs, others that they are decadents from a variety of Clans, probably led by Toreadors. Crowley has been widely accused of being a prominent member of the Hunt Club, but nothing has yet been proven. Although

Mithras is missing and a Blood Hunt has not formally been called in London, all the other fiefs and coteries of the British Isles have let it be known that membership in the Hunt Club is considered a capital offense.

For around 30 years now, Kindred — normally of ninth and older generations — have been disappearing. Occasional bloodless remains have been found, and often an item such as a riding-crop, a rider's cap in hunting pink, the tail of a fox, or some similar item has been found in the victim's Haven. On at least one occasion, a victim has found the tail of a fox in his Haven a day or so before disappearing.

The Hunt Club is an informal coterie of brash and mostly young Cainites who have taken to Diablerie for several reasons. One, of course, is the promise of power to be gained by drinking the Blood of their elders, but equally important in their eyes is the chase itself. A Vampire is the most dangerous prey of all, and the challenge of bringing down a more powerful Vampire is perhaps the ultimate test of one's own ability. Recently the Hunt Club has become more audacious by leaving warnings to its intended victims — increasing the sport by giving the quarry a headstart.

At present, nothing is known of the whereabouts of the Hunt Club or the identities of its members. It strikes all over the British Isles, wherever there are Cainites of early generations to be found. So far, victims have all been of the Sixth-Ninth generations, but the choice of quarry is tending toward the earlier generations.

A persistent rumor names Count Zaroff, a young Vampire against whom Blood Hunts have been called in most of the fiefs of Europe for similar activities. In life, Zaroff was an expatriate Russian nobleman who lived for the hunt and searched the world for ever more dangerous prey. In the 1930s the mortal authorities discovered that he had been kidnapping humans — often other big game hunters — in his search for the most dangerous game of all, and he disappeared from his island estate in the Pacific. A decade or so later, a Neonate calling himself Zaroff appeared in Europe; he showed a disturbing lack of respect for senior Kindred, challenging almost every Cainite he met to some physical contest. He has not been seen for 10 years, since he was expelled from Berlin.

Sire: Arebehaluah

Clan: Caitiff

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Competitor

Generation: 10th (when last seen)

Embrace: 1941 (born 1893)

Apparent Age: early 40s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2, Leadership 2, Search 3, Scan 2

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Archery 4, Camouflage 3, Climbing 3, Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Falconry 2, Fast-Draw 3, Firearms 5, Game Playing 3, Gunsmithing 3, Hunting 5, Melee 5, Orienteering 4, Ride 3, Stealth 4, Survival 5, Throwing 3, Tracking 4

Knowledge: History 4, Kindred Lore 3, Lupine Lore 2, Occult 3, Naturalist 4

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 3, Fortitude 1, Obfuscate 2, Potence 2, Serpents 2

Background: Resources 4, Retainers 3

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 5, Courage 8

Merits: Code of Honor (always kill cleanly, feed only on own kills), Overconfident, Iron Will, Daredevil

Flaws: Prey Exclusion (females, anything weaker than himself), Compulsion (hunting), Anachronism (19th century)

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 7

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 13/1

Derangements: Arrogance, Obsession (hunting)

Notes: Zaroff's Retainers are a massively built mute Cossack manservant and a pack of four hunting dogs, all of which are thought to be Ghouls. At the present time, he may have attained an earlier Generation through Diablerie than that shown above.

Image: Immaculate, medium height, wiry build, hawk-like face. Oiled dark hair, dark trimmed beard and moustache, dueling scar on left cheek. Normally dresses in riding boots, jodpurs, shirt and cravat. Sometimes wears a monocle.

Haven: Unknown at present. Favors large remote estates and islands.

Roleplaying Hints: Be polished and charming at all times, but always find a way to turn the conversation to hunting and use metaphors based on hunting wherever possible. Without ever being less than charming, subtly challenge any male character you encounter to a physical contest — a hunt if



possible. Use a very slight Russian accent if you can manage it without being heavy-handed; at any rate, try to sound like a European aristocrat.

Chronicles

The information in the chapter can only scratch the surface of the possibilities for using the British Isles as a setting for Vampire. The following notes are intended to help the Storyteller in developing a Chronicle in this setting.

Further Information

As mentioned earlier, tourist guides are recommended to Storytellers outside the British Isles as a means of getting the basic information about an area quickly and digestibly, and there is a range of popular paperbacks for researching particular historical events and characters. Very little modern Vampire fiction has been set in the British Isles, but Barbara Hambly's *Immortal Blood* could form the basis for a

worthwhile story, or at least a source of interesting characters.

Those who have a taste for such things could research real crimes in the British Isles and weave them into their Chronicles; the Ripper killings of 1888 will be considered in more detail below, and other possibilities present themselves. Basil Copper's *The Vampire in Legend, Art and Fact* covers a few cases.

Where's Jack?

The Ripper murders of 1888 have left a lasting mark on British popular culture as well as the nation's criminal history. In a reign of terror lasting several weeks, an unknown killer murdered five prostitutes in the poorer parts of London's East End, mutilating their bodies in a horrifying way. Jack the Ripper — or someone claiming to be him — sent taunting letters to the police, even claiming to have cooked and eaten some of his victims' organs which were missing when they were discovered.

The speculation over these killings continues to this day, and scarcely a year goes by without another book being published with new information, a fresh perspective or even a handy summary of previous books.

A popular theory claims that the Ripper was a gentleman. The letters betray some education, and some commentators believe that the mutilations were done in such a way as to betray medical experience. Other aspects of the killings, they say, have links with Freemasonry, and some have suggested that the killings were ritual in nature, pointing to the Masonic connection and sagely reminding the reader that there were five killings and a pentacle has five corners. In at least one film version of the case, it was noticed that there was far less blood in and around the body than might be expected.

Prominent suspects have included the court physician and a distant member of the royal family, but to this day the case remains unsolved.

In the world of Vampire, these killings could very easily take on a new significance. If the killings were ritual in nature, were the Tremere involved? If so, why were the bodies not disposed of properly, and who wrote the taunting letters to the police? Were they the work of some deranged Malkavian — perhaps set up by Mithras to discredit the Tremere? Or was the killer simply a mortal — an insane and vicious one to be sure, but a mortal nonetheless? How were the Kindred of London affected by the killings? It must have been of great importance to discover the killer's identity, and what action — if any — did the Kindred take? Why did the killings suddenly stop, and if the killer is still in existence, where is he? Or she?



Botella 92

† FERNANDO BOTELLA
"MADE OF A MEDIEVAL TOWN"

Europe By Night:

An Overview

Written by Rob Hatch, Art by Josh Timbrook

Ah, dearest. You are awake. Good. I shall have Pietro fetch the map and itinerary. We have much to discuss, much to prepare you for, before we fly across the Atlantic. We go to Europe, the Old World, land of my birth — how long ago was it? — and of my Embrace.

What's to discuss, you say? Ah, my Childe, how much you have yet to learn. No, I would never patronize you, but you must understand: the Kindred of Europe are as different from your brethren as — pardon the pun — night and day.

First and foremost, and you must understand how important this is, Europe's Kindred are, for the most part, so old. The Anarch rabble of our city sit in their clubs and complain about the stagnation of our society and the unchanging natures of their Princes — Princes who are often a mere century and a half old, societies which perhaps predate their Princes by a few decades! What do they know of age? I tell you, there are Princes in Greece who debated with Socrates in the marketplace — I have spoken with one who marched with the legions along the Appian Way...

Forgive me. I get — how do you say it — carried away? Yes. You cannot imagine what such years do to one. You, who grew up in a mortal society which developed its televisions and its spacecraft and its lasers and its compact disk players in a handful of years, where change is as close as a remote control button, where a life's work is tossed aside with two weeks' notice and a Haven is casually thrown away when the lease expires, cannot comprehend what it is to live in a time when farmers plowed the fields of their fathers and their fathers before them. Change is anathema to many of the Elders, and tradition has gone from being a nicety to being an obsession. Watch all that you say and do. A wrong word, a wrong look, has led to the Final Death for many a Kindred.

The Kindred of Europe

Many of the Kindred Elders of Europe are truly ancient, some having been created well before medieval times. Some Elders have ruled for centuries, and the web of tradition, betrayal and revenge that blankets Europe may well have had its first strands spun before the birth of Christ. Rituals, jealousies and feuds have gnawed at some of the Elder Kindred to the point of obsession — indeed, an objective outsider might say, to the point of madness.

Strict tradition dominates the unives of Europe's Kindred. The word of the Lextalionis is followed to the letter. Particularly in the post-Renaissance years, the growing population and limited space in Europe means that such Traditions as Presentation and Becoming are taken very seriously. Some of Europe's more reactionary Kindred still use old-fashioned calling cards to Present themselves to others of their kind, and even the Princes do not often Beget without the tacit approval of the other Kindred.

The Prince of a city acts very much as did his feudal counterparts of a millennium ago, and demands much the same obedience. Often there is no Primogen council to check his actions — many of Europe's Princes, already undead for centuries before the Enlightenment concepts of democracy and limited rule, saw the writings of such thinkers as Rousseau and Locke as mere Anarch babble.

As Europe's Princes are often far older than their American counterparts (Sixth or even Fifth Generation), they have the innate power to enforce their heavy-handed rule, and the Kindred activity of a European domain is largely dictated by the whim of the Prince. Blood Hunts are called with greater



frequency, and for far less cause. For the most part, the Prince may do as he pleases (and the word 'he' is used deliberately; male chauvinism remains strong among Europe's Kindred, and most of the continent's Princes are male). Many of Europe's Elders are extremely reactionary; the years of unlife have hardened them against any acceptance of change, and in fact they lash out at any attempt to keep up with the times as Anarch sentiment. This has led to the formation of a class of Ancillae who, while by no means Anarch, see some degree of enlightened change as essential to the survival of the Camarilla. These Ancillae, the 'liberal Yuppies' of European Vampires, play a dangerous game: they are often castigated as Anarchs by the Elders and are seen as fence-straddling whiners by Europe's growing faction of true Anarchs.

Many of Europe's youngest Kindred, in fact, are beginning to lash out at 'the system' with a fury unrivalled by any of their American brethren. Seeing no future in a stagnant system of centuries-long waits for power, the Anarchs strike out at their Elders under the guise of terrorist bombings and political protests. Europe's many factions of political, disaffected youth make perfect smokescreens for these rebel Kindred. Indeed, the War of Ages seems to have become tripartite in Europe: the old guard, the reformers, and the Anarchs.

Brujah

The Brujah are strong in Europe, but are perhaps not entirely synonymous with their New World counterparts; indeed, many European Brujah act like Ventrue. Intellectualism is still strong among this clan; many European Brujah's idea of revolution is sitting in all-night cafes discussing the merits of Marxism over a game of chess. Many Brujah are bitter and disillusioned over the failure of their Communist "noble experiment."

Gangrel

There is almost nowhere for them to run. The limited space and large population are catching up to them — Europe's Gangrel are more politically active, and indeed some border on the verge of ecoterrorism. They have very little space left to hide from the Lupines and are being crammed into the cities which they so despise. Many Gangrel are drug addicts or just plain crazy, and there seems to be a mass Gangrel exodus from Europe going on.

Malkavians

What is more dangerous than an insane Vampire? An insane Fifth Generation Vampire who rules her own city. In a society where many Vampires ruled long before the coming of the Camarilla and 'eccentricity' is decorously ignored among the powerful, many Malkavians are in positions of prestige and influence in Europe. Malkavians are the exceptions to the rule of 'proper' behavior; most other Kindred indulge all but their most grotesque excesses.

Nosferatu

Nosferatu are widespread in Europe — the many ruins and ancient buildings, as well as the extensive metro systems, give them perfect places to hide. Nosferatu are looked on with greater loathing and contempt than in America, as the idea of individual achievement is less prevalent among European Vampires than those of the United States, and the Nosferatu line in general is seen as cursed.

Toreador

Europe is renowned even among mortals for its great artists; it is only natural that the continent would be a major nexus for the Toreador Clan. The Toreador are very strong in Europe, and indeed Toreador from all over the world flock to such centers of Toreador power as Paris and Florence. The European Toreador look with disdain on these foreign Philistines, not that any of them would ever show it; they smile graciously at the Ugly Americans and snicker behind their handkerchiefs.

Ventrue

The Ventrue clan is powerful in Europe, like nearly everywhere else. There is a great debate concerning policy in the Clan between the eldest Ventrue who wish to preserve

the current system of government (or better yet, revert to quasi-feudalism) and the younger Ancillae who harbor great hopes for a United Europe (controlled by them, of course).

Tremere

The Tremere were born in Europe and are still largely controlled from Vienna. Of all the Camarilla Clans, European Tremere will seem most familiar to American Vampires (not that this is necessarily a good thing...).

Caitiff

Nowhere is the lot of a Caitiff poorer than in Europe. Here, where prestige is based on age, bloodline and clan ties, a Caitiff has almost no chance to rise in Status. Caitiff are shunned and ostracized, even by the Anarchs; occasionally, a Caitiff is recruited by some other Vampiric organization with the promise of power and prestige and sent on a suicide mission.

Assamites

As the struggle between Kindred in Europe reaches the boiling point, the Assamites stand ready to take advantage of it. Expanding outward from their Turkish stronghold under the guise of Arab immigrants, the Assamites are quietly consolidating their strength in the cities of Europe. Many so-called 'terrorist bombings' are in reality Assamite 'hits' on various Vampiric targets; the Vienna airport bombing of 1985 came dangerously close to destroying one of the Tremere's Seven Elders en route to his stronghold via coffin.

Followers of Set

The Minions of Set are few and far between in Europe, but they are there — a few gangs in Southern Europe and along the Mediterranean have been taken over by their representatives, and agents of the clan have made it known that their services are for hire — for the right price...

Giovanni

The Giovanni are on the move; already a major power in Italy, they seek to expand into the economic playgrounds of Switzerland and the Benelux consortium. No one knows what they want, but one thing is for sure: no one trusts them.

Ravnos

Although common to Eastern Europe, Ravnos have migrated all over Europe with the Gypsy clans. They are certain to appear at all the major Vampire festivals, entertaining with their tricks and sleight of hand and pocketing whatever they can. Europe's feudal-based old guard Vampires would like nothing better than to have the lot of them beheaded as common thieves.

France

All that is beautiful among our kind can be found in France. The Toreador scrupulously maintain the artistic splendors of the nation. However, more than anywhere else in Europe, you must be careful in everything you say and do. Prejudice and intolerance casts an ugly pallor over the land.

The history of France has long been synonymous with the Toreador clan. The Toreador of France are seen (by themselves, at least) as the luminaries, movers and shakers of the clan worldwide. It is largely the influence of the Toreador that is responsible for France's being the cultural center of the Western world. Kindred xenophobia is perhaps stronger here than anywhere else; the Toreador see themselves as true aristocrats, alone fit to decide the future of art in the world. Foreign Kindred who visit France are often given an external show of great politeness but are made to feel acutely uncomfortable.

The Toreador of France are as reactionary as any Ventrué. If they could, they would restore the monarchy. They are ardent supporters of nationalism, for only this provides the cultural diversity necessary to produce great art. Under the influence of the Toreador, anti-foreign sentiments have reached new heights, in particular because of the influx of Assamites into the country.

Paris

Long renowned as the center of culture in the Western World, Paris has naturally attracted the attention of the Toreador Clan, and indeed one of the main meeting places of the entire Clan is in the Louvre. Here, in the shadowy after-hours corridors, the luminaries of the Parisian Guild pass solemn judgement on what will be chic and avant-garde in the way of art and fashion. A word from the Elders of Paris can make or break mortal and Vampire alike in the art world. Art in Paris is not exclusive to the Toreador, however; some of the Malkavian performance art is as bizarre as anything else in the world, and has been banned as shocking by the supposedly liberal Toreador.

The ruler of Paris is Francois Villon, a Fifth Generation Elder of the Toreador. He owns the Louvre, for all practical purposes; he and his clique are the final word on what is artistic and what is gauche, what is fashionable and what is tacky. A renowned womanizer in life, Villon still haunts the fashion shows of Paris; his Herd consists of the world's most beautiful models.

Many other Vampires are sick of the Toreador stranglehold on the City of Lights. Anarch bands of Brujah, Gangrel and Malkavians stalk the Left Bank, joined by several renegade Toreadors whose work was rejected by the Elders' clique. The Sabbat maintains a headquarters somewhere in the Parisian slums, with the hope of inciting violence among the kine and thereby weakening the Toreador hold on the city. A small band of Nosferatu stalk the city. These Nosferatu

share the Toreadors' love of art and beauty; many of them make their homes beneath cathedrals, and have been mistaken for gargoyles by passersby. One such Nosferatu may have been the inspiration for Victor Hugo's Quasimodo, while another Nosferatu by the name of Erik, who maintained his Haven underneath the Paris Opera House, is grudgingly acknowledged by some Toreador as the best singer of all time.

Germany

Even after all these years, the thought of my homeland still moves me. The flowing roar of the Rhine, the whispering of the Black Forest, the old castles of our Clan—and at last that damned wall is down. Would that the wall of ignorance and misunderstanding between the Kindred of my land were as easily brought low.

Much as France is the domain of the Toreador, Germany is the headquarters of the Ventrue of Europe. The vast majority of the Princes of the German cities are controlled by Ventrue. Although Germans have made many contributions to art and culture (particularly in the area of classical music), the Ventrue have been careful to preserve their state against the incursions of the Toreador, even going so far as to help unite the scattered city-states in the late 19th century in a show of Ventrue solidarity. Although a misjudgment on the part of the Ventrue concerning the threat posed by the Nazis led to a reduction in the power of Germany, with the collapse of the Berlin Wall most Ventrue are optimistic about the future power of the new state.

Most of the Ventrue rulers are extremely old. Here, more than anywhere else, the old guard of the Ventrue hold sway. Advancement in German society often takes centuries of loyal subservience. Many of the younger Ventrue, frustrated by this lack of vision on the part of their Elders, covertly support the Anarch activities of the Malkavians, Brujah and Caitiff who have been all but shut out of German society in the last century and a half.

Berlin

Surprisingly, the capital of Germany is the hotbed of Anarch activity in the country. The sudden wash of freedom following the Wall's collapse provided a plethora of punks and political activists of all stripes for Germany's Anarchs to walk among. In the shadows of the Wall, the Anarchs plot their next moves to destroy the Ventrue consortium. Berlin has also become a haven for Malkavians in recent times; the sudden outbursts and expressions of liberty mean that all sorts of bizarre behavior go essentially unnoticed.

Black Forest

Once a Gangrel stronghold, in the last century the Lupines have been making a concerted effort to destroy the Gangrel in the forest. As a result, many Gangrel have had to retreat to the cities, where most join the Anarchs or simply wander



EUROPE



aimlessly. Deep in the forest, hidden from the Lupines by powerful Obfuscate disciplines, is a base for the Sabbat, who plot to control the resources of the new United Germany. The Sabbat are having problems with the Forest's large faerie population, however, which torments them unmercifully.

Belgium/Netherlands/Luxembourg

Small in size, small in Herd, true – but it is not without reason that these nations have been bitterly feuded over by greater powers for centuries. The future of Europe may well lie within a little patch of land painstakingly wrested from the sea.

Although there are not many Kindred in this small region, the ones that are here are very influential, as they control much of Europe's banking and jewel industries. This is a headquarters for the Ventrue reformers who wish to unite Europe in an economic consortium.

These reformers have begun making offers of assistance and friendship to the rulers of what was once the Soviet Union; expecting to deal with the former Brujah rulers of the country, they have found their communiques unanswered. Still, realizing that the addition of the Soviet Kindred would help them tremendously, they continue their efforts.

Amsterdam

This port is famous for the variety of goods offered here—anything, legal or otherwise, can be bought here. The Prince of Amsterdam is relatively new—a Seventh Generation Ventrue and leader of the Ventrue reformers. His dramatic liberalization of the city's trade laws has given the city an economic boom and attracted all manner of people—legitimate businessmen and smugglers alike. The Prince has also, in a gesture of solidarity, taken advisers from other Clans besides his own. The Prince is unsure of himself, as many more powerful Ventrue in Germany are looking with suspicion on his irregular behavior, thinking of it as almost Anarch. Both the Giovanni and the Sabbat have agents in the city, and would like nothing better than to control this economic bastion.

Norway/Denmark/Sweden

At first glance, one would not expect the frozen north to be a land comfortable to the Kindred. After all, the myths tell of Dwarves, Trolls, Giants—not Vampires. But did not Odin One-eye demand blood sacrifice? Did not Freya turn into a falcon? Did not Loki vanish in a wink, and were not the Viking snowfields littered with corpses to be picked over by the Choosers of the Fallen?

Due to the relatively large tracts of wilderness and small populace, the Kindred of Norway, Denmark and Sweden maintained a tradition of isolation and neutrality toward one another for millennia. There are few Kindred in this region, largely due to the 'midnight sun' phenomenon which causes

Vampires to go into Torpor for as much as six months at a time. Although the Vampire population was once comprised largely of Brujah (who favored the area for the bloody Viking battles; when mortals went on as many berserker frenzies as Vampires, who would look twice at a "warrior" sucking his foe's blood?) and Gangrel, the Christianization of the Scandinavians brought with it many Ventrue and Toreador. In a series of battles, the combined Ventrue factions of England and Germany defeated the Viking Brujah and drove their allies, the savage all-female Gangrel band known as the Valkyries, into the forests.

The Princes of western Scandinavia are for the most part Ventrue with ties to both England and Germany, though there is a strong Toreador faction in Denmark. The Scandinavian Princes work remarkably well together, even going so far as to call informal meetings in Oslo, Copenhagen or Stockholm to discuss their affairs. The Scandinavian Ventrue are for the most part in favor of a United Europe, as are the Toreador. This particular political stance has driven a rift between the Denmark Toreador and their brethren; Paris firmly maintains that nationalism is vital to create the cultural differences from whence springs True Art. The art of the Denmark Toreadors is snubbed as well; many Danish Toreador are cinematographers, and their movies have gained a reputation among Kindred and kine for their alleged 'pornographic' content.

Lately, there has been a graphic upsurge in Anarch activity, however. Bands of disaffected, punk-influenced youth roam the streets, dealing drugs and committing random vandalistic acts; of late these acts have increased nearly to the point of sabotage. They serve as the perfect smokescreen for Anarch activities aimed at Kindred. The Elders of Scandinavia grin politely for outsiders and pretend that nothing is wrong while the violence grows daily. There are even fearful whispers among the Ventrue that the Valkyries have arisen once more, that they are behind the recent rash of Anarch activities. A sketchy description of the unknown assassin who took the life of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme in 1986 almost perfectly matches that of the legendary Brunhilde, leader of the ancient Gangrel warband.

Finland

A land of darkness and fog, whose shamans travelled down the river of the dead to talk with Tuonela in her hut. The plots of the Finnish Kindred stretch back through the eons, and a far and isolated land is not necessarily controlled by weaklings. Indeed, Louhi and her Brood have weighed on my mind more than once over the centuries.

The Vampires of Finland, conversely, gathered together in tightly-organized coterie even before the birth of civilization proper in the area; due to the large Kindred population, Lapland became known among the kine as Pohiola, the Land of Darkness. Finland is primarily controlled by Louhi, a Fifth-Generation Vampire whose Thaumaturgical skills rival those of the Tremere Elders; now quite mad, she is



rumored to be working on a great ritual to blot out the sun. There are whispers among the northern Kindred that Louhi is allied with the Sabbat. For years Louhi both sided and feuded with the Brujah who ran the Soviet Union; some say her greatest heights of madness (and paranoia) coincided with the collapse of that group.

Austria

A realm of soaring spires and quaint chateaus, rustic villages and The Sound of Music. Who would believe that the world's most dangerous occult society clutched this land so tightly in their talons?

Much like England, Austria has become a covert battleground between the Ventrue and Tremere. The Tremere would very much like to dominate the entire country, so as to have a bastion of strength and secrecy, while the Ventrue seek to control Austria's economic resources and prevent the Warlocks from running everything here.

Vienna

Vienna is infamous in Kindred lore as the headquarters of the Tremere Clan's Seven Elders. All Tremere are brought here at some point in their initiation to be Blood Bound to the Clan Elders and there will often be several Neonates and their Sires here at any given time. All other Kindred entering the city will be noted and watched (through both high-level rituals performed by the Clan over the centuries and mortal

spies) and at some point early in their stay will be approached by a Tremere agent and politely informed that any troublemaking or apparent espionage will result in the Final Death for the offender.

Although there are a few Ventrue in charge of various business interests here and a branch of the Toreador who patronize such centers of culture as the Albertina, this is a Tremere city, and the Elders are not about to let anyone forget it. What few Anarch movements have arisen here (some sponsored by the Ventrue, of all Kindred) have been promptly squelched by various ghastly mystical means. Many of Europe's oldest Vampires (including the Inconnu) consider the city to be a blasphemy and would gladly support any revolutionary activity that stood a chance of undermining the Tremere's power here (not that much would).

Switzerland

An island of peace in the midst of turmoil. I will enjoy our stop here. Still, in my communiques with my brethren, I have gotten the odd feeling that all is not as serene as it seems. Like the fabled Swiss lakes, a shimmering surface can hide the dark depths beneath.

There are very few Kindred in Switzerland. The nation is run by Guillaume, a Fifth-Generation Brujah who has (unknown to most) reached Golconda and is secretly a powerful voice in the Inconnu. Formerly a military leader, Guillaume still insists on military training for all citizens (including

Kindred) who reside in his Domain, but with his ascendance into Golconda has done everything possible to keep Switzerland neutral from all conflicts; the combination of Switzerland's mountainous terrain and Guillaume's own formidable power has ensured that this state continue. All Kindred entering the country are thoroughly checked out and undesirables (i.e. potential troublemakers) are deported.

Not surprisingly, Geneva has become a favored meeting place for the European Inconnu. Although their main stronghold is in Transylvania, the other Inconnu often meet with Guillaume in Geneva; the close proximity to the United Nations allows the Inconnu access to data from all over the world.

Guillaume has allowed Ventrue bankers into the country in the last century, wisely realizing that this would help the landlocked nation's economy tremendously. Although he does not care much for these Gnomes, as they call themselves, he allows them to stay in Switzerland for a share of their profits. The Gnomes, in turn, are free to indulge in banking practices not permissible elsewhere, backed up by Guillaume's formidable authority.

In the last several years, several new Vampires have appeared on the Swiss banking scene, much to the dismay of the Gnomes. Guillaume does not know who they are, and he does not care — they cause no trouble and Present themselves periodically. He assumes that they are Caitiff, driven out of their homeland and eager for refuge in Switzerland. Guillaume allows no retributive action against them to be taken by the Gnomes — he tolerates no violence in his Domain, and bears no great love for the Ventrue bankers.

In reality, the newcomers are Giovanni. They seek to gain control of the fabled Swiss banking industry. While Guillaume is presenting a problem in that regard — he is watching the Giovanni even while unaware of their strength — plans are being made even now for his removal.

Spain

In Spain, the Anarch cancer that spreads across Europe is at its most visible. Riots, bombs, death squads — don't the fools know that change must come slowly, carefully: evolution instead of revolution?

The Kindred of Spain have always been fractious and divided. The Vampire population is a hodgepodge of Brujah, Ventrue, Toreador, Tremere, and even a few Malkavians, with scattered Gangrel packs in the inner plateaus. The European Anarch movement is strong here, and the Elders are little better; the Camarilla is considering sending a Justicar into the area. The Elders war among themselves while Anarch bombs explode in the streets of Madrid, Barcelona and elsewhere. The Sabbat is strong in Spain, using the chaos as a cover for their activities, and many villagers are reporting wild tales of horror to the uncaring Guardia Civil.

Barcelona

Renowned as the most beautiful city of Spain, Barcelona is ruled by a conclave of Toreador who banded together for protection from the Anarchs. Possibly the most cohesive force of Spanish Vampires, they are still fractious and disorganized. The largest Vampire festival of all is held here. Dia de los Muertos — Day of the Dead — held on November 1, brings Vampires from all over the continent and beyond for a wild night of revelry in the streets. On this one night there are no Elders or Anarchs, no clans; social distinctions and centuries-long feuds are thrown to the winds, and it is not uncommon to see a stately Elder of the Ventrue or Tremere, drunk on alcohol-laced blood, clumsily dancing in the streets. Costumes are worn by most Vampires and prizes are given for the most outlandish (Malkavians usually walk away with this one).

A new Vampire is always Embraced at the beginning of the night; this Neonate is told that he or she is the 'Prince of Vampires' and given utter and complete reign over Europe's Kindred for the entire night. They may command the mightiest Elder, violate the Masquerade or do anything else they want. At the end of the night the 'Prince' is captured, staked, and left in an alley somewhere to burn with the rising sun.



Toledo

Long renowned as a city of wizards, Toledo has long served as a covert battleground between magi and Vampires from House Tremere. Indeed, the legendary steel from which the swords of Toledo were made was a byproduct of the wizards' search for an enchanted metal which could damage Vampires. Both magi and Tremere maintain headquarters here: the Sociedad de la Luz Exterior for the human magi, and the Chantry de los Reyes for the Tremere. Nocturnal raids from one group upon the other's collection of magical tomes and paraphernalia are not unheard of.

A small group of Nosferatu live in Toledo under the Escorial — their comings and goings are largely responsible for the local legends of ghostly noises emanating from the crypts there. For the most part, the Nosferatu of Toledo do what they do best — stay out of the way of the centuries-long feud.

The Basques

The Basques are an indigenous people native to the northwest corner of the Iberian peninsula. They wish independence from Spain and have used terrorist tactics in their quest for sovereignty. Younger Brujah and Gangrel have been known to run with the Basques as a cover for their own operations or simply for fun.

Italy

Italy, more than any other country, saddens me. Nowhere else is the malaise that has gripped our people so evident — nowhere else are we so truly walking dead.

If Spain's Kindred seem divided, Italy's are even more so. The medieval map of Italy was a patchwork of warring city-states incapable of organization, and little has changed in the intervening centuries. The rulers of the Italian cities are primarily Brujah and Toreador, and seem more interested in reciting their centuries-long litanies of grievances against their neighbors than in improving their cities. Many of the Italian Elders do not even seem to realize what century it is at times; they often dress in the florid fashions of bygone ages and display an elaborate and formal gentility worthy of a Renaissance noble. They sit in their Havens and stare wistfully at their collections of art or engage in lengthy tirades against one of their peers for some deed done in the days of the DeMedicis, leaving the running of the cities to their circles of sycophants, who are often incompetent and tyrannical.

The Princes of Italy are usually gracious to a fault to guests in their domain, entertaining them with lavish balls and parties; however, if the guest suddenly commits a breach of the Princes' elaborate codes of etiquette or falls under suspicion (rightly or wrongly) of being in league with the Prince's enemies, retribution can be truly terrible. One of the

Italian Kindred is thought to be the inspiration for the speaker in Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess*.

Many of the younger Ventrué of Europe would like to send in a Regent (one of their own, of course) to 'oversee' and 'guide' Italy; the elder Ventrué, of course, will not hear of such a thing, as it is utterly disrespectful of their Italian peers and a gross violation of the Second Tradition. Propriety must be maintained, even to those not of one's Clan.

The major active power here is, of course, the Giovanni. This clan holds the real economic power in Italy and is rapidly expanding into the rest of the European Economic Community. While Lupines are almost nonexistent here, faeries can occasionally be found in the rugged outlands of the country.

Rome

Perhaps due to the fact that Rome is the foundation of the Catholic Church, Kindred in Rome are few and far between. There are a few individuals with True Faith in the city — enough to cause many Kindred there to feel "bad vibes." While Ventrués often control aspects of the Church elsewhere, their strength here is weak. The Sabbat would like nothing more than to undermine the Church and take over the city, but as yet have not figured out how to go about it.

A few Nosferatu lurk among the slums and ruins of Rome; for whatever reason, they seem less bothered by the aura of Faith than most vampires. The head of the clan even maintains a Haven under St. Peter's Basilica. The city is a favorite visiting place for Toreador, who gladly risk the Inquisition in order to gaze upon the works of Michelangelo.

The Society of Leopold maintains its headquarters here. It is rumored among Kindred that they have a secret library somewhere in the city with at least one copy of the Book of Nod and the names, powers and weaknesses of many Kindred, both individual and clan. In the last year the Nosferatu of Rome have been approached by the Camarilla and asked to ascertain the existence of this library; however, to date they have had no success.

Venice

This ancient merchant city is the headquarters of the Giovanni Clan. In recent years they have erected a huge skyscraper of black glass and steel, their corporate sanctum. Termed the Mausoleum (with uneasy chuckles) by other Kindred, the structure dominates the Venetian skyline. Other Kindred are not encouraged to visit the city; any foreigner in Venice will quickly become aware of hostile stares and shadowing from unseen followers; any attempt to gain proximity to the Mausoleum may well provoke more hostile responses.

Small bands of Nosferatu roam among the sewers and canals; they are always fearful of the Giovanni, who hate them with a passion and have hunted down more than a few of the 'spying vermin' who allegedly uncovered some secret

or other of the clan. The Nosferatu rarely show themselves, especially to foreigners.

Sicily

The island of Sicily is ruled with an iron fist by Don Caravelli, a Brujah and supreme head of the Mafia. In the Gothic-Punk world, the Mafia still dominates organized crime on both sides of the Atlantic. The Followers of Set, the Giovanni and the Sabbat have all made attempts to dethrone the Mafia, but so far with little success. Caravelli rules his underworld empire tightly; all attempts by younger vampires to 'rub him out' have resulted in painful death for the would-be assassin. Recently rumors have surfaced regarding the Don's own connections to the Sabbat. Nothing has come of these rumors, however, as all who spread them either heed the warnings of giant Brujah visitors to shut up or just disappear.

Sicily is also home to a large population of Lupines, who feed on sheep and goats, terrorize the populace, and make things difficult for the Mafia. The Don has feuded for centuries with the Lupine, with a high carnage rate and little progress on either side. Lately, Caravelli has been considering the impossible: what if the Lupines could be inducted into the Mafia? With them as allies, anything could be accomplished — even the overthrow of the Camarilla ...

Eastern Europe

Even the mortals know that the dark and sullen East is the true home of our kind. The Kindred of the Balkans are old, old — daily they give up the struggle, sink into the earth of a world which has passed them by.

Long considered the classic home of Vampires, the Kindred of Eastern Europe are holdovers from another, darker time, when the black pines clung to the frowning mountainsides and the villager prayed to his household gods in the dark. The Vampires of the lands well remember the days before the coming of the Church and the Crusades, when Kindred were few and far between and walked among their flocks like gods. The Elders of this region prefer to keep to themselves for the most part, and take very little interest in either Kindred or kine society — they remember the days before the Camarilla, when each Vampire was a law unto himself. As most of these Elders are extremely powerful — even more so than most European Elders — their wish for isolation is generally granted. Many of these Kindred have, in fact, voluntarily relinquished their hold on the mortal world, retreating into the oblivious peace of Torpor. This has caused serious political repercussions among the kine, particularly in Yugoslavia.

If a Kindred finds himself in the Domain of a Balkan Elder, he will generally be treated with somber and distant courtesy, provided he Presents himself. Female Kindred will be looked upon with the faintest of curiosity, and questioned as to the presence of their Sire — Balkan Elders often not understanding that female Kindred may in fact travel inde-



pendently in this day and age, and not as part of the retinue of some male Elder.

The exception is the Tremere. The Elders of Eastern Europe remember well the treachery of the first Tremere and will react with contempt, anger or outright hostility to any Tremere that they find in their Domains. Indeed, Tremere himself formed his clan in Transylvania, and (unbeknownst to most other Vampires) those of his Clan who seek to commune with him still make a pilgrimage to the Carpathians. He is of the Third Generation (through Diablerie).

Transylvania is also the main meeting ground for the Inconnu, who gather in an ancient cavern complex carved under one of the ancient castles that dot the landscape. Although they are aware that the Tremere are active in the area, the main concern of the Inconnu at present is to the east. Something has happened in the Soviet Union, something big; great ritual magics nearly completely block off Auspex, and all agents that the Inconnu have sent into Russia have failed to return.

Packs of Gangrel run wild in the forests, although competition with the Lupines has forced many of their number into the cities and villages. Scattered Malkavians of all power levels wander the countryside; an encounter with one of these individuals can be pleasant or horrifying, most likely the latter. The bands of wandering Gypsies in the area allow for contact with the Ravnos, who have gained a reputation throughout Europe (and just about everywhere else) as cheats and thieves.

Greece

Here, my Childe, is where many of our eldest traditions were enacted. 'The glory that was Greece...' — How true Poe wrote! We must be truly careful here, my dear — the curse of the Malkavians has seemingly afflicted most of the Grecian Kindred.

Greek Vampires maintain the ancient Hellenic tradition of the city-state, and Princes here, regardless of Clan, absolutely insist on all newcomers Presenting themselves — failure to do so has been cause for a Blood Hunt on more than one occasion. Although many of the Kindred of Greece are incredibly ancient (it was partially through the influence of the first Brujah that Greek culture reached such a peak), the area itself does not play a tremendously important role in Kindred politics.

For the most part, the Princes sit on their thrones and painstakingly plan their petty feuds with their neighbors just as they might have done in life millennia ago. Many Elders, weary of the long, slow decline, become lethargic and strange; some actually relive their 'glory days' of the 5th century B.C., while others sink into madness and despair. Woe to the unfortunate traveller who becomes embroiled in the schemes of these mad Elders!

Although there is a large Brujah presence here, Greece is not the hotbed of Anarch activity one might think. The

Brujah of Greece are heavily steeped in the old traditions of the clan; they are intellectuals and philosophers, much more likely to meticulously argue the merits of a democracy than to actually implement one. Indeed, many of the Greek Brujah are as shocked and disgusted by the activities of their American clan-cousins (churlish whelps!) as any Ventrue.

The true Anarchs of Greece (known as Thetes, or beggars) are small guerrilla bands living on the outskirts of the cities, and are ceaselessly hunted by the Princes' minions; they consist of scattered Gangrel and much of Greece's large Nosferatu population (Nosferatu, or Kallikantzari as they are called in Greece, are despised by the Elders, due in large part to the Elders' ancient idea of purity of body reflecting purity of mind). Greece's Nosferatu are much more violent than they are in most parts of the world; they have been known to dig ambushes and openly waylay travellers on the back roads at night, and the villagers of Greece have long feared the Kallikantzari.

Lupines are not common in Greece; the necessity of the Thetes to walk the countryside unmolested has led to a series of brutal skirmishes with the Lupines throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and in Greece the Lupines lost. Faeries are still found in many Grecian wildernesses (satyrs, nymphs and maenads, to name a few) and are not kind to the unwary human or Vampire who they catch in their domain.

USSR (now UCS)

My Childe, we may well have to stay out of this country — if such a disintegrated mass can in truth be termed a nation. A curtain has fallen over Russia far darker than the Iron one that Churchill spoke of. In all honesty, no one really knows what is going on over there. If anything, the Kindred are more in the dark than the kine, perhaps — all my sources have been able to ascertain is that the Brujah Council who controlled the Soviet Union has not been heard from since August of last year, and that many of Europe's Ventrue and Toreador, suddenly summoned to Moscow at about the time of the coup, have vanished without a trace also. Probably some kind of Anarch plot — it would serve the Brujah bastards right to be taken down in the same bloody way they came up — but then why would those of my own clan have gone over there as if to help the Brujah? No one really knows who, if anyone, runs the new Russia, but all agree that things are very dangerous for Vampires in those benighted lands.

It was so perfect. Or so the Brujah thought. The October Revolution had given them the second largest country in the world to test their theories. The Ventrue, the Toreador, all of them would see that a truly egalitarian nation of proletariat rule could work for Kindred and kine alike. Oh, yes, there had been some problems — the damned Ventrue had nearly ruined the economy over the years out of spite, there were complaints among the kine about shortages and the like — short-sighted fools! — and the Soviet Brujah had even heard



snickers at Council meetings that they were becoming as rigid and tyrannical as any Ventrué.

Idiots, all of them! In matters of utopia, one must learn to take the long view. And had not the Masqucrade been more perfectly preserved here than anywhere else? Atheism was the state philosophy — no one in the whole country believed in such foolishness as Vampires anymore. Even the Ventrué had admitted the "religion is the opiate of the masses" party line was brilliant.

But not all of the old myths and stories had died out with the rise of the Brujah Communists. In secret rooms Russians still knelt in Christian prayer. The stories of the Bogatyrs, the great Russian heroes, were told on the collective farms. And in the dachas, in the dark of night, young children still trembled when their grandmothers recounted the grisly legends of Baba Yaga. Baba Yaga, mightiest of the Russian sorceresses. Baba Yage, dealer with demons. Baba Yaga, the ogre-hag whose face was nightmare, whose claws and fangs were made of iron, who gobbled up children and men alike foolish enough to walk the forests alone at night.

Still, no one in this rational age could believe such drivel. The legends of the Russian witch were consigned to historical curiosities, quaint folktales of Russia's Czarist past.

In 1990, Baba Yaga awoke from Torpor.

Where were the villages of wood and sod? Where were the forests that stretched to the end of the world? What had these Childer done to her Rodina — she felt the earth of Chernobyl

screaming — and where was the fear? Vodka-besotted sheep working in their factories like ants, half in Torpor themselves — this was Mother Russia? This was her Herd? Well, Mother Russia was back, and let the world tremble!

Still, one must be cautious at first. She built slowly, a puppet here, a puppet there. The world watched as former exile Boris Yeltsin rose back into power. The Brujah were stunned — they hadn't planned all these sudden reforms. What was Gorbachev doing?

In August 1991, Baba Yaga made her move on Moscow. The Brujah, Ventrué and Toreador of Europe united to stop her, risking all on a sudden use of force under the guise of a hard-line coup. Their effort lasted eight days as Baba Yaga hunted the Brujah down one by one. She had nearly forgotten how savory Kindred flesh was.

What to do, what to do? She supposed that she might as well maintain this silly little Masqucrade a bit longer — until she got bored with it, anyway. As for the government — although the old Czars had their majesty, she remembered all too well the Bogatyrs, Knights of Russia, the sharp enchanted steel biting into her iron-hard flesh. No, she would keep all the states separated, confused — the perfect Herd, unable to act coherently. As for the imminent economic troubles, well, it served the stupid kine right. Let a few starve to make the rest stronger. She had always liked lean meat anyway. But first and foremost, she had to lift this ridiculous ban on religion. Let the kine worship their Crucified God — in the

coming dark times, a few would turn to equally dark beliefs, would delve into Thaumaturgy. She would walk among them — she would find the most promising — and she would create a Brood. Those Tremere upstarts think they know magic, eh? She would show them — Old Russia would show the world, yes? Watch and wait...

Turkey

Turkey has much more in common with the mysterious East than with Europe. The Assamites who live there are as much an enigma to me as the Lupines. Still, they must want something in Europe — Turkey hasn't stayed in NATO by accident.

Turkey is infamous among Vampires as the headquarters of the Assamite Clan, which maintains a secret Haven

somewhere in the mountains. The Assamites take very little interest in Turkey's mortal government. There are very few other Vampires here, save for a small faction of Setites which would like to loosen up the nation's strong anti-drug laws. Lupines and faeries, though rare, roam the hills.

Istanbul

Obviously, the Assamites maintain a strong presence in Istanbul. The ancient city is widely known among Vampires as a place to come and arrange a 'hit'. The ancient Byzantine architecture draws a few Toreador, but for the most part, Western Kindred leave the city well alone. A few Kindred from various clans have entered the city in attempts to spy on the Assamites; such Kindred have, without exception, vanished.

Characters

Brunhilde

Clan: Gangrel

Nature: Competitor

Demeanor: Rebel

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 150 BC (born 173 BC)

Apparent Age: late 20s

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 5, Brawl 7, Intimidation 4, Leadership 5

Skills: Animal Ken 4, Drive 5, Firearms 2, Melee 6, Riding 4, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Linguistics 2, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics 1

Disciplines: Animalism 4, Celerity 3, Fortitude 4, Potence 2, Protean 5

Background: Fame 1, Retainers 5

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 1, Courage 5

Humanity: 3

Willpower: 9

Blood Pool: Max per Turn: 30/6

Image: A tall, slender Nordic woman of athletic, wiry build with red hair, pale skin and ice-blue eyes. Coldly beautiful in a feral way. Generally dresses in leather, spikes, chains and other staples of metal/punk fashion. She has acquired some animal characteristics over the centuries, as

many ancient Gangrel do. Rides a Harley-Davidson with the word "Sleipnir" crudely painted in red on the side.

Roleplaying Hints: You ride like an avenging angel over the kine, feasting on the dying. The stinging caress of the glacier air, the roar of the storm through the icy pines, the burning salt of the bravest warriors' blood — your world is, as a Bard would later write, one of sound and fury. You live for the untamed spaces and the hot lust of war. And now, in this age of iron and glass, the savage realm you once roamed has been tamed into an oh-so-polite cog in the colorless economic wheel, turned willy-nilly by the gluttonous, cowardly swine who call themselves Ventrue. You will wrest your land from them once more, feel their soft sinews shred beneath your talons and ride the lightning once more.

Don Caravelli

Sire: Antonius Caracus

Clan: Brujah

Nature: Plotter

Demeanor: Bravo

Generation: 6th

Embrace: AD 1557 (born 1512)

Apparent Age: Mid-40s

Physical: Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Stamina 7

Social: Charisma 6, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 7

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 7, Intimidation 7, Streetwise 7, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Driving 5 (sports cars), Firearms 5, Melee 7 (stakes), Security 4, Stealth 5

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Computer 1, Finance 5, Organized Crime 7, Politics 3

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 6, Dominate 5, Fortitude 6, Obfuscate 4, Potence 7, Presence 7, Protean 4

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

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 3, Courage 6

Humanity: 1

Willpower: 10

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 30/6

Image: A huge man (6 foot 4, 250 pounds) with a deep tan and broad shoulders barely contained in a black business suit. You are fastidiously clean and always wear a flower of some kind in your vest pocket — next to your automatic.

Roleplaying Hints: Polite and chummy to your friends, chillingly ruthless to your enemies. Even when you are friends with someone, you are always watching them, and at the slightest hint of betrayal you will destroy them. You enjoy being physically imposing and taking other people's personal space. You value order and discipline, but minor conflicts among your people don't really bother you (you like a good fight anyway).

Guillaume

Sire: Hannibal

Clan: Brujah

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Autocrat

Generation: 5th

Embrace: AD 515

Apparent Age: early 40s

Physical: Strength 8, Dexterity 8, Stamina 8

Mental: Perception 7, Intelligenece 6, Wits 5

Social: Charisma 8, Manipulation 5, Appearance 6

Talents: Athletics 7, Brawl 7, Leadership 8, Meditation 4

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Archery 8, Melee 8

Knowledges: Computer 1, Finance 3, Linguistics 5, Occult 4, Politics 6

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 4, Celerity 7, Fortitude 8, Potence 8, Presence 8

Background: Status 8, Resources 5, Contacts 5, Influence 5,

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

Humanity: 9 (and in Golconda)

Willpower: 10

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 40/8

Image: A tall, broad, muscular man, with neatly trimmed brown hair (greying at the temples) and mustache. Wears

perfectly tailored black business suits and gold-rimmed glasses. Often carries attache case.

Roleplaying Hints: The rage and turmoil of your past has been replaced by a slightly weary, pragmatic calm. Golconda for you was more resignation at your own ultimate meaninglessness than any grand enlightenment. Nonetheless, in accepting your weakness, you have conquered it and forged a new steel within your soul. You are genuinely concerned about the welfare of your nation and more than anything wish to stay well out of the mud-puddle of Kindred politics; you have the strength to back it up and will use it if necessary. You are brusque, sober and somewhat grim — while you are a genuinely good person, you are no simpering idealist and have little patience for fools or foolishness. Guests are welcome in your Domain provided they behave themselves, but you have better things to do than arbitrate a bunch of silly power games. Anyone misbehaving among your people will be thrown out on their ear — pointed, furred or otherwise.

Louhi

Sire: Lerterimas

Clan: Malkavian

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Plotter

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 200 BC (born 292 BC)

Apparent Age: 90s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 7

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 7, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 8, Intelligence 8, Wits 7

Talents: Alertness 7, Leadership 6, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Etiquette 1, Melee 4

Knowledges: Alchemy 8, Linguistics 4, Occult 8, Spirit Lore 8

Disciplines: Animalism 6, Auspex 8, Dominate 7, Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 6, Protean 5, Thaumaturgy 8

Background: Retainers 5, Fame 1

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 4, Courage 1

Humanity: 0

Willpower: 9

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 40/8

Image: An ugly old crone constantly reeking from various foul alchemical experiments, and always carrying a gnarled black staff (with various rituals on it). Her eyes are sunken and truly unnerving.

Roleplaying Hints: You are more than a little crazy, but you see just about everything. Cackle to yourself a lot, and make vague prophesies that have the eerie habit of always coming true. Speak in horrific metaphors and

ominous, vague terms, and say nothing straight out. They all want to know, don't they, but only you see the reality.

Francois Villon

Sire: Helena

Clan: Torcador

Nature: Bravo

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Generation: 5th

Embrace: AD 1230 (born 1197)

Apparent Age: late 30s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 8, Manipulation 8, Appearance 7

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 7

Talents: Brawl 6, Intimidation 4, Singing 7, Streetwise 7, Subterfuge 8

Skills: Etiquette 7, Melee 6, Music 8, Stealth 5

Knowledges: Art History 7, French History 6, Linguistics 6 (not that you would deign to speak a lesser tongue than the one you helped create!), Occult 3

Disciplines: Auspex 7, Celerity 6, Chimerstry 3, Fortitude 3, Obfuscate 3, Presence 7

Backgrounds: Status 7, Retainers 5, Herd 4, Resources 5, Contacts 5, Allies 5, Influence 3

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

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 8

Blood Pool/Max per Turn: 40/8

Image: A dashing, well-tanned Caucasian in his late 30s. Raven-black hair, brown eyes, always wearing immaculate suits and flamboyant neckties (from his jongleur heritage). Smokes with a cigarette holder.

Roleplaying Hints: Generally maintain the "proper" front necessary for your position, but you were a rabble-rouser in your mortal days and can look the other way concerning Anarch behavior as long as it is fairly amusing and not too blatant. A great proponent of French superiority, your ballads helped define the French tongue and you will never speak another language, though you understand several. You are pleasant and easy to get along with, and great fun at parties (occasionally you can be persuaded to get out a stringed instrument and play), unless you perceive someone as a threat to you — then you will crush her like a bug. You have unpleasant memories of your exile from your beloved Paris and will not let anyone ever put themselves in a position of dominance over you again).

Baba Yaga

Sire: Absimiliard

Clan: Nosferatu

Nature: Plotter

Demeanor: Bravo

Generation: 4th

Embrace: 5000 BC

Apparent Age: at least 200

Physical: Strength 8, Dexterity 6, Stamina 9

Social: Charisma 6, Manipulation 6, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 7, Intelligence 9, Wits 7

Talents: Alertness 4, Brawl 7, Intimidation 8, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Animal Ken 4, Etiquette 6, Pilot 7 (mortar & pestle), Stealth 4, Survival 6

Knowledges: Alchemy 8, Area Knowledge (Russia) 9, Investigation 3, Linguistics 3, Medicine 2, Occult 9

Disciplines: Animalism 7, Auspex 7, Celerity 3, Dominate 8, Fortitude 8, Obfuscate 7, Potence 7, Presence 8, Thaumaturgy 9

Background: Status 7, Fame 3 (legends), Retainers 3 (cat, mouse and something else), Resources 4

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 2, Courage 4

Humanity: 0

Willpower: 10

Merits: Eat Food, Mansion (chicken hut), Occult Library

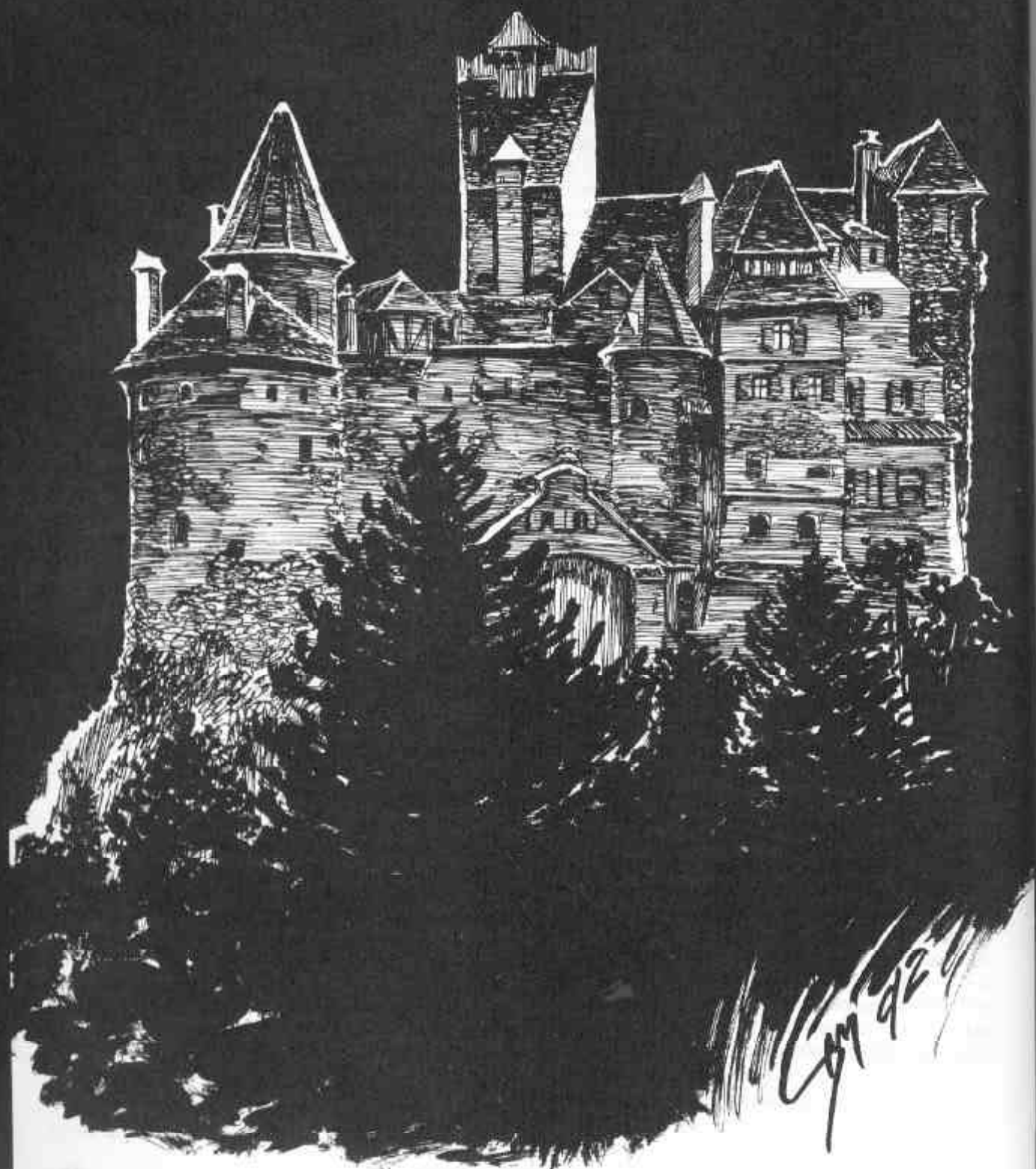
Flaws: Monstrous, Cannot harm a totally virtuous person (Conscience 5, Humanity 10, and either True Faith 5+ or Golconda)

Derangements: Delusions (?) of grandeur

Blood Pool/Max per turn: 50/10

Image: the most hideous hag imaginable — 8 feet tall; four-inch iron claws; sharklike iron fangs; stringy hair; gnarled, boil-covered grey flesh; cataract-laced eyes; foot-long (slight exaggeration) warty nose

Roleplaying Notes: You are the most powerful sorceress on Earth and the absolute ruler of the Motherland. Men, and other Kindred, are cattle to assuage your ravenous hunger. And you are *so* hungry You are generally coarse and crotchety, but you hide a terrible cunning within, and enjoy playing with your prey like a cat with a mouse. You respect politeness, and if a lesser being can stand to gaze upon the abomination that is your face and humbly refer to you as "Little Grandmother," you might spare them ... and then again you might not.



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Europe: Hunedoara Castle

Written by Andrew Greenberg, Art by Josh Timbrook

*For time has imprisoned us
in the order of our years,
in the discipline of our ways
and in the passing of momentary stillness
we can view our chaos in motion
and the subsequent collision of fools
well versed in the subtle art of slavery.*

*Dead Can Dance. In the Kingdom of the Blind
The One-eyed are Kings*

Hidden high in the lonely Carpatii Meridionali mountains of Eastern Romania sits a dark medieval castle, forbidding and desolate in its fading grandeur. No villages lie near its sinister peak, and those few travelers forced to journey past its shadowed walls hurry by with eyes averted.

Strangely, these rare visitors seldom spread tales of this ominous site when they reach their destination. The odd figures on the battlements, strange sounds from the tower and lack of life all around it never draw comment, and the castle remains concealed from the world at large, tucked away in its rocky abode.

No mention of a castle at this site appears in annals of the past and, despite the intensifying interest in feudal times, such references are unlikely to ever appear, no matter how glorious its history. Once a jewel in the defenses of Christendom against encroaching Turks, the castle now sits removed, abandoned by those mortals who once benefited from its protection.

But to say this sinister castle no longer houses people does not mean it lies empty. Indeed, it still serves as a stronghold for those who consider themselves battling the forces of evil, only this time the combatants war for eternal life not on heaven but on earth.

History

Originally constructed hundreds of years ago to protect shipments from nearby gold mines, Hunedoara Castle became known as an impenetrable rock against which the armies of the Sultan smashed themselves again and again. It even

survived the great Mongol invasion of Hungary which so devastated the rest of the kingdom in the 13th century.

For the next 200 years, it served as a bulwark against the invading Turks, and stood against numerous attempts to take it. It was after the failure of one of these Turkish assaults in the mid-15th century that the castle's guardians opened its gates to a force of mounted knights. However, instead of being the expected relief column, the heavily armored troops turned out to be under the command of a Wallachian noble on the side of the Ottoman Empire. The traitor and his troops quickly overwhelmed the castle's defenders, slaying all within its walls.

This renegade count, the Vlad of castle Ciglesz, turned Hunedoara over to the Turks, who then pressed on to attack Belgrade. Only the greatest heroics of the defenders kept the city from falling, but Hungary's mightiest warriors died in the epic battle. The Turks retreated back to their holdings and were unable to penetrate the Hungarian defenses until 1526 when the kingdom finally fell.

In the intervening years, several Christian forces tried to bring the Vlad to justice, but none succeeded. Indeed, it was not until the Vlad nailed a Turkish ambassador's head to a drawbridge that his former allies ended his cruel reign, and he disappeared from history.

The Turks abandoned Hunedoara Castle following the siege of Belgrade, but before the Hungarians could retake the fortress, a small cabal entered the ancient structure. Under the light of a full moon its members gathered in the castle's courtyard, linked hands and chanted to the stars. After six hours of chanting, dancing and sacrifice, the might that had

been Hunedoara castle disappeared from the records of humanity.

There had been a second Hunedoara castle already, but its history had no hope of approaching that of the original. However, the ritual of the 12 caused all memories of the old site to be transferred to the new one north of the original structure. Recollections of great battles and remembrances of grand tournaments attached themselves to the newer building, until even those living in the second Hunedoara castle believed it to be the same one.

Since that night, no mortals have willingly entered the old castle. Indeed, no mortal could willingly enter the castle, for one effect of the ritual is to cause all who pass within eyesight of it to feel great fear, growing as they get closer to the structure and only fading when they leave it behind. The farther they get from it, the more faint their memories of it grow, until finally they remember it no more. Now the only beings to willingly enter the stronghold are members of the Inconnu, mysterious Vampires of legendary might.

Dark Nights, Dark Magic

During the same period the Kingdom of Hungary fought its epic struggles with the Ottoman Empire, events of even greater magnitude were taking place among the ranks of the Undead. Younger Kindred, frustrated by the intense stratifi-



cation of Vampiric society, engaged in the first rumblings of what would become known as the Sabbat, and Elder Princes were beginning to fear for their very immortal existences.

At the same time, a bloodline of Vampire thaumaturgists had appeared, and none knew whether they had gained their immortality through the Embrace or horrid magics. The Inconnu had watched the growth of both movements with growing trepidation, until the Tremere made the move which consolidated them as a Clan.

In an act as bold as it was horrifying, the leader of the Tremere sought out the Third-Generation Antedeluvian Saulot, the first Cainite to reach the exalted state of Golconda. Then the Tremere sank his fangs into the revered Elder, and thus Saulot ceased to exist.

Diablerie is an act best committed in secret, with none to know and none to seek vengeance. The Tremere leader did his best to conceal his heresy, but there was no hiding such an act from the Inconnu.

Composed of some of the mightiest Kindred in existence, members of the Inconnu had long looked to Saulot as their hope and salvation. Saulot had been the first to show they could be free of the Beast which so plagued everything they did. Saulot, though never a member of the Inconnu, had been a friend to many of them and an inspiration to all. Across the world, ancient members of the Inconnu woke from their deep sleeps with the greatest feelings of dread, knowing for sure what had happened to the one who had shown them the light.

None of the Inconnu could doubt that the appearance of the Tremere was a danger second only to Gehenna itself. Fear swept the world of the Undead, for the older the Cainite, the surer they were that the death of Saulot, combined with the violence of the younger Kindred, could mean nothing but the end.

For the first time in millennia, a meeting of the entire Inconnu was called. After long nights of debate, the loosely organized sect agreed it would have to increase its internal ties if it was to survive. Its members agreed the sect needed a place of power to use as a base from which it could coordinate its numerous limbs. They also decided the site should place them in a position to move rapidly against the Tremere should events warrant such action.

Twelve of the mightiest members of this mighty sect, all former students of Saulot, set forth for the home of the Tremere, seeking a fortress to make their own. Hunedoara Castle beckoned to them like a new friend, waving them in from the dark.

Aside from being a military stronghold, the original Hunedoara Castle had also gained renown in certain circles for its magical heritage. Originally built on the site of a pagan (non-Christian) temple, the first noble family to inhabit the fortress were rumored to have been touched by the faerie folk. Through the years the castle produced more than its share of both powerful leaders and shunned freaks, locked away while peasant superstitions ran rampant.

It was to this citadel the 12 came, and it was here they cast their enchantments.

The Curse

The ritual they engaged in had been proposed by Cret, an ancient Ventrue and self-proclaimed sorcerer. While most of the 12 opposed the use of a ritual requiring so many live sacrifices, Cret managed to argue, cajole and finally convince the others of its necessity. He pointed out the great benefits of having such a powerful place from which to spy on the Tremere, and noted its strength of defense. The final argument which converted the other 11, however, was his assertion that the only way to defeat the Tremere was with their own weapons. If the Tremere used such rituals, then so should the Inconnu. After all, they would only have to do it once.

The agreement made, Cret made an alliance with the very Vlad who had so treacherously seized the castle from its Hungarian defenders. With captives supplied by the Vlad, the inner circle of the Inconnu made their preparations and cast the mighty ritual. Its effectiveness has been without denial.

The only way to avoid both the horror and the forgetfulness caused by the ritual is to actually enter the castle, an almost impossible task (assume just seeing the structure requires the character make a Courage roll with a difficulty of 4, while each turn the character spends approaching it increases the difficulty by 1, until eventually the character must make Courage rolls against a difficulty of 10 every turn just to keep from running). Even such powers as Domination and Presence cannot force someone to avoid this fear, though they may slightly lessen the chance of flight — or allow someone to watch where she runs, so as to avoid falling off the mountain.

Those who do make it into the castle are usually forced to. On those rare occasions when a new member has been inducted into the Inconnu, and comes to the castle for the first time, he is usually bound tightly with ropes and chains, and sometimes even staked. Even when staked, however, the newcomer feels the fear growing and growing in his breast until, after what seems a horrifying, maddening eternity, he enters the castle.

The Castle

Entrance to the walled castle can only be gained along a long, winding mountain path, thin and treacherous, and often with a deep chasm to its side. Once a well-travelled road, the path has degenerated to the point where anyone able to brave the instilled fear would have to make Survival rolls to continue on. Additionally, the outer walls of the castle grounds are in a state of gross disrepair, and almost all the outer buildings have collapsed, making the whole area seem more deserted and malevolent.

At the end of the path, the traveller finds 20-foot-high stone walls, and must continue to the right to reach the main

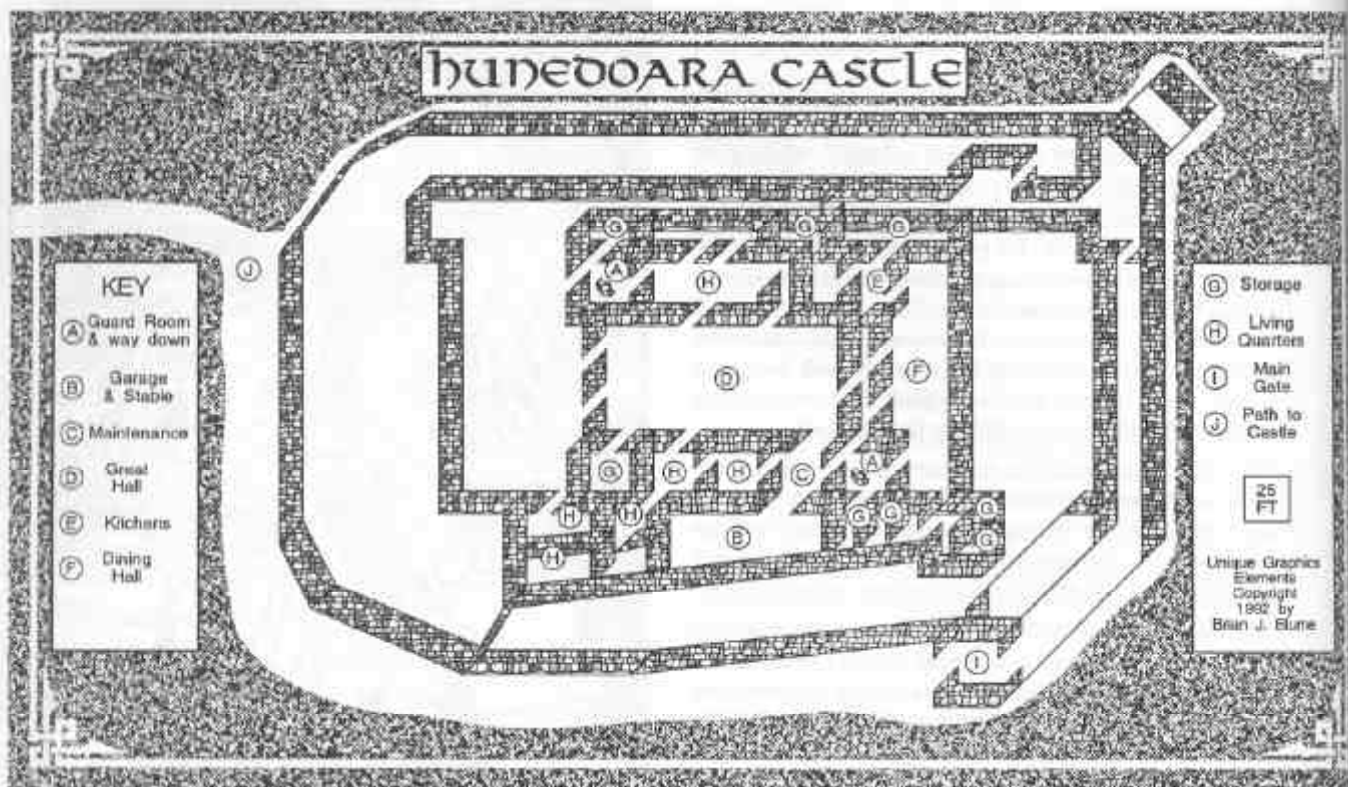


gate, barred both by a portcullis and a great iron-shod door. Thanks to locks both physical and magical, the portcullis and door can only be opened from within the castle. Entrance over or through the walls can be equally difficult, even for those who have the Disciplines to allow such passage.

When anyone attempts to enter the castle via any way but the main gate, great winds begin to whip up around the mountain. A low rumbling noise issues from the castle grounds, increasing in intensity the more successful the intruder becomes. Clouds roll in at amazing speeds, and flashes of lightning cut across the sky. Bursts of flame appear around the intruder, appearing seemingly at random and disappearing immediately.

Not only does this horrifying symphony of the occult serve to deter potential trespassers, but the cacophony also alerts the castle's defenders to the presence and location of the threat. The attention of Fourth-Generation Inconnu and the Ghouls who feed on their blood is something few would want to attract.

Most of the castle's non-Vampiric inhabitants — primarily maids — make their residences on the ground floor of the main citadel. These servants, Ghouls all, take care of what maintenance the building requires and are its first line of defense. Thanks to the ages they have spent drinking the blood of the Inconnu, these Blood Bound servants alone are more than a match for most Neonates and many Ancillae.



Also in this main area are numerous animals — horses, cows and sheep — for members of the Inconnu to feed upon. Attached to the castle is a powerful generator, kept supplied with fuel from various local fields.

The upper floors of the castle provide guest rooms for visiting members of the sect as well as quarters for Cret (the Inconnu's Monitor of the Tremere) and whichever of the other 11 who first came to Hunedoara is staying there. Cret volunteered to remain here to watch the Tremere after the casting of the ritual, but due to the magnitude of the job, the other 11 come to help out, rotating the duty among themselves.

One other Cainite remains here on a regular basis. The Vlad who once captured Hunedoara Castle through treachery, and later provided sacrifices for the ritual which so protects the fortress, eventually became allied with the leaders of what would become the Sabbat. After his defeat at the hands of the Turks, the Sabbat made him a full and permanent member.

However, in 1848, after a harrowing escape from the clutches of the Black Hand, the Vlad returned to the site of his medieval triumph. Seeking out Cret, he offered his services to the Inconnu, and Cret agreed. Since then the Vlad has served Cret well in all his endeavors. He maintains his own quarters of the second floor of the castle, and on those rare occasions Cret leaves the castle, commands it and its servants.

The higher floors of the castle contain primarily living quarters (mostly windowless), libraries, art studios and similar rooms. At the very top is a well-equipped occult workroom, and it is from here Cret keeps an eye on the Tremere.

However, recently his attention has been diverted from his mission and forced to investigate a possibility which turns his cold blood icy. The Vampires of the Soviet Union have disappeared, and Cret fears he knows why. Thus he turns his scrying eastward, and searches for a horror he catches himself praying he will not find.

The Underkeep

The dread Underkeep of Hunedoara Castle is the main meeting place for the Inconnu and the center of its power and influence. Twice since the Inconnu seized control of the castle the entire sect has met within its walls, filling the building with the greatest concentration of Vampiric power since Carthage.

Entering the Underkeep requires passing through one of two heavily protected guard rooms on the first floor. This protection, not obvious at first glance, becomes evident when anyone not cleared by Cret steps on the first stair down. The stairs immediately heat up, becoming white-hot. After five seconds, the stairs become insubstantial but, as soon as the intruder's feet pass through, turn solid again, immediately

melting anything thus caught. This process continues until the intruder removes himself from the stairway or is destroyed.

Attempts to pass below the ground level by any other means (digging, Earth Meld or mist, for example), causes the air around the intruder to heat up in the same way, causing 10 dice damage for two continuous turns, stopping for one, and then starting again. In this way the Inconnu give invaders a chance to leave before meeting Final Death.

In any case, the spiral staircases in the guard rooms lead to the Underkeep. The main meeting room itself is cordoned off from the stairways by immense crimson curtains stretching from one end of the room to the other. Members of the Inconnu generally use the areas concealed by the curtains to discuss matters in private, as the curtains have been enchanted to prevent noises from disturbing those engaged in the actual meeting.

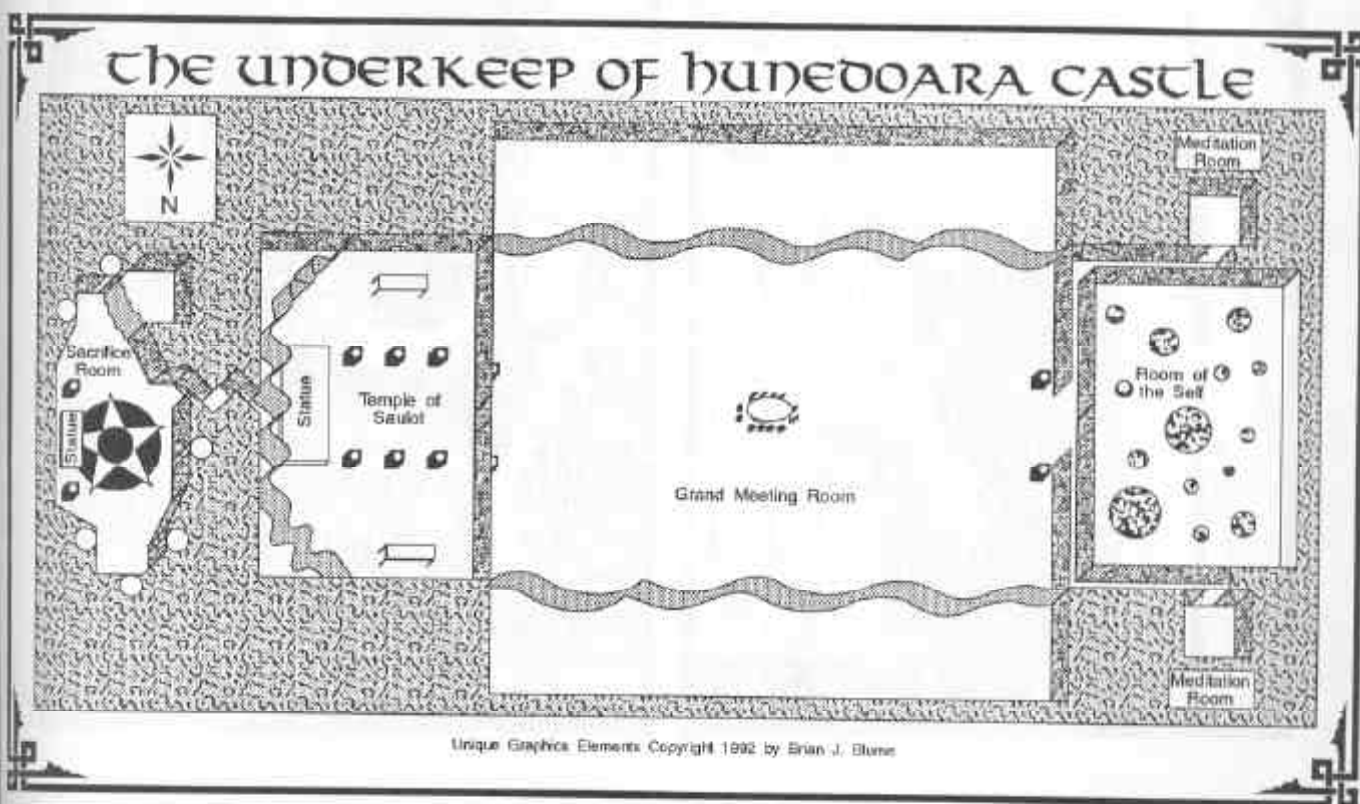
Lining the walls of these two areas are exquisite portraits of members of the Inconnu who have met the Final Death. There are not many of these portraits, but there are enough to keep members of the sect from taking their immortality for granted.

The only light in these areas comes from candles burning constantly below the portraits, keeping the room dark and sending eerie shadows scurrying across the ceiling.

Members of the Inconnu reach the meeting room by passing through gaps in the curtains. For the first meeting, several members of the Inconnu placed a large, oval marble table in the center of the room. While the table is nowhere near large enough to seat all the sect members, the 12 central members always sit there while others stand around the cavernous room.

While there have only been two occasions when the entire Inconnu has filled this meeting room, members of the sect have met here at other times when large numbers needed to gather in a place of safety and secrecy. Thus it sees use at least once a year as Elders gather to discuss their concerns of the world and what role they should take in it. For the past 40 years, the split between those who advocate their role as monitors and those who believe they should intervene more in the world has been felt most strongly in this room, and the debates have lasted many nights.

To the west of the meeting room is the Room of the Self—a fiery prison where Kindred submit to the vilest torments in order to further their quest for Golconda. The room is filled with flaming pits, scattered so there is no part of the room a frenzied Vampire can flee to. One wall is completely mirrored, making it almost impossible for the Kindred to avoid facing themselves. Here Vampires must face their deepest fears, horrors and agonies—all to help them reach this highest point.



This room, while it could be of great benefit to all Kindred, is only open to those members of the Inconnu on the path to Golconda. At least one actually reached that exalted state through these sessions, but two others met the Final Death here, burned to nothingness by the cleansing fires of this room.

Before entering the Room of the Self, Cainites spend night after night in the meditation rooms to each side. Dark but beautiful, with velvet cushioning lining the floors and gorgeous tapestries hanging all about, many of the Inconnu have spent weeks or even months here, preparing themselves for the next step on the way to Golconda.

To the east of the meeting room is the Temple of Saulot, thought by most members of the Inconnu to be a shrine to the first Kindred to reach Golconda. The Temple of Saulot itself is a beautiful room filled with gold and jewels, all arranged to honor the ancient Vampire. The lighting, like most of that in the castle, is electric, but here it is subdued and unobtrusive.

The altar, covered with a red velvet cloth and supporting crystal goblets, jewelled figurines and freshly cut roses, sits in front of a statue of Saulot layered with gold leaf. Life-size, the statue shows a robed Saulot standing, arms at his sides with the palms facing out and the faintest of smiles on his face.

Only the 12 central members of the Inconnu know this great statue actually hides the passage to a site of Satanic worship, where they sacrifice victims to continue feeding their dread spells.

Damned For All Time

When Cret proposed the ritual which would drive the old Hunedoara castle from the world's memory, he told his brethren they would not have to sacrifice victims more than once. Much to the distress of the other 11, that has not proven true.

Cret was not the sole creator of the ritual which has protected Hunedoara castle for so long. He had a great deal of help from Bahomet, a demon from the pits of Hell. The original ritual required the demon's aid, but the other Vampires felt sure its assistance would be needed only once—during the casting.

However, when the protection the ritual offered began fading after one year, Bahomet reappeared. Without further sacrifices of blood, he told the 12, the ritual would wear off. If they hoped to maintain their safety, they would have to make more sacrifices to him.

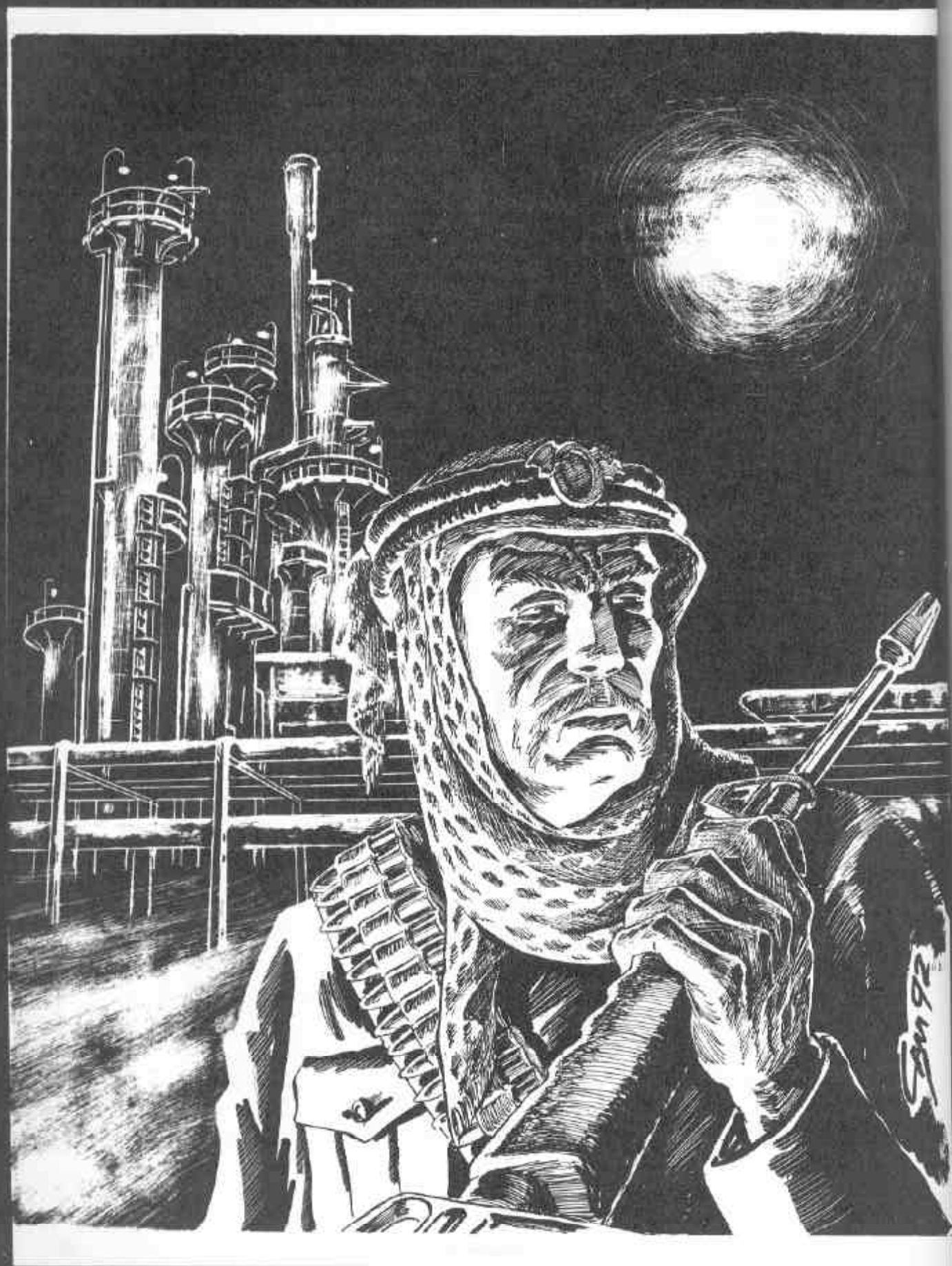


At first they complied out of fear of the Tremere, but as the years past, and the Tremere took little to no action against the Inconnu, this fear lessened. Despite this, they still maintain the blood sacrifices.

Some of the 12 have tried to stop the practice, but the others always manage to convince them to continue. The arguments utilized to keep the cabal whole have been many and varied, including fear of breaking the Masquerade if humans suddenly discovered a castle no one remembered, the use of maintaining such a headquarters, a fear of what the Tremere would do if they discovered how they had been spied upon, and even a fear of what the other Inconnu might say or do when they discovered what had gone on in their sanctum.

Thus the sacrifices have continued for years, decades and centuries. None of the 12 have managed to break free from their role in this horror and, as the years pass, their willingness to make such a break fades. Now most seemed resigned to the murders, and these ancient seekers can feel nothing but bitterness when they watch younger Kindred climb stoically along the path to Golconda, while they can proceed no more.

The sacrifice room itself is dark and gloomy, dominated by a pentagram and an idol of Bahomet. Blood stains litter the floor, and body parts left over from recent sacrifices occasionally fill the room. The cells around the shrine are filthy, and have never been cleaned as the 12 fear letting anyone else into this area but refuse to care for it themselves.



Jordan —

The City of Petra

Written by Steve Crow, Art by Jon Skoglund

There is scarcely a single man sufficiently aware to know all the evil he does.
— Duc de la Rochefoucauld, *Reflexions on Sentences et Maximes Morales*

Introduction

One of the most prominent themes in *Vampire* is that of Evil versus Evil. Characters constantly have to deal with the choice of embracing a lesser evil to combat a greater one. However, it is not only Kindred society which exists in such a state. There are regions of the world that operate in much the same manner, notably the country of Jordan.

A being of great power, an entity whose existence stretches back over 1800 years, rules over this land. He has schemed and plotted against those that would stand against him; if any have opposed him, they have not lived long to tell of it, and many die unaware that they even opposed this being.

Yet this same being has brought peace and prosperity to his people. Jordan has flourished under his influence. Many of those who have died were those who acted, or would have acted, against the country's security. Thus does one evil act to negate a greater one. The question is: who decides which evil is the lesser, and which the greater?

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, or Jordan, is an oddity in the Middle East. Its ruler, Hussein ibn Talal ibn Abdullah ibn Hussein Al Hashimi, is the monarch of a partially

democratic country. He strongly supports the Western countries in a region traditionally anti-Western.

As with much of the Gothic-Punk world, not all is what it appears. Hussein is a monarch, true, but he answers to a greater power — one that values the sanctity and security of the country it has made home.

Jordan —

The Known History

The area of the Jordan Valley was one of the fabled 'cradles' of civilization. As early as the eighth millennium BC, a Neolithic culture came into being here. From this culture the Israelite tribes evolved. They were enslaved by the Egyptians, but eventually established their independence, only to be conquered by the warrior-king Saul in the late 11th century BC.

Under David, who ruled after Saul, and David's son Solomon, Israel's influence grew. With Solomon's death, Israel fractured into two countries, Israel and Judah (Judea), each in conflict with the other. However, Israel was eventually

conquered by the Assyrians, and its countrymen exiled. The Assyrians were conquered by the Neo-Babylonian Empire, who were conquered by the Persians, who were conquered by the Achaemenid Empire. Alexander the Great's army later conquered the Achaemenids.

It was at this time that several distinct groups influenced the area. One group was the Nabataeans, a group of Arabs who had wandered into Judah. They built several major cities, including Petra, and were expert metalworkers and architects, and one among their number, a soldier named Talaq, became a Vampire (see Talaq, below).

Several groups controlled the Jordan Valley. However, Roman legions eventually conquered the area, turning it into a province. The invaders, hoping to stem the tide of rebellion in the area, chose to wipe out almost every trace of the Nabataean kingdom. The Nabataean capital, Petra, was transformed into a provincial Roman capital. When Rome evolved into the Holy Roman Empire, the Byzantine emperors ruled Jordan.

The Coming of Islam

In the sixth century AD, the Prophet Muhammad and his followers brought most of the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula under their control and introduced the religion of Islam. After Muhammad's death in AD 632, Arab caliphs moved north and east into the Jordan Valley and defeated the Byzantine military.

Over the centuries, Islamic control of the region became steadily stronger. When trade shifted from caravans to sea transport, Jordan became a backwater because of its landlocked condition. It served as a stop on the road to other, more important places, and was often utilized as a campground for Crusaders on their way to Jerusalem.

The Ottoman Turks gained control of the realm in the early 16th century, but paid little attention to the Jordan Valley area. As long as their subjects paid their taxes and provided military levies, the Ottomans left the area alone.

In the late 19th century, the Arab Nationalism and Zionism movements began to gain power. Pro-Turkish nationalist army officers forced the ruler of Constantinople to restore the Ottoman constitution. They deposed the Sultan, Hamid II, and placed his brother, Mehmed V, in power. They then coerced Mehmed into granting greater self-rule to the Ottoman Empire's subjects.

World War I

The Ottomans appointed Hussein Ibn Ali Sharif of Mecca. However, the Ottomans were unaware that Hussein had been replaced by the age-old Talaq (see *The Shadow History*, below). Talaq had his own agenda, and "Hussein" proved more independent than either the Sultan or his army backers had intended. Hussein's son Abdullah contacted the British, asking for their support. At that time, the British were allies

of the Ottoman Empire. When World War I broke out, however, the Ottomans joined forces with Germany.

The British carried on several behind-the-scenes manipulations, including the support of pro-Zionism forces and the establishment of a Palestinian state for the disenfranchised Zions, hoping Palestine's creation would give England a strongpoint in the Middle East. When news of Britain's support for the Jews became known in the Arab community, there was an uproar. However, the British were able to reassure Hussein that they intended to keep their pledges to him concerning Arab independence from the Ottomans.

During World War I, the British marched on Jerusalem. They were allied with Arab military forces commanded by Faisal, another of Hussein's sons, and the combined armies advanced southward to force the Ottomans to surrender.

After World War I, the Allied Powers met in Paris to negotiate peace treaties. Britain ended up with mandatory power over the area known as Palestine. They lent support to the Zionist organization, but Arab opposition prevented the British from establishing the separate state many wanted.

The area wavered back and forth. Faisal invaded Syria, which had been turned over to France for postwar control. Abdullah made a stab at conquering Syria. Ironically, the French forced Faisal to leave Syria, but he was appointed king of Iraq by the British. The English appointed Abdullah ruler of a new area named Transjordan in returning for abandoning Syria.

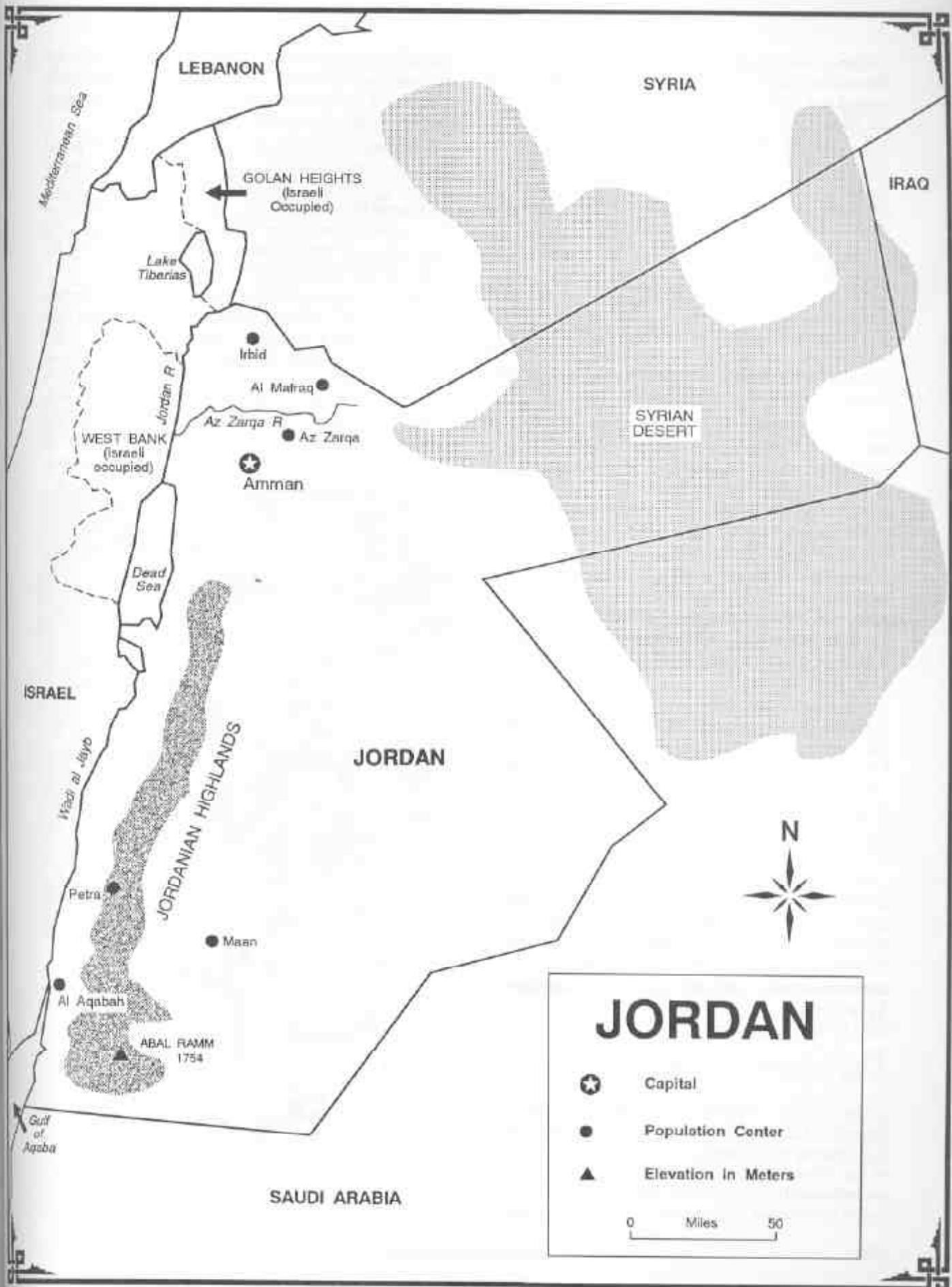
England began taking steps to recognize Transjordan as an independent state. For his part, Abdullah was a faithful ally to the British. Arab Legion units served with distinction alongside British forces to overthrow a pro-Nazi regime that seized power in Iraq.

The Eternal Struggle

In 1948, Britain essentially yielded control over Transjordan. However, it was unable to guarantee the safety of Jews in Palestine. England put the matter of an independent state before the United Nations. A Special Committee came up with a complicated division plan, which the Zionist General Council accepted, thus announcing the formation of the country of Israel. The Arab League Council announced their opposition.

The Arab League invaded the newly created Israel. Abdullah secured portions of Palestine (now known as the West Bank). Otherwise, the Israelis were successful in both defending their newfound homeland and gaining strategic territory along its borders.

Word of Abdullah's secret negotiations with the Israelis reached the Arabian Palestinian refugees, one of whom was supposedly the assassin who killed Abdullah in 1951. In reality, the assassin was an Assamite participating in a complicated plan to bring the renegade Talaq out into the open.



LEBANON

SYRIA

IRAQ

Mediterranean Sea

GOLAN HEIGHTS
(Israeli Occupied)

Lake Tiberias

Jordan R.

Irbid

Al Mafraq

Az Zarqa R.

Az Zarqa

WEST BANK
(Israeli occupied)

SYRIAN DESERT

Amman

Dead Sea

ISRAEL

JORDAN

Wadi al-Jayb

JORDANIAN HIGHLANDS

Petra

Maan

Al Aqabah

ABAL RAMM
1754

Gulf of Aqaba

SAUDI ARABIA



JORDAN

- ★ Capital
- Population Center
- ▲ Elevation in Meters

0 Miles 50

After a short period of disarray, Abdullah's grandson Hussein ibn Talal took the throne. As king, Hussein had to contend with Palestinians who wanted him to invade Israel and regain the territories lost during the first Arab-Israeli War. After the second Arab-Israeli War (in 1956), the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was created by dissatisfied Palestinians and used Jordan as a staging point for its raids into Israel. In response, the Israelis retaliated against residents along the Jordanian border.

This swept Jordan into the Six-Day War, the third Arab-Israeli War. Israel defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, winning the West Bank back from Jordan. This failure led the PLO to try to overthrow Hussein and a civil war between Jordanians and Palestinian refugees who had come into the country. In September, 1970 ("Black September"), loyal Jordanian Army units drove the PLO out of Amman after several bloody battles.

Jordan's participation in the fourth Arab-Israeli War (1973) was minimal but enough to win them financial aid from its oil-rich Arab neighbors. Jordan later received support from the U.S., which considered the country a buffer against communism. Finally, Hussein was able to negotiate an "open bridges" policy with the Israeli West Bank, allowing many Palestinians to resettle in Jordan.

Meanwhile, Hussein was trying to resolve the East/West Bank situation. His efforts failed when the PLO took his place as the official representative group of the Palestinians at an Arab summit conference. Still, over the years, Hussein has tried to strengthen his claim as caretaker of the West Bank.

During the long war between Iran and Iraq, Jordan had supported Iraq and its ruler, Saddam Hussein. When the war ended and Saddam turned his eyes towards Kuwait, Jordan supported him. However, fear of international reprisals forced the country to limit its help, but criticism of the United States' failure to help resolve the East/West Bank crisis still caused the superpower to cut off economical support.

As the situation now stands, Jordan's economy is spiralling slowly downward. Hussein has further opened up the democratic process in the hopes of relieving internal strife, but this has proven only marginally successful, and the chance of a coup attempt remains strong.

Jordan - The Shadow History

The true history of Jordan has its origins in the ancient histories of Egypt and Rome. The pharaohs of the 13th-20th dynasties were often under the control of the Followers of Set. When King Saul, with the aid of other Clans, wrested control of the Holy Lands from the Egyptians, the Setites were furious. Unfortunately, Egypt was in a great

deal of turmoil as the other Clans contested with the Setites for control of the country. The Setites had enough trouble maintaining their precarious grip on the rulers of their native country to deal with recovering lost territories.

Disputes in the court of the Pharaoh ended with the arrival of a mysterious individual known as Sethnakht, who became Pharaoh in 1223 BC. The Setites failed to corrupt him, his son Ramses III, or any of his successors. The Setites fell from favor, and spent many years trying to regain power. No other Clan seemed to benefit from Sethnakht's rule, making his origins a mystery to this day.

No one among the Kindred is quite sure who Sethnakht was. The Setites had many rivals, any of whom might have guided Sethnakht to the throne. However, no other Clan has ever admitted to being the power behind the mysterious Pharaoh. Indeed, none seemed to benefit from Sethnakht's rule. Some Setites believe he was a powerful Magus or even Caine in one of his many guises, acting for some mysterious purpose of his own. In any case, after Ramses III took the throne, Sethnakht vanished as mysteriously as he appeared.

The Setites managed to regain some influence in 50 BC. They recognized the growing power of the Roman Empire, and also wished for Egypt to regain its previous territories. They sent their mortal agent, Cleopatra, to influence the Roman Senate. She was unable to use her wiles on Julius Caesar, but persuaded Mark Antony, Octavian, and their



allies to assassinate the soldier-ruler; Octavian later became Caesar Augustus and, under Cleopatra's influence, sent Herod the Great to rule Jordan.

The Setites catered to Caligula, who took the throne in AD 37. It is thought that Caligula was under the influence of so many Clans and outside forces that he had no option but to go insane. With all of the commotion over his activities, the Setites' orders for the conquest of the Nabataean kingdom went almost unnoticed.

The Setites continued to partially influence the Caesars up to AD 106, when Emperor Trajan finally conquered the Nabataeans. The Romans sacked Petra and transformed it into a Roman provincial capital.

The Setites were unaware that Trajan was also being manipulated by the Assamites, the Kindred clan that were to later become hired assassins. Several Assamite agents were present at the final battle of Petra, with orders to note other Kindred interference. During the sack, one of the Assamites

saw a Nabataean soldier, a warrior known as Talaq, singlehandedly kill a dozen Roman warriors.

Talaq finally fell, but his prowess made a deep impression on the Assamite observer. At that time the Assamites did not have an apprenticeship rite for Neonates — they recruited fanatic Middle Eastern warriors as cannon fodder for their Clan. The Assamite finished off the few surviving Legionnaires, took the dying warrior to an abandoned building, and initiated the Embrace.

When Talaq revived, the Assamite informed him of his new situation. Despite a desire for vengeance on the Romans, Talaq let himself be taken to Alamut, the Assamites' mountain stronghold in Turkey, where he improved upon his already formidable skills.

After Rome

Meanwhile, the few survivors of the sack of Petra were scattered to the four winds, and the city itself continued under Roman rule. However, when the Empire lost its influence, Petra stood empty. Soon, only a few Bedouin tribes knew of the great stone city. The Nabataean survivors soon intermingled with other tribes and forgot their heritage.

Talaq had become one of the Assamites' finest warriors. Despite his status as "cannon fodder," he survived every conflict he was placed into and within a century his Elders had decided he was too valuable to waste. All the while, however, Talaq was obsessed with gaining vengeance on the Romans that had destroyed his homeland.

On several occasions Talaq committed the ultimate sin of his clan: fighting in wars without his Elders' permission or knowledge. His targets were always Romans, whether in the last days of the Roman Empire's glory or during the Byzantine era. Fortunately, his Elders never caught him in these lapses.

The Assamites kept busy during the Crusades. They, along with many Nosferatu, Malkavians, Lasombas, and Tzimisce, sided with Saladin against his enemies. Richard the Lion-Hearted was supported by several other Clans, primarily the Ventrue and the Toreadors. Despite several attempts, Richard avoided death at Assamite hands, and some believe the red-haired Magus known as "Merlin," or one of his descendants, provided the king with mystical safeguards. His actions were independent of Richard's Kindred supporters, who were willing to sacrifice the sometimes obdurate king and replace him with someone more susceptible to their influence.

It was also during this period that Talaq met the Nosferatu Khalid, with whom he shared a hatred of the Byzantine Empire. During one of his freelance battles, Talaq was decisively beaten for one of the few times in his existence by Alexius, a Byzantine prelate turned Kindred.



Fortunately, he managed to escape before meeting Final Death. He returned to hunt the prelate, and again his path crossed Khalid's as they hunted Alexius. Alexius was Khalid's Sire, and at the time the Nosferatu was seeking his creator in an attempt to learn more about his Vampiric state.

The two never found Alexius, which is perhaps fortunate. Talaq wished to kill the Byzantine, while Khalid wanted to obtain answers from his Sire. If they had found him, Alexius would have no doubt played them off against each other. As it was, the two parted on equitable terms. Khalid, a warrior himself, was impressed with Talaq's skill, while the Nosferatu's battle fervor and hatred of Europeans likewise impressed Talaq. The two have remained in subtle contact ever since.

As a result of his duel with Alexius, Talaq came to realize two things. The first was that he was not the invincible Vampire warrior he had believed himself to be. The second was that, while his kingdom would never truly rise, there were still those among the Nabataeans who survived, their ancestry forgotten. He came to believe that it might be better to do what he could for his people rather than seek an eternity of revenge for Petra's destruction.

To this end, Talaq ceased his attacks against the Romans and their descendants. He went out into the wilderness of the Jordan Valley and began to track down the ancestors of those who had lived in Petra. Talaq found one small tribe, the Naba,

made up almost entirely of Nabataean descendants. He killed the non-Nabataeans in their sleep, then came before the rest, manifesting his supernatural powers. He led them to believe that he was a god of their ancestors, ready to lead them to true power.

Over the next few centuries, Talaq began to unite the Nabataean remnants into a cohesive tribal unit. He brought them to the now "lost" city of Petra, their homeland. He passed on much of his fanaticism and martial training, turning them into a deadly group of warriors.

Talaq lived a triple life, so his plans went slowly. Not only was he bringing together the tribes of the Naba, but he was acting as a loyal warrior for the Assamite Clan. He had also not given up his revenge against either the Romans or the Followers of Set; he had come to realize that the Scetites had influenced the Romans against his people, and that they were as much to blame as the Romans.

Talaq managed to gain revenge against both the Romans and the Scetites when he aided the Mamluks, a military caste of ex-slaves which achieved power in Egypt in AD 1260. Talaq manipulated their ambitions so they were deeply suspicious of the Scetites, who had aided Egypt's previous rulers. The Scetites were once more in disrepute in their native lands, which pleased Talaq to no end.

The Mamluks' rule of the Holy Land was for the most part benevolent, allowing the Ottoman Turks to gain power. The Ottomans, under Talaq's subtle guidance, besieged Constantinople, bringing an end to the Holy Roman Empire's domination of the Middle East. At this point, Talaq considered his vengeance against the Romans complete.

Talaq was successful in keeping the secret of his reunification of the Nabataeans from the Assamite Elders. He realized that if they ever found out about his secret operations, his existence would come to an end. He knew that he had to break their hold on him. Also, he needed the extra freedom of movement that his Vampiric state prevented.

With this goal in mind, Talaq contacted a Talmudic scholar of the Israeli peoples. The scholar, Maimonides, was actually a powerful Kabbalah Magus who had served as a scholar and courtier to Saladin. Maimonides was also known as Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon, or Rambam, and had known Khalid when the Nosferatu was studying the Kabbalah. Talaq had heard of him through Khalid and knew that Rambam had been active since the 10th century, making him a master of many life-sustaining spells. The Nabataean hoped that one of the mystic's spells would be able to end his Vampiric state.

In 1515, the two came to an arrangement — Rambam would perform a Kabbalistic ritual to return Talaq to his human form and grant him extended life. In return, Talaq would influence the Ottoman ruler Suleiman the Magnificent to do two things. The first was to erect a wall



surrounding the Old City of Jerusalem. The second was to protect the city throughout his reign.

Talaq, suspicious of the arrangement, since he stood to gain much more than Rambam, eventually accepted, and Rambam performed the ritual. Talaq was delighted to find himself human once more, and the ritual not only granted him a vastly extended lifespan but allowed him to keep some of his Kindred powers.

During this time the Camarilla took steps to end the threat the Assamites posed in their preying on Kindred during the Sabbat Wars. With his martial expertise, Talaq easily made the transition from warrior to assassin, and many of the Nabataeans' Childer also became formidable killers.

Once Talaq had regained his humanity, he took steps to feign his death for the benefit of the Assamites. He "died" during the final battle between the Ottoman Turks and the Mamluk. It was this battle that allowed the Turks to take control of the Middle East, and Talaq's ruse proved successful for 300 years.

From 1515 to 1812 the Holy Land region was relatively peaceful. Talaq was too busy becoming reaccustomed to his humanity and freedom from the Assamites to have much effect on the land. He discovered he was still aging, but at a rate of about one year for every 20. The Nabataean soldier was also busy organizing, training, and strengthening the Naba, and increasing his influence with the Ottoman Emirs.

By 1812, Petra was a bustling community of 2,000. The Naba, now a full-fledged tribe, survived by farming and raiding other tribes throughout the region. Talaq's influence, and Petra's isolated locale, kept the Ottoman Emirs unaware of the city's existence.

This peaceful situation was threatened in 1812. A Swiss explorer, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, and his party were exploring the region surrounding Petra. Talaq was unaware of how close the explorers were to the city, and before he could intervene, a Naba patrol chanced upon the explorer's party and wiped it out. One native guide managed to escape and rumors were rampant that the mysterious raiders of the last century operated in or near Petra.

Talaq had to bring all of his resources to bear to keep the Emirs from moving against Petra. He supplied aid to Muhammad Ali, an Ottoman viceroy who was rebelling against his Turkish masters. Fifteen hundred Naba warriors rode 200 miles north to Amman and engaged a Turkish force three times their size. The Ottomans completely wiped out the Naba tribesmen, but were convinced that the mysterious raiders were completely eliminated.

More significantly, the Assamites took notice of the situation. Several scouts were able to infiltrate Petra, and one survived long enough to report back that Talaq still lived. The Assamites now had an answer for much of the strange activities and secret influences in the area that they had, until then, accredited to the Followers of Set. They realized Talaq was conducting a Masquerade of his own, and moved against

their former clansman, attacking him covertly in order to avoid compromising their own secrets.

Fortunately, Petra was proof against the Assamites, for Talaq had trained the Naba using the Clan's own disciplines. The Kindred were unable to mount a full-scale assault, while the Naba and Petra's guardian spirits proved quite capable of killing anyone who entered the city.

Talaq now found himself opposed by his own former clan and the Setites as well, for the latter had gained knowledge of his existence after interrogating an Assamite spy. To bolster his position, he took the identity of Hussein Ibn Ali, a Hashemite chieftain. He secretly killed the original Hussein in 1878 and took his place, using his Assamite-honed skills at disguise and mental control abilities to pull off the masquerade.

As Sharif, Talaq fathered four children: Ali, Abdullah, Faisal, and Zaid. In 1914, World War I began and the Ottomans allied themselves with the Germans, leading Talaq to begin a correspondence with the British High Commissioner in 1915. He pledged an Arab uprising against the Turks in return for England's recognition of Arab independence.

Talaq, now the Sharif of Mecca, instructed his sons (unaware of their father's real identity) to aid the British. Talaq himself drove the Turkish garrison out of Mecca, while Faisal captured Al Aqabah, a major seaport. The son later entered Damascus, forcing the Ottoman government to capitulate a few weeks later.

After the war, Britain finally began to acknowledge Arab independence. Of Talaq/Hussein's sons, Ali became the new Sharif of Mecca in 1924, Abdullah was appointed Amir of the newly-created Transjordan in 1921, and Faisal was made King of Syria in 1920. As Hussein, Talaq "retired" in 1924. The British designated much of current-day Israel, including the "West Bank," as Palestine, a Zion homeland. Talaq had no particular grudge against the Jews. The Israelis were responsible for much of the culture and learning in the days when Petra was the capital of the Nabataean empire. Thus Talaq returned to Petra, manipulating the country's government and maintaining the Naba tribe's strength.

After World War II, in 1946, Britain granted Transjordan full independence due to the country's loyalty during the war. Two years later, Britain ended its mandate on Palestine, and Israel proclaimed itself a nation. This began the first Arab-Israeli War as the Arabs fought to take what they believed was theirs.

Abdullah, King of Jordan, participated in the War rather than risk the wrath of his citizens. Jordanian military captured the West Bank, including Jerusalem, but proceeded no further. Abdullah's apparent reluctance resulted in his enemies employing an Assamite assassin, who accepted the assignment in the belief Abdullah's death would bring Talaq out of Petra. Once he was exposed, they could kill him with relative ease.



Abdullah died at al-Aksa Mosque in 1951. His grandson, Hussein, barely escaped death when one of his uniform medals deflected a second bullet. The king's son, Talal, became king but was unable to rule for long due to mental illness. At the same time, Talal's half-brother, Naif, was plotting to become king.

To thwart Naif's plans, Talaq got Talal out of the way by taking him to Petra. The Nabataean then disguised himself and took Talal's place. While ruling the country, Talaq spent much of his time avoiding the many Assamite assassination attempts. Fortunately, he was able to thwart them all.

Talaq ruled over Jordan long enough for Talal's son, Hussein, to be appointed king in 1952. He then stepped out of the limelight and returned to Petra. Talal himself was taken to a villa near Istanbul, where he died in 1972. Talaq "persuaded" Naif to leave Jordan and never return.

Hussein assumed constitutional power on May 2, 1953, and was to prove an extremely effective leader. During Talaq's brief rule as Talal, the Nabataean opened up the country to more democratic policies, believing this would ease some of the country's internal strife and help guarantee Petra's safety. Besides, Talaq preferred the area surrounding "his" city to be as peaceful as possible.

As a result of Talaq's policy, Hussein had to deal with Communists and Socialists trying to gain control of Jordan's Parliament. He also had to deal with several internal and external threats, most notably the many assassination plots aimed at him. On one occasion, Syrian MIG fighters tried to bring down his personal plane. Another assassin laced Hussein's nose drops with acid. The Assamites initiated several of these plots, trying to make Talaq vulnerable by forcing him to protect the king.

In 1967, the political situation changed in the Third Arab-Israeli, or "Six-Day," War. Israel occupied Palestine's West Bank. Talaq was upset at the constant uproar within his country, and the invasion of "his" country. So great was his rage that he planned to unleash the Naba against the Israelis.

It was at this point that the Kabbalah mystic, Rambam, contacted the Nabataean. Like Talaq, the Talmudic scholar/mage had benefited from life-prolonging spells that had kept him alive for centuries. Additionally, Rambam now worked with the Mossad, Israeli's intelligence organization.

Rambam informed Talaq that he was to allow Israeli to take the West Bank. Jordan was not to intervene. If they did, Rambam would withdraw the spells he had cast on Talaq so long ago to preserve his life.

As Talaq had long suspected, the bargain he had made with the mystic was now being paid in full. However, there was little he could do. He used his influence with Hussein to cause the Jordanians to lose their battles, and Israel took the West Bank, causing hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arab refugees to enter Jordan.

To convince Hussein to give up the West Bank, Talaq was forced to reveal himself to the king. Out of respect for his great-grandson, who had exceeded all of his expectations, Talaq divulged his true background to Hussein. He also revealed that his was the power that had thwarted so many of Hussein's assassins. Talaq informed the young ruler that he wanted peace in Jordan, and that he would support Hussein as long as the king maintained the peace.

Hussein was awed by this spectre from the past. He realized Talaq's power and influence was immense and that even if he had wanted to, he could not have opposed his ancestor.

Hussein accepted the situation gracefully. A skilled politician, he could see how Talaq's influence would be important to his rule. The Nabataean assured him that his powers and influence would be Hussein's to command, as

long as the king complied with his wishes. Talaq's needs were relatively simple. First, Petra's location was to be kept secret. Over the centuries, the area surrounding Petra had achieved such a reputation that no one would dare approach it. Hussein was to take no further governmental steps to investigate or utilize Petra.

Talaq also wanted no further actions taken against the Israelis. This position was difficult to keep, but Hussein has managed to hold to it despite the anger of neighboring Arab countries. Nonetheless, Hussein was relieved when he was finally able to sever relations with the West Bank. The PLO and its leader, Yassir Arafat, took over administration of the region.

To maintain Jordan's peace, Hussein has eased martial law, loosened press restrictions, legalized political parties, and allowed general elections. Although Hussein retains much power, he is partially answerable to Jordan's National Assembly.

The last major upheaval in Jordan was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Hussein, a long-time ally of Iraq, had supported Saddam Hussein during that country's war with Iran. Saddam had great popular support in Jordan, and King Hussein was unwilling to anger his people. He was also unhappy with Saudi Arabia's invitation to the United States to protect their territory.

Hussein complied with the U.N. sanctions against Iraq, but protested the use of force against its ally. This position has cost him approval with the Arab countries who entered the coalition. Even with the war's end, Jordan is still recovering from the loss of tourism, the reluctance of other countries to buy its exports, and the cutoff of development aid from the West.

Jordan is now spiralling into poverty. Talaq is not particularly concerned, since this has had little effect on the Naba. Hussein, now 57 years old, worries about Jordan's declining economy and his own slowly faltering health. His only protection against assassins, particularly those of the Assamite clan, is Talaq. Talaq, in turn, is beginning to regret having informed Hussein of his true origins. He is beginning to consider one of Hussein's sons a proper replacement once Hussein meets with an "accident."

Petra - The Valley of Kings

Petra (Greek for 'rock') would be Jordan's most significant historical site even if Talaq and the Naba did not occupy it. It is located approximately halfway between Aqaba and the Dead Sea, and the government redirected at least one highway due to Talaq's influence.

The ancient Nabataeans literally carved Petra out of the reddish sandstone hills. They used the city as the capital of their kingdom. Originally a series of caves, with only one free-standing building, the Romans installed such architectural features as baths and colonnaded streets after their

conquest. Since Talaq and the Naba reoccupied the city, the former Assamite has had all reminders of his former enemies torn down. It is now once more a series of deep caves extending miles into the sandstone rock.

As noted earlier, Petra was never rediscovered by Johann Burckhardt in the 19th century. The Naba drove out other Bedouin tribes who were living in Petra when they reoccupied the Nabataean city. The ancestors of these Bedouins remember vague rumors passed down through the generations. However, the few that have tried to explore the city have never returned.

No one outside of these few Bedouin and King Hussein are aware of Petra's location or significance. Over the centuries the area has gained a reputation of being haunted, and few would willingly approach it.

One enters Petra by travelling west down the Siq, the narrow winding wadi (3 km. long) that serves as the main entrance into the city. The 200-meter-high sandstone walls loom over the 10-20 foot wide path, all but blocking out the sun. The pathway was paved by the Roman conquerors, but the Naba have let it fall into ruin to further dissuade the curious. After two kilometers, a series of small niches are carved into the walls. They hold small statues of the ancient Nabataean god Dushara, which the Naba have restored in honor of their ancestors.

The first building one comes to is the Khazneh (Treasury). The building was originally a tomb, but its name originated in the 17th century. At that time bandits penetrated this far into Petra and hid their treasure here. The bandits' visit went undiscovered until they returned for the treasure, when the Naba killed them all. Petra's human guardians now use the building as a guardpost. Like many of Petra's buildings, the facade is very ornate, but within is only a small unadorned chamber.

The path leads further into Petra, passing to the right of a Roman amphitheater. This is the only Roman structure Talaq allows to remain standing. He had the Naba tear down any traces of Roman decor, but the amphitheater itself still remains, and Talaq uses this forum when he addresses the united tribe of Naba.

A nearby stairway leads up to the High Place of Sacrifice, a flattened area atop the valley's southern wall. Here, ancient depressions with drains show where the ancient Nabataeans sacrificed animals (and, it is rumored, the occasional human being) to their gods. There are several altars carved into the rock, and obelisks decorate the platform. Several buildings once housed the Nabataean priests, and the Naba have restored one of these, which they use as a watchtower from which almost all Petra and the Siq leading into the city can be seen.

The path from the Siq then turns north, leading into the three square kilometers making up Petra. There are several tombs against the valley's east wall, the Jebel Kubtha. Each stands as a monument to the ancient Nabataeans' architectural

ingenuity. The first of three major tombs is the Um Tomb, and its smooth walls and precisely edged corners have withstood the rigors of time.

There are many other insignificant caves, most of which served as the Nabataean's residences. As is common with Nabataean architecture, the entrances are highly ornate, but the interiors are small, square chambers, with no decorations or inscriptions. Many of these now serve as dwellings for the Naba.

The path then turns westward, passing into the heart of the old Nabataean city. The Temple of Al-'Uzza-Atargatis (Winged Lions), north of the path, is one of the city's two important structures, and is where Talaq resides and holds court. Over the centuries he has had the Naba restore the temple to its full Nabataean glory, filled with art and ornaments devoted to Atargatis, Nabataean goddess of fertility and consort of Dushara.

The path continues on to the west, passing under the Temenos Gateway. The temenos, or courtyard, leads into the Qasr el-Bint, Petra's other important building. This building is Petra's only freestanding structure. The Qasr el-Bint (Castle of the Pharaoh's Daughter) was named by ancient Egyptian travellers, but served as the Temple of Dushara. It is here that the Naba come to become one with their ancestors and conduct much of their worship. Sacrifices are held at the High Place of Sacrifice, and much rarer ceremonies designed to placate Atargatis are held at the Temple of the Winged Lions.

The path from the Siq continues past the Qasr el-Bint and into a smaller wadi. It leads to the Monastery, a structure similar in design to the Treasury, but far larger. The inside is very plain, and a few crosses carved into the walls suggest that it was used as an early Christian church during the Roman occupation. A chamber near here has been banned by Talaq after several mysterious deaths occurred there centuries ago (see below).

The areas north and south of Petra's center are used as farming and livestock. During the rainy season melted water floods down the wadis, irrigating the land. Horses (for riding) and sheep are raised as livestock. There are currently only about 100 of the former, since the desert raids that they were once used for no longer take place with any great frequency. The northernmost area, where the Wadi el Mataha runs northeast out of the valley, is where military training is held. Three jeeps are kept here for times when quick transportation is needed. Several Naba have been trained in their maintenance.

Defenses

Petra has several means of defense. Its first are Jordanian military patrols Hussein has guarding the outskirts of the area surrounding Petra. They believe Hussein suspects PLO terrorists of being in the area and have no idea what it is they patrol, but their devotion to their king keeps them from

asking or entering the area themselves. Talaq's Ritual of Obfuscation is commonly maintained to prevent any aerial or satellite reconnaissance.

Petra's second line of defense is a combination of the winding wadis (gullies) that are the only entrances to the city, and the Naba tribesmen. The city's inaccessibility means the Naba can guard the few entrances with relative ease. Tribesmen are posted at each entrance, and will kill anyone who approaches. They cannot be negotiated with, bargained with, or intimidated. Their orders are to kill anyone whom Talaq has not instructed them to let pass. They will even attack someone dressed in Naba garb.

Petra's third and final defense is supernatural in origin. Talaq has somehow managed to tap into the combined psychic force of the Nabataeans killed by Roman's during the city's sack. He has little control of the spirits, but for the time being they have assented to let him and the Naba occupy the city. Talaq often makes sacrifice to them to keep their favor; he performs these sacrifices in private, since the Naba would not believe in his divinity if they saw him bowing before spirits.

The spirits have no physical presence, but are capable of summoning a khamsin, a violent desert breeze. This is treated as a ranged attack with a damage of 4. Anyone caught within the breeze takes a +2 penalty to all actions due to the sand and wind. If they wish to break free of the khamsin, they must make a Strength roll against difficulty 7. Three successes are necessary to escape. The howling winds also serve to attract the attention of the Naba, who will immediately come to investigate.

Naba rumor has it that, when Petra was first being settled, spirits attacked a small party of tribesmen exploring a secluded burial chamber near the Monastery. This party was never seen again. Talaq gave orders that the Naba avoid the chamber, and to this day the ban has never been lifted. The Naba do not know what lies within the chamber, or why the spirits guard it so zealously. Some of the tribesmen fear that the spirits are not as trustworthy as Talaq has told them while others suspect that the spirits of the Christians who once used the Monastery as a place of worship haunt the area, and are not friendly towards the Nabataeans.

Within Petra, the Naba live life much as many of the Bedouin do. Instead of swearing their allegiance to a sheikh, they give fealty to Talaq. They view him as one of their ancestors come down to Earth, and follow his orders explicitly.

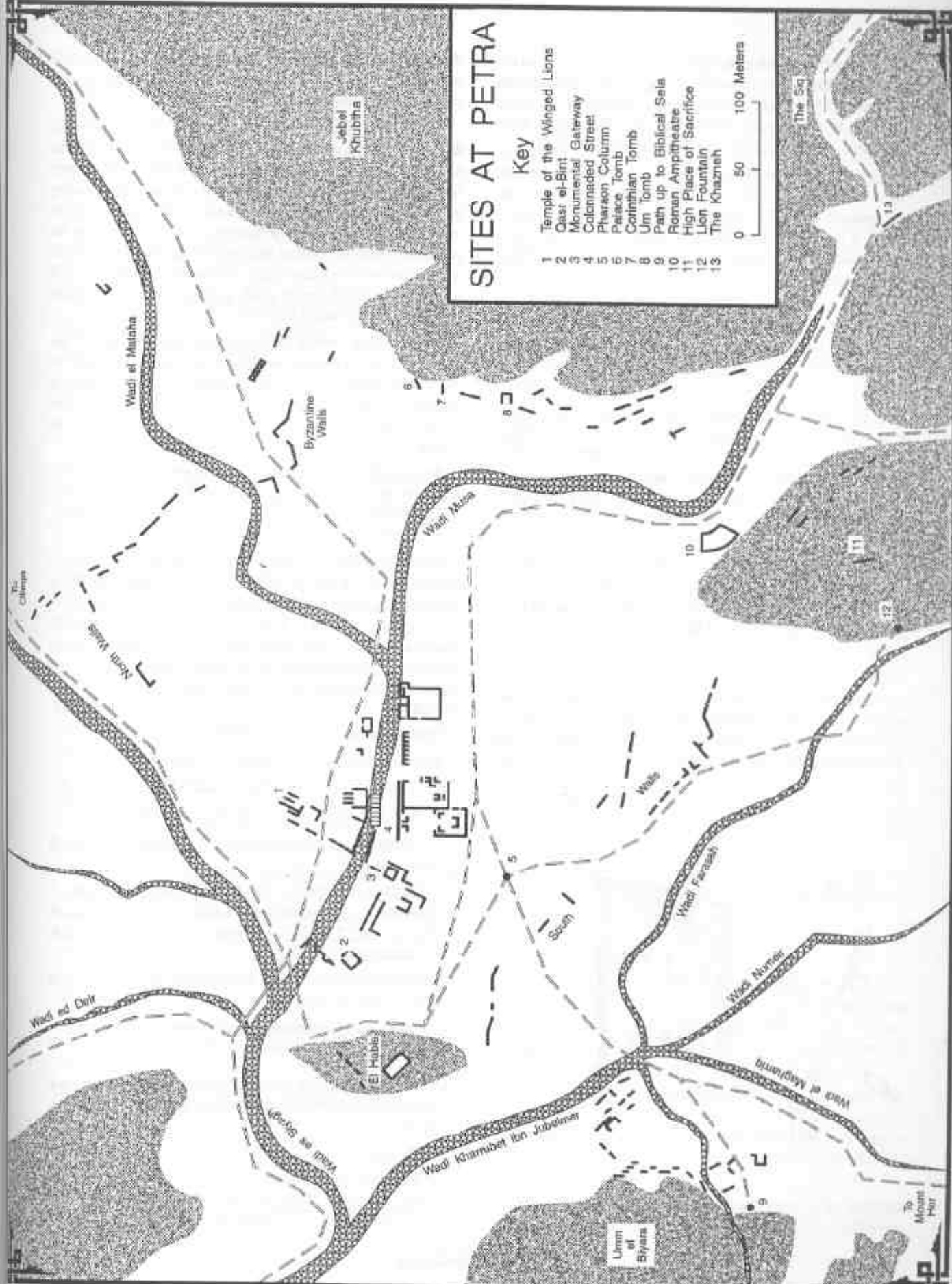
Under his orders, the Naba have cleared out parts of the city for farming and livestock breeding. Unlike most Bedouin cultures, the Naba share duties equally among men and women. Both tend the fields and raise children, and both train and fight as warriors.

SITES AT PETRA

Key

- 1 Temple of the Winged Lions
- 2 East el-Bint
- 3 Monumental Gateway
- 4 Colonnaded Street
- 5 Pharaon Colonn
- 6 Palace Tomb
- 7 Corinthian Tomb
- 8 Umm Tomb
- 9 Path up to Biblical Sela
- 10 Roman Amphitheatre
- 11 High Place of Sacrifice
- 12 Lion Fountain
- 13 The Khazneh

0 50 100 Meters



When a child reaches the age of 10, he is initiated into the combat disciplines. He trains for eight years, and the tests become progressively more difficult. After four years the training is totally real, with edged weapons and loaded weapons. Any failure will result in the youth's death.

Upon reaching his 18th year, he travels into the desert. He must travel at least 100 miles from Petra, kill a male adult between the ages of 22 and 40, and return with the victim's head. If the youth successfully completes his "quest," he is acknowledged as an adult and granted status in the ranks of the Naba warriors.

The Naba warriors specialize in small unit groups, and rarely fight in groups of more than 10. More often, they work singly or in pairs. As such, there are no "ranks" among the warriors, while in groups of five or more, Talaq will designate the most experienced warriors to act as commander.

In the first few centuries of their existence, Naba tribesmen often repopulated their tribe by riding out and raiding other tribes. This allowed them, in 1812, to reach a population of 2,000, the most Petra could adequately support. However, Talaq sacrificed more than 1,000 Naba to draw attention away after Johann Burckhardt's unwitting discovery of Petra.

This sacrifice severely depleted the Naba and led Talaq to give the women an equal role as warriors. The tribe's population has risen slowly over the years to its current level of 1,200. This number would be much higher, except for the fatalities resulting from childhood training and special missions outside of Petra.

Talaq trains the Naba warriors in disciplines Talaq has adapted from the Assamites. Naba training covers melee weapons, firearms, stealth, infiltration and tracking. Talaq also imbues them with a religious fanaticism rarely seen in

the world. Each Naba warrior believes that to die while following Talaq's orders is to receive a place among the royal courts of the Nabataeans in the afterlife.

The Naba are aware of the outside world. Talaq has taught them that technology is a curse, and that to rely on it is to dishonor their Nabataean ancestors. Still, he employs some Naba warriors in the outside world, and gives them training in firearms and modern security devices. They are trained to view cities as hostile environments, but ones that can be survived. However, Talaq emphasizes that the Naba should not rely on modern technology. The Naba warriors' favored equipment is black desert garb, a sharp sword, light chain mail, and a silver knife.

In the outside world, Naba warriors perform three functions. First of all, they act as Talaq's special agents when he must strike against his enemies. If a secret military base has sprung up in Saudi Arabia or Lebanon, the Naba will be sent to break in, steal any valuable information, and return to Talaq.

Second, Naba are occasionally assigned as bodyguards, via Hussein, to important government officials. These officials believe the Naba to be elite Desert Patrol soldiers. Hussein himself has six as bodyguards.

Finally, two dozen Naba lurk in the shadows of Amman, always on watch for peculiar outsiders. They will never engage a suspicious stranger directly, unless Talaq has given them specific orders. They will contact Talaq through Hussein, and the Nabataean will pass on orders or come personally to investigate the situation. These two dozen Naba are rotated every two weeks, and there are 10 such groups.

Naba have the following statistics:

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Camouflage 3, Climbing 3, Firearms 2, Interrogation 1, Lock Picking 3, Melee 4, Orienteering 2, Ride 2, Security 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4, Swimming 2, Tracking 4

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Petra) 4, Area Knowledge (Jordan) 2

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

Willpower: 7

Equipment: Sword (as a Sabre), Silver Dagger (as a knife), special Light Chain Mail (Armor Rating 3, Penalty of 1)

Talaq

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Autocrat



Apparent Age: 53

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 1, Instruction 3, Intimidation 3, Intrigue 5, Leadership 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Bribery 2, Climbing 3, Disguise 4, Escapology 2, Firearms 2, Melee 4, Security 3, Stealth 4, Survival 2, Tracking 3

Knowledge: Area Knowledge (Petra) 5, Area Knowledge (Jordan) 4, Kindred Lore 3, Linguistics 2, Magus Lore 2, Occult 4, Politics 5, Spirit Lore 1

Disciplines: Auspex 1, Celerity 2, Chimerstry 2, Fortitude 1, Obfuscate 2, Presence 5, Quietus 3, Thaumaturgy 3

Background: Allies 3, Influence 5, Resources 3

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

Merits: Ambidextrous, Double-Jointed, Political Ties

Flaws: Enemies (the Assamites, the Followers of Set)

Willpower: 8

Note: When Talaq uses Celerity and Quietus, he substitutes Willpower for Blood Points when the latter are called for. He may spend 2 Willpower points per round on Disciplines.

Rituals: The equivalent of Devil's Touch, Purity of Flesh, Calling the Restless Spirit, Donning the Mask of Shadows. He has a level 3 ritual that is the equivalent of Level 5 Obfuscate, taking a week to cast, but good for two months. Give him any additional rituals you feel he needs (especially those involving spirits).

Paths: Corruption 3, Fire 3, Thaumaturgy 3, Weather Control 3

Equipment: Sword (as a Sabre), Silver Dagger (as a knife), special Light Chain (Armor Rating 3, Penalty of 1)

Description: Talaq is of medium height and build, with typically Arabian features and coloring. When at Petra, he wears the white robes and golden ornaments of a Nabataean ruler. When acting covertly, Talaq wears Naba battle gear: black robes and light chain mail. When he must visit with politicians and dignitaries, he wears an impeccably tailored black business suit.

Roleplaying Hints: You have devoted your existence to the memory of the former Nabataean kingdom. Since the 10th century, you have devoted yourself to bringing your people back. In some ways you feel responsible for the kingdom's fate, having failed in your duty as a soldier when the Romans attacked Petra.

You care nothing for Jordan, the country that has grown up around Petra. Your main concern is first and always the safety of the Naba tribe and the sanctity of Petra. You will manipulate and scheme ruthlessly to keep your people intact.

You take a certain pride in your great-grandson's, King Hussein's, accomplishments, but would kill him in a minute if he did anything to threaten Petra.

You still despise Romans, though you temper this hatred since the completion of your revenge with the destruction of the Byzantine Empire. Nonetheless, you have little affection for Italians.

To the Naba, you are a demigod, a being of mythological proportions. They believe you to be the physical manifestation of their Nabataean ancestors, the spirit made flesh. They are unfailingly loyal to you, following your commands with a fanatic's zeal.

You get no pleasure in the Naba's worship. However, you realize one must appear omnipotent to hold the Naba together. To some degree you have come to believe in your own omnipotence, but are aware enemies still pose a threat.

Enemies

In his 1900-year existence, Talaq has accumulated several enemies. They include:

The Assamites

The assassin Clan of Kindred still consider Talaq a traitor after his desertion of them. However, they have learned their lesson against sending lone or small parties of assassins into Petra. The city's Naba patrols and guardian spirits have thus far seen to it that not a single Assamite has gotten close to Talaq while he has resided in the city.

The Assamites have had a little better luck when attacking Talaq outside of Petra. Their schemes have included the assassination of Talaq's son, Abdullah, and a number of attempts on Hussein. The purpose of these attacks has been to force Talaq out of Petra to protect his underlings, making himself vulnerable to attack; however, Talaq has managed to avoid all assassination attempts and successfully protect Hussein.

The Assamites are currently content to bide their time. They no longer send assassins into Petra, but occasionally try a hit when Talaq leaves his ancient city.

The Followers of Set

The Setites first began to suspect the existence of a "behind-the-scenes" manipulator when the Mamluks came to power in 1260 and threw them out. Whoever it was, the Setites hated him with a passion, since the Mamluks proved resistant to their influence for more than 200 years.

It was not until the capture of an Assamite spy in the 19th century that they were able to place a name upon the shadowy presence controlling Jordan. They uncovered Talaq's name a few short months after the Assamites themselves received confirmation of his existence.

The Setites are intent on regaining control of the area that they still consider theirs. They feel that since the Egyptians

originally ruled the area, they have the best claim on it. The Assamites, despite their Arabian origins, have no argument with the Setites' policy. Talaq, however, has no intention of yielding Jordan or its bordering countries to Setite influence. He strives mightily to prevent the Setites' seduction of government officials.

Talaq has been mostly successful. Religious conservatism in Iran has prevented the Setites from gaining much of a foothold, and Syria is falling under the influence of Western powers, culminating in their plea for help to the Americans during the Gulf War. The presence of Kabbalistic mystics in Israel has acted to negate the Setites' threat.

Within Jordan itself, Talaq has used his influence to monitor the government's officials. Although the upper echelon of government and military leadership remained uncorrupted, three minor cabinet members, no less than seven parliament members, and four low-ranking officers are under Setite control. For now, the Setites are content to use their pawns to obtain information, rather than to actively lead a coup against Hussein or assassinate Talaq — after all, it took them nearly a century to get this many puppets.

Slowly but surely, the Setites are worming their way into a position of influence in Jordanian politics. They have taken the long view, believing that one day they will gain enough power to challenge Talaq and take control of the entire region.

Other Kindred Clans

Talaq and his contacts are quick to spot outsiders, so very few non-Arabic Kindred can enter Jordan without Talaq knowing of them. Unless Talaq believes the Kindred might

be of use to him, he will have Hussein dispatch soldiers to inform the Kindred intruders to leave. If they disobey, he will have Hussein send soldiers against them.

If the soldiers fail, Talaq will send at least two squads of Naba against them. The first group will consist of as many Naba as characters. The second will be at least twice that size, more if Talaq believes it necessary. If the second group fails, Talaq himself will investigate. He will take as many Naba as he feels he are necessary.

If Talaq can find a use for a particular group of Kindred, he will meet with them. He will have soldiers escort them to some out-of-the-way location, and then meet with them from the shadows. He will always have at least twice the party's size in Naba hiding in the shadows. For ideas of what Talaq might want a party for, see *Story Ideas* below.

For all practical purposes, Talaq is "Prince" of Jordan. However, his presence is unknown to most Kindred. The Giovannis and the Tremere suspect his presence, and it is quite likely the Nosferatu have knowledge of him. Khalid, of the Chicago Nosferatu, is an old friend, but would be unwilling to trade or sell knowledge of Talaq's existence.

Lycanthropes

A desert country, Jordan, like many such nations, has proven inhospitable to the Lupines, as hunting is not good for them outside of the cities; however, a few obscure Bedouin tribes consist entirely of lycanthropes. Talaq tolerates their existence as long as they remain in the far eastern regions of the Jordan Desert. These tribes prey on Bedouin tribes in Syria, leading to occasional border skirmishes. Talaq can have Hussein disavow any control over these "wild" tribes. If the Bedouin lycanthropes cause too much damage, Talaq has the Naba deal with them. He considers it good practice for his people.

Talaq has reason to believe that certain members of the PLO are Lupines. He is not sure who, but he has noted that during the exile of the PLO from Jordan, several cells put up resistance so great that he had to send Naba against them. Even then, the lycanthropes killed many of his tribesmen. Those that survived confirmed the existence of shapeshifters among their opponents.

Talaq has since began a policy of training the Naba to be able to deal with werecreatures. Talaq is almost positive the PLO leader, Yassir Arafat, is not a lycanthrope. However, it is certain that Arafat would have knowledge of the Lupines within his ranks, and could deploy them for maximum effect.

Since the PLO eviction from Jordan, the group's efforts have been directed more at Israel. Still, Talaq is wary of any lycanthrope presence in Jordanian cities, and will send Naba to deal with them.



Rambam

Talaq considers the Israeli scholar and mage his most powerful opponent. Rambam is the one who endowed Talaq with his extended life. At their second meeting, Rambam made it clear that he could withdraw the spells if Talaq ignored his wishes concerning the West Bank. Although Rambam declared Talaq's debt paid in full, the Nabataean is highly suspicious of the mage as Rambam could easily blackmail him again.

Rambam is currently active in the Mossad, Israeli's intelligence agency. There are several other Kabbalah mystics aiding the Mossad against Israel's enemies; however, none are as powerful as this centuries-old Talmudic scholar. One of the reasons Jordan has been so nonaggressive against Israel is because of Talaq's fear of mystical retaliation.

Because of this fear, Talaq has given standing orders to Hussein that no operations be initiated against Israel unless he gives personal approval. Few have received his approval. Talaq never unleashes the Naba, fearing this would be interpreted as his personal involvement.

This situation has proven frustrating to Hussein, since his position on Israel has cost him the support of other Arab countries, but to date he has been too grateful and afraid of Talaq to disobey his orders.

For his part, it is hard to tell what Rambam's intentions are. He may honestly consider his debt paid. Alternatively, he may be using his hold on Talaq as a silent threat. Since Israel obtained the West Bank, he has had no further contact with Talaq. Rambam has assured the Mossad that Jordan is not their enemy, and the agency is not especially active in Jordan (certainly not as active as they are in Lebanon), but there are a number of small intelligence-gathering stations in operation.

Other Mages

Rumors of foreigners with strange powers meeting mysterious deaths have spread far and wide among certain circles. Most Magi avoid Jordan like the plague. If Talaq hears of any within his country, he will treat as if they were Vampires (see above). He will meet with them if he can find a use for them. Otherwise he will have them kicked out of Jordan or killed.

Hussein

King Hussein is perhaps Talaq's greatest threat, primarily because Talaq is unaware he is a threat. Under the subtle yoke of Talaq's influence, the King has come to resent that he is essentially a puppet ruler. Talaq's only concern is how the Naba at Petra fare. He has little regard for the rest of the country, and only desires that nothing happens to interfere with his kingdom.



On the short term, Jordan is a peaceful country. However, the area is currently at odds because of Talaq's orders for Hussein to support the U.N. sanctions against Iraq during the Gulf War. Hussein and many of his people supported Iraq. The king's apparent betrayal by supporting the U.N. against Iraq has inflamed the populace. Hussein believed Jordan should aid Iraq and blames Talaq for forcing him to go against his beliefs and angering his people.

Hussein knows he must move carefully against Talaq. The Nabataean has spies everywhere, and the king can never know if his efforts to ferry them out have been completely successful.

Hussein knows of the supernatural only from what Talaq has told him. He knows there is a Clan of assassins known as the Assamites, but has been unable to locate them. If the Assamites could ever gain such an ally within the Jordanian government, they would leap at the opportunity — that is, assuming they did not figure it to be a trap.

The Setites would also be interested in an alliance with Hussein. Ironically, they long ago dismissed the king as Talaq's pawn, and have never bothered trying to corrupt him.

Hussein has a vague suspicion that other supernatural forces are active in the world (Occult 1). He is unaware of how to contact such beings, or how far he could trust them. If Hussein were to somehow contact any characters from Chicago, and the Kindred made travel reservations to Jordan, Khalid would undoubtedly hear of it and warn Talaq. Whether this means the characters would receive a warm reception at

Amman Airport or be ambushed at a critical point during a delicate operation is left to the Storyteller.

Jordan —

Its Geography and People

The country of Jordan is bordered on the north by Syria, on the East by Iraq, and on the southeast and south by Saudi Arabia. Its western border is formed by Israel and the Israeli-occupied area known as the West Bank. Jordan proper covers 35,000 square miles, or about 91,880 kilometers — an area slightly smaller than the state of Indiana.

Jordan's most distinguishing geographical feature is the Rift Valley, a great rift running north-south formed by the depression of Lake Tiberias, the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea. This rift forms the border between Jordan and Israel.

The Jordanian Highlands run roughly parallel to the Rift Valley. The Highlands have an altitude of between 2,000 and 3,000 feet, and are divided into ridges by valleys and gorges. Most of Jordan's "civilization," as well as Petra, lie within this area.

The Jordan Desert is part of the Syrian Desert, and covers 82% of Jordan. Occasional oases dot the area. However, for the most part the area is uninhabited by natural or supernatural beings.

The Jordan River, which runs through the Rift Valley from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee, is a major source of irrigation for Jordanian and Israeli farmers. Conflict between the two countries has prevented them from coming to a reasonable, balanced use of the waters.

Jordan's climate is relatively arid. There is a relatively rainy season from November to April and dry weather for the rest of the year. The parts of the country within the Jordan Desert are subject to harsher conditions, receiving less than five inches of precipitation a year. Except in the Rift Valley, frost and occasionally snow can be found.

The government has conducted only two censuses in the last 32 years, so it is hard to determine Jordan's population; three to four million is a good estimate. Of that population, most are Arabs who speak Arabic. However, there are many conflicts between the Bedouins, the original inhabitants of the area, and the Palestinians, who now represent 60-70 percent of the population.

Of the two factions, the Bedouin are most loyal to King Hussein. They (and others) view them as the "original" Arabs. They live life much as their ancestors did, and hold their lifestyle as the standard all Jordanians should follow.

The Bedouin live primarily in the Jordan Desert, although they can be found near the Rift Valley during certain times of the year. Technically nomads, they have fixed winter and summer campgrounds, and participate in Jordan's cash economy.

Palestinians refugees make up a large percentage of Jordan's population. Many have moved out of the camps and have become an active part of Jordanian life. Many others live in Amman, inhabiting poorly constructed shantytown refugee camps. Since they believe they will eventually return to their homeland, it is difficult to persuade them to move out.

The Palestinians are, to some degree, a thorn in the side of Jordan. They are made up of a number of factions. Many believe Jordan is at fault for not fighting strongly enough for the West Bank. Others resent King Hussein's attempts to incorporate them into the Jordanian government. The U.N. recognition of the PLO has given them a cause to rally around.

The vast majority (90 percent) of Jordan's population is of the Sunni Muslim faith. The Constitution of 1952 states that the king and his successors must be Muslims, born of Muslim parents. The other 10 percent consists of Christians, mostly of Eastern Orthodox and Greek Catholic sects. There are smaller groups of Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Shi'ite Muslim faith.

Jordan's major resources are farming and livestock. This is an irregular source, since much of the country's agricultural activities are dry farming that takes place in areas that suffer from drought. The raising of livestock takes place in desert areas.

Mining is also an important part of Jordan's economy. The two most significant minerals are potash and phosphate, both of which are used as fertilizers. Sources include the Dead Sea, small oil wells, and several mines. Mineral exports make up 20% of Jordan's exports.

Jordan's economy is also made up of a variety of different industries. The government is also heavily promoting tourism, although the loss of West Bank sites such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Jericho have hurt their efforts. Ironically, one of Jordan's most potentially interesting tourist sites, Petra, is off limits due to Talaq's occupation.

Major Cities

Jordan's capital, Amman, is located in northern Jordan, about 35 miles northeast of the Dead Sea. Archaeologists have documented its existence back to 500 BC, where the Old Testament refers to it as Rabbath Ammon. The city remained a major trade center down through the centuries. The

Nabataeans occupied it at one time, before they were defeated and Herod the Great occupied the metropolis.

Seven jebels, or hills, divided Amman. Streets have up to three different names, and none are marked. The city is a bustling, chaotic mess of human and automotive traffic. The architecture is basically a monotonous repetition of six basic Middle-Eastern building styles.

Amman is a friendly city, however, even in the declining days since the cutoff of trade and economic help to Jordan after the Gulf War. Most of its residents are older Palestinians and their families. While crime is not uncommon, it is directed at city residents, not visitors.

Many historical buildings dot Amman. With Jordan's economic situation little money has been allocated for development of these structures, and they are often used as rendezvous spots for criminals and foreign agents. A popular site for such meetings is a restored Roman theater, five minutes' walk east of downtown. The theater is the only surviving

remnant of the city when it was under Roman occupation and was known as Philadelphia (after Ptolemy Philadelphus).

Several cheap downtown hotels are available for the intrepid traveller. For the travelling Kindred, safety is hard to find. Not that any particular guide would sell out the character's location for a few pieces of silver — it is simply that Hussein's intelligence service is effective at ferreting out foreign travellers who reserve deserted warehouses and apartments.

Moneychangers are a common sight in the downtown area, as are foreign and local banks. The Jordanian unit of currency is the dinar (JD), which is made up of 1000 fils. A girsh is 10 fils. One dinar equals \$3.50 U.S.

The only other city of any great significance is Aqaba, in Jordan's southern regions. This city is the country's only seaport, located on the Gulf of Aqaba. When Jordan allied with Iraq during the latter's war with Iran, Aqaba served as a major port for Iraq. There is still a bustling weapons



business running here, and one can obtain almost any weapon if the price can be paid.

Other than beaches and fair weather, Aqaba has little else to offer. Its distance from Amman puts it outside of the political infighting that takes place in the country's capital. Aqaba is just a few kilometers away from the Israeli resort town of Eilat. Despite national conflicts, the two cities are on good terms and their airports are close by. An enterprising operative with contacts at both ends could slip from one airfield to the other without anyone detecting their original port of entry.

Story Ideas

The first type of Story would be those based in the city where the Storyteller's campaign takes place. This helps in that the conflict comes to the player characters, instead of having to find a way to bring them halfway around the world.

Politics as Usual

King Hussein is on a tour of the United States, trying to encourage economic aid and tourism to his besieged country. The Assamites believe Talaq is on the tour, providing the king with protection, and they feel he may make himself vulnerable while protecting Hussein. If the Nabataean is not present, they can kill Hussein and leave Talaq without a major pawn.

When Hussein arrives in the campaign city, the Prince soon notices strange Kindred are in town, and have not Presented themselves to him. If the character group are allied with the current Prince, he will ask them to investigate the matter. If the characters are Anarchs, the Prince might trick them into fighting the Assamites, or blackmail them by holding a loved one (perhaps a former wife) hostage. The Assamites may become too eager in their attacks, risking the Masquerade. A general call might go out for all Kindred to hunt the strange Kindred down. Alternately, the characters may become involved simply by being in the wrong spot at the wrong time.

The characters will have to deal with Assamite assassins, local police, and Secret Service agents. At the Storyteller's option, Naba tribesmen acting as bodyguards could be caught in the crossfire, or catch the characters in a crossfire between the tribesmen and the Assamites. It is unlikely Talaq is along on this trip. Depending on what the Storyteller intends for future stories, he may very well be present.

Blast From the Past

A Nabataean relic has been recovered from a millionaire's old attic. Archaeologists are studying it at the Museum of Natural History (or campaign equivalent). Talaq gets word of it and sends Naba warriors to recover it.

See #1 above for the means that the characters could become involved. They might also simply be innocent bystanders at the museum after hours when the Naba break in.

Complications can include Talaq himself along with the raiding party, Assamites on the trail of the Naba, security guards, and the item's mystical abilities — if the latter, any number of miscellaneous parties, particularly magi, might be trying to get the artifact as well. Alternatively, some sort of accident might unleash supernatural forces that could threaten everyone.

Pelt of Many Colors

The PLO has arrived in the campaign city, raising funds from Palestinian sympathizers. The Mossad are hot on their trail. The characters might become accidentally involved, the Prince might ask them to investigate these strangers, or the characters might have an Ally or Contact who is Palestinian. If the latter, the ally/contact comes to the character and tells them about an illegal interrogation by foreigners.

The PLO has sent several Lupines along to provide muscle for the PLO money-raisers. The Mossad operatives are well-armed and trained and include a Kabbalistic mage or two. An encounter between the characters and one of the parties, or both parties meeting with the characters in the middle, could provide a battle royal between Vampires, werewolves and mages.

The second type of Story is where the characters travel to Jordan. If your campaign takes place in the Middle East, then this is not a problem. More likely, your campaign takes place in the United States. A few examples of how to get your characters into Jordan are:

Free the Oppressor

As a result of the first Story above, Hussein ascertains that the characters are supernatural beings. The king believes the characters might be able to help him break Talaq's hold on Jordan.

The Storyteller can modify Hussein's mission based on the level of power of the group. Unless the Storyteller is feeling vicious, having Hussein ask the characters to infiltrate Petra is a bit extreme. However, Hussein might want a cabinet member Dominated to determine if he is under Talaq's influence. Or he might ask the characters to slip into Israel to contact this "Rambam" that Talaq fears so greatly.

Ugly Old Friends

If the campaign setting is Chicago, Khalid needs something delivered to Talaq as part of a correspondence. He will

certainly ask any Nosferatu characters, and ask the Nosferatu to appeal to their fellow characters.

The package could contain something relatively harmless (a chess move), and the delivery is a test by Khalid. Alternately, the package could contain valuable information that Khalid has gotten. Possibilities include a overheard rumor at Chicago's Israeli Embassy about a Mossad raid on Amman to capture a PLO terrorist cell, or news of PLO operations in Amman. If the latter, the characters could very easily have to run a gauntlet of Mossad agents, Kabbalah mages, PLO terrorists, and Arabic werewolves.



KEVIN
KAPPERT
"CRY ON THE FLOOR"

Hong Kong

Written by Ryan O'Rourke, Art by John Cobb

*Asia is not going to be civilized after the methods of the West.
There is too much Asia and she is too old.*

—Rudyard Kipling, *The Man Who Was*

1846

A crash of breaking glass disturbed the late-night silence of Queen's Road, followed by loud giggles from a band of urchins as they streaked a way from a shattered and sputtering street lamp. The gang scurried into Chinatown, elated with their crime, not seeing the tall, well-dressed figure who followed them past gambling dens, ramshackle temples emitting clouds of incense, dirty whores and stoop-shouldered old alchemists.

The hunter grimaced as several of the smallest boys leapt screaming into a pigsty and rolled about in the mud. Animals. They live in dirt, eat things God never intended be food, worship pagan gods. Immoral, unclean animals...

Pedder felt his Hunger reaching its peak as he moved quickly through the unseeing crowd. His prey, the eldest, was a strapping, muscular boy, naked to the waist, with rich vitae pumping through his veins.

A tingling in his spine ... Pedder froze, suddenly aware that he was not the only hunter stalking tonight. Another Kindred? Who dares violate my Domain? The other was short, dark-haired, dressed in robes and, Pedder realized with a shock, Oriental in features and complexion. Revolted yet fascinated, the English Vampire watched the newcomer speak quietly with the urchin and followed as they walked together into an alley behind a fortuneteller's.

Now he shall feed, thought Pedder. A long fingernail flashed across the boy's neck. Pedder stifled his Beast's hungry growls at the sight of the warm vitae oozing slowly from the small wound. The Chinese Kindred opened his mouth with a loud whooshing sound; immediately, the blood

arced through the air from the youth's neck and down the foreigner's throat.

Pedder's Beast growled again, this time in terror. *A Tremere?* he thought wildly, but he doubted that it was a Warlock trick. Observe him now, follow him to his Haven, and destroy him, Pedder decided as the blood poured forth in increasing torrents. The other's face began to glow a warm pink. He has not seen me...

The flow of blood abruptly ceased; the boy sank to the ground with a final shudder. Lazily, the robed Kindred turned, looked right at Pedder and licked his lips. His mouth split into a fiendish smile.

Pedder fled Chinatown, back to Victoria, all the way to his bungalow, pausing only to feed on a stumbling Indian merchant. The fat Punjee had smoked opium, and Pedder's panic ballooned from the effect of the drug. He shrieked at his servants, summoned his aides, sent out parties of burly dockworkers. But even when his ghouls reported four days later that the foreigner had been found and destroyed, the memory of the Chinese Vampire's smile refused to fade from his mind.

1992

Robert Pedder, Taipan of Hong Kong, gazed out his penthouse office window at the bright lights of Central District. The city was his, from the money that passed silently through the surrounding towers of steel and glass, to the ships rocking in the harbor, to the blood of the thousands of mortals who walked below, not daring to lift their eyes to meet their master's stare.

Even the other Kindred — Undead whose presence Pedder at first resented but came to tolerate — even they submitted to his will. Sometimes reluctantly, true, but those who defied the Taipan did not do so for long. Like that slum Caitiff whose latest indiscretion made the front page of the South China Morning Post ... Pedder scribbled a note to an aide.

Despite all his power and wealth, Pedder was uneasy. Blinking at him from across the harbor, the pink and blue neon of Kowloon disturbed him. Still farther north, beyond the New Territories, unseen but not unfelt, crouched the great dark mass of China, a huge dragon about to swallow the Taipan and his rich, fat city. In less than five years, the People's Republic would snatch one of the last jewels from Victoria's crown.

And there will be a new Prince, Pedder reflected. His arrangements were already made. In three years, or at most four, he would board his yacht, the *Able*, and be on his way to Europe. Back after so many decades ... He only hoped Europe would be far enough.

Pedder abruptly rose and headed for the elevator. He would be more comfortable in his old colonial bungalow. A highrise hotel had blocked his view of the harbor for several years now. For Pedder, that was just fine.



History of Hong Kong

Even before the barbarians of the West arrived in force, foreign ships off the south China coast were a familiar sight. Other Asians, Arabs, and Indians had been sailing to Guangzhou (Canton) to trade for centuries. In the sixteenth century the Portuguese trading colony of Macao was established in the region, and by the nineteenth all the great colonial powers of Europe, as well as the Americans, had profitable factory enclaves in Guangzhou itself.

Despite being China's only port that had any contact with the outside world, the Guangzhou delta and its associated islands were a remote backwater of the Chinese Empire. Communication lines to Beijing 1500 miles to the north were long, and organization at the clan and village level was more immediate than the decree of the Qing (Ch'ing) emperor.

The local population was sparse. Most land — island or mainland — was too mountainous to farm. Still, fishermen, stonecutters, herb gatherers, and a few rice farmers eked out an existence, following the Confucian traditions and worshipping deities both Buddhist and local.

During the first half of the 19th century (and later, too) British businessmen profited immensely from the nominally illegal trade in opium. Chests of the drug from India were exchanged for Chinese tea. Vice fed vice. This trade, in addition to cultural conflicts between the two nations, led to increasingly strained relations.

In 1839, matters came to a head when a newly appointed Chinese magistrate seized thousands of chests of opium and destroyed them. The Royal Navy opened fire on Chinese war junks, and Parliament had the excuse it needed to declare war on China.

Merchants had long been lobbying for a little military action to convince the Qing to loosen their restrictive trade policies. Some Kindred believe the Ventrue clan, long powerful in London, may also have supported the decision, hoping to uncover mystic secrets of the East under cover of British imperialism.

The war swiftly humiliated the Chinese. Successive victories by the Royal Navy forced the Imperial government to the bargaining table, and the local British official on the scene, Captain Charles Elliot, negotiated his own settlement: the annexation of the island of Hong Kong by the British Empire.

Many were critical of Elliot's action. The merchants were looking for a more general opening of China to foreign trade, and while Parliament was glad to gain a physical piece of China, its members had hoped for more — say, Taiwan. Hong Kong had an area of only 26 square miles; rocky and barren, it was inhabited only by a few thousand boat people.

Still, Hong Kong was close to Guangzhou and had an excellent deepwater harbor. On January 26, 1841, the Union Jack was raised on the shore, and the ceding of Hong Kong

to Britain was officially recognized in the Treaty of Nanking a year later.

Robert Pedder and others were to wonder afterwards if the influence of Eastern Kindred or geomancers had led Captain Elliot into extracting such a paltry ransom from China. But perhaps its seeming unimportance enabled the colony to survive well past the Victorian age, while other, prouder possessions were lost.

Certainly, Hong Kong's insignificance helped the immigrant Western Kindred survive unnoticed by their Eastern cousins long enough to firmly ensconce themselves in positions of power in mortal society. The Taipan and his allies were constantly on guard against Kindred infiltrating from the north, and over a dozen were exterminated or expelled during the first 50 years of colonization. Meanwhile, the British built up their enclave with all the imperial necessities: a palatial mansion for the Governor, a body of laws and bureaucracy, churches, clubs, hotels, an esplanade along the waterfront ... The population reached 100,000 before 1870, and 600,000 by 1920.

There were tensions in the colony. Government and business had a rivalry that continues today over importance, grandeur, wealth and status. Racial segregation was the rule until after World War II; occasionally anti-colonial sentiment in the Chinese majority flared into violence against Westerners. Despite racism and ill-treatment, many Chinese prospered and were more or less accepted by the white elite.

In 1860 England acquired Kowloon, the tip of China across the harbor. In 1898, more breathing room was added in the form of the New Territories, with an area of 390 square miles, increasing the colony's space tenfold. The New Territories were leased for the finite span of 98 years, and without them modern Hong Kong could not hope to survive. Though on paper Hong Kong and Kowloon are granted to the British crown forever, as a practical matter the New Territories lease started a long countdown to the end of the colony. Again, some Kindred believe the hidden hand of Chinese Vampires influenced the negotiations.

Trade continued with China; the great merchant houses of Hong Kong had a near monopoly on trade with the southern provinces. Around the turn of the century, additional concessions were wrung out of China by the foreigners, including more territory and increased footholds in the port of Shanghai. Indeed, Shanghai eclipsed Hong Kong in importance for a time; however, the new lands did not remain in foreign hands for long, and all Westerners were gone from Shanghai by 1949.

Kindred of the West attempted to establish Domains in the new ports, but on the mainland the Eastern Vampires were prepared and had strength of numbers. Only a few members of the Camarilla escaped with the knowledge and artifacts they sought; the rest, including powerful Elders, either perished outright or vanished without a trace.

Hong Kong was invaded and quickly conquered by the Japanese during World War II. A few thousand were killed, landmarks were destroyed, Europeans were held prisoner in Stanley and a shrine to the Japanese Emperor was erected. The Cainites then living in the colony feared vengeful Eastern Kindred would accompany the invading army. Some entered the earth to escape (rumor says a few sleep there still), but the threat proved false. If any Japanese Vampires came, they did not show themselves. Hong Kong was still relatively small and unimportant; its occupation probably cost the Japanese more than they gained.

It was after the war that Hong Kong began to truly live up to its potential. Reconstruction was rapid, and following the Chinese Revolution, refugees began to flow into the colony, including industrialists flush with capital. The Korean conflict and attendant embargo on trade with China threatened Hong Kong's primary means of support. Rather than suffer, the island turned to manufacturing (often sweatshop style) and finance, prospering more than ever.

As the number of refugees increased, the Vampire establishment of Hong Kong became hard-pressed to screen out any Eastern Kindred trying to slip into the colony. Few were discovered; certainly some must have made it. No one knows how many are now living secretly on the island; the Elders hope the number is small, and it seems likely that the Easterners are waiting for 1997 to make their move.

In 1984, the fourth Anglo-Chinese treaty on Hong Kong was signed after years of negotiation. The British agreed to hand over the colony to Chinese rule in 1997; for their part, the Chinese promised to preserve Hong Kong's capitalist society and economy for at least 50 years. Many of the colony's residents are skeptical and plan to take their money elsewhere. Not the least of those fleeing Hong Kong are many of the Kindred Elders, who also fear the arrival of mysterious Eastern Vampires.

Today, despite its uncertain future, Hong Kong stands as a monument to both the strengths and weakness of the entrepreneurial spirit of mankind. A modern city-state with one of the world's busiest harbors, every Western service and luxury is available (often duty-free) in an environment that has paradoxically sheltered traditional Chinese culture from the upheavals of the mainland. Vibrant, dynamic, with a dark and dirty underbelly, Hong Kong is an exciting setting for a great Vampire story.

A Walk Across Hong Kong

Central

A visitor to Hong Kong, arriving on a Star Ferry from the airport in Kowloon, would most likely disembark in the Central District, the downtown hub of commerce and finance. Giant office towers compete with luxury hotels for dominance over the skyline. Hundreds of thousands of workers swarm

down its sidewalks and over its pedestrian bridges and skywalks during the day. In many ways, Central seems to be made in the mold of any number of Western financial districts: Wall Street, the City in London. Still, there are reminders of the East: small Daoist temples tucked between skyscrapers, Buddhist hermitages on the top floors of office buildings, and the bamboo used for scaffolding during construction.

Central houses much of the apparatus of mortal government, like the parliamentary Legislative Council and countless bureaucratic boards and commissions regulating everything from zoning and banking to street vending and park usage. Hong Kong has never been democratic. The governor of the colony has ultimate, dictatorial authority; he can overturn decrees of the Legislative Council, ignore the advice of his Executive Council, and generally answer to no one except the Secretary of State in London.

Of course, matters are not quite so simple. Corruption is not only common, it is a way of life. Especially in the Gothic-Punk reality, everyone is for sale; the dollar speaks louder than the governor. Favors are traded between friends, family, and distantly related clan members; most individuals are at the center of a complicated net of obligation, payoff, graft and nepotism.

Central District is also home to the supernatural government. Robert Pedder, Prince of Hong Kong, hides his



administration in a nondescript and rather rundown office building off Murray Road. Pedder, a seventh generation Ventrue, was a British soldier Embraced in the late 17th century. He moved with the expanding frontiers of empire, and came to Hong Kong soon after its birth, following a mortal descendent out of curiosity. Pedder Street in Central is named after this descendent, the island's first harbor master.

Pedder, known locally as the Taipan, has shaped the growth of the colony throughout its history. Early on, he established a successful trading venture of his own and controlled the harbor operation and other merchant companies through selective Domination and blackmail. He is well known among other Princes and the high society of the Camarilla and is considered a contender for the office of Ventrue Justicar. Pedder played a major role in the great boom that Hong Kong experienced in the 1950s and 60s. His salesmanship and guarantees persuaded many Elders across the world to invest in the island's businesses and move their assets to Hong Kong's banks, where they would be safe from investigation.

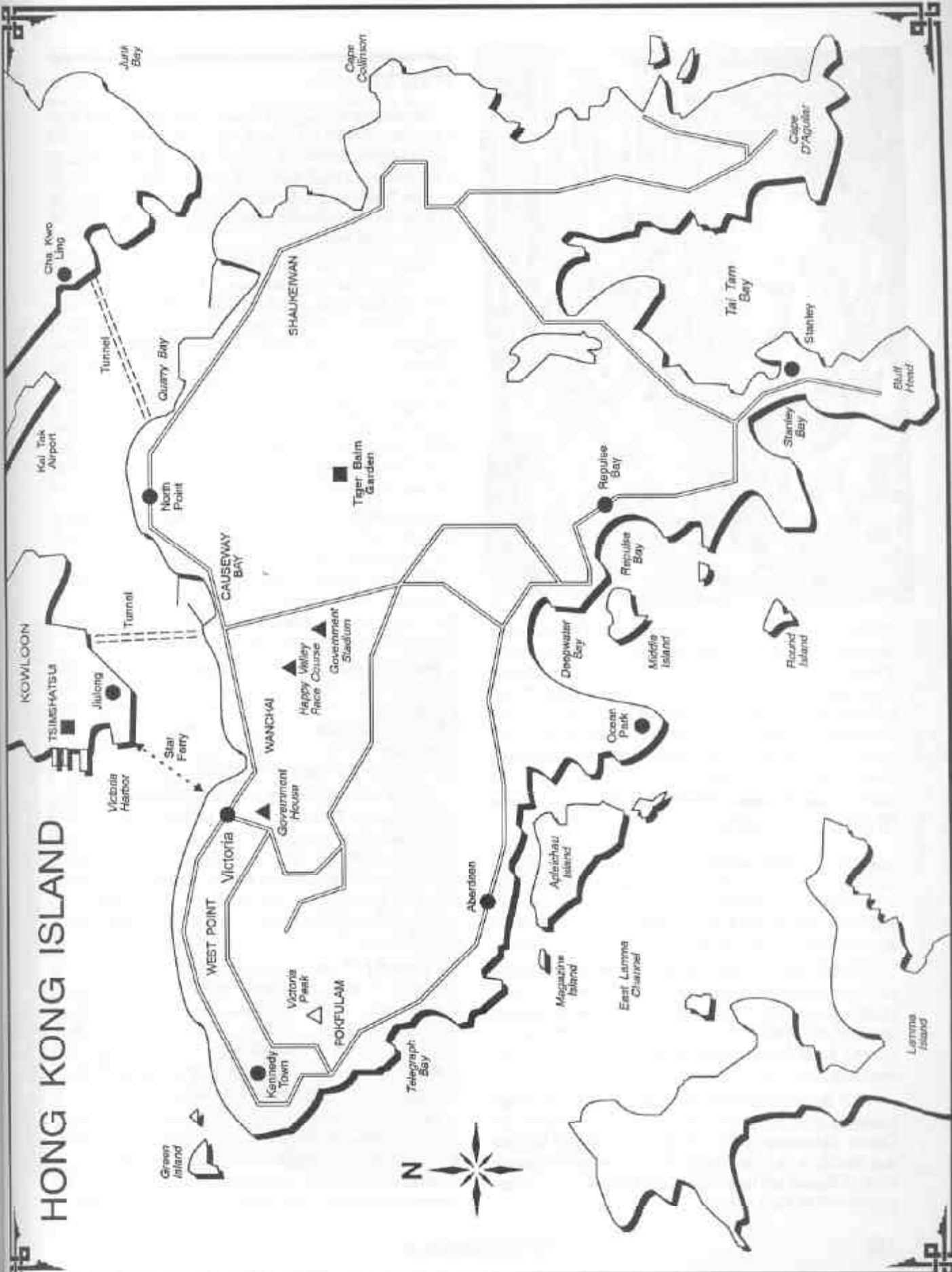
Today, the Taipan's influence is nearly omnipresent in the mortal community. His tendrils extend into the government, the underworld, religion, and especially shipping, finance, and commerce of all kinds. Hong Kong is one of the safest destinations for a Vampire who goes by freight; Pedder makes sure that no Cainite is uncrated in daylight by customs officials.

The Taipan has a fairly sizable Brood, all European, who help him administrate his empire. His most feared servants make up the infamous Ghoul Squad. These heavies, not all of whom are actually ghouls, go about during the day looking for Kindred who sleep on Hong Kong Island without the Primogen's permission. Despite its crowded condition, there have always been more Kindred seeking Havens on Hong Kong than the Elders feel the mortal population can support. The Taipan's Ghoul Squad has convinced many younger Licks that despite the threat of Eastern Kindred, Kowloon is a safer place to reside.

Pedder is a solid traditionalist, a proud citizen of the British Empire, tarnished and shrunken as it is today. He is often chided by other Elders for his preoccupation with mortal society and politics. He feeds only on non-white "natives"; for many years, he would not allow Kindred to create non-white Progeny. His racism has its root in fear of others. His fear of the Eastern Kindred is equaled only by his capitalist's hatred of the Chinese Communists.

Many tourist attractions can be found in Central, including Statue Square (which today holds only a single statue), a Cenotaph to the colony's war dead, and St. John's Cathedral. Haunting these places and their attendant gift shoppes is Gerald. Gerald is a Malkavian who plays the part of the ugly American tourist to the hilt. He always wears a flowered shirt and several cameras on neck straps.

HONG KONG ISLAND





Pedder and other Elders believe he is not as mad as he seems and is working for someone, perhaps even the Eastern Kindred. They would like to be rid of him, but the Ghoul Squad has never been able to locate his Haven, and if he is molested at night, he will scream for the police and the American consulate. Since Gerald is usually mingling in a crowd of real tourists, attempts to eliminate him always end when he starts a commotion.

Stories in Central

1: The characters, seeking wealth through some kind of business opportunity, meet with great initial success. However, they discover too late that a company they just took over was one of the Taipan's prize possessions. Was an Elder greasing the wheels for them as part of a plot to get at Pedder?

2: Gerald can be a great nuisance, popping up to snap a picture of a character engaged in the act of feeding, trying to haggle outrageously with a shopowner Kindred, or bringing a busload of mortals from Ohio for a "tour" of a character's Haven. Later he may prove to be dangerous as well as annoying.

3: If the characters are new arrivals in Hong Kong, according to Tradition they must Present themselves to the Taipan. In fact, the Taipan delights in having new Kindred sent directly to his office before they are uncrated, catching them off balance and impressing them with his power. Many players will be quite annoyed.

Wanchai

Standing on the edge of the harbor, less than a block from a Star Ferry terminal, is Hong Kong's proud new Convention and Exhibition Centre. All around it, along Harbour Road, sit other modern cultural buildings, like the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts; the Hong Kong Arts Centre, with galleries and performance halls; and the Museum of Chinese and Historical Relics.

Businessmen and tourists from across the globe wander the streets of Wanchai at all hours. Many seek nourishment, and, like most areas of the city, Wanchai contains a wide array of restaurants. Almost any imaginable cuisine is represented: Chinese (from a variety of regions), Indian, Japanese, Korean, Burmese, five-star French, English pubs, American fast-food ... Indeed, a visiting Parisian Toreador was heard to lament, "The sun — that I can do without. Agents of the Inquisition — I can live with them. But to never taste again *fois de gras*, or a fiery breast of tandoor chicken ... Ah! What good is immortality when one can taste only the chef and not his creations?"

For the gourmet Kindred, an international smorgasbord of mortal blood is most readily available a few blocks inland. The Convention Centre and attendant hotels are built on a landfill. To the south is a tightly-packed bar district, once the waterfront, where sailors on shore leave cut loose and the fictitious prostitute Suzy Wong plied her trade. Behind its glittering modern facade, Wanchai is home to the Rack.

The establishments run from the posh to the sleazy, but the emphasis is on sleazy. Massages and other services are available on the second stories of dirty hostess bars run by middle-aged Filipino women. Touts stand outside bars with names like the Pussycat and the Rumpus Room, tempting passersby with claims of the most beautiful girls in town.

These sorts of places are favored by Neonates, Anarchs, and other dregs of Kindred society. Most live in Kowloon or the southern New Territories but "commute" to Hong Kong Island regularly, like Chen, an ex-pimp Nosferatu. Chen sleeps in subway tunnels and construction sites in Kowloon but often returns to his mortal haunts. He is quite well informed about the bar district, its people, and its underground, from both his mortal life and Obfuscated snooping.

Although perhaps the most exclusive clubs are located in Central, Wanchai has its share of places that cater to a more sophisticated clientele. Joe Banana's, a bar and dance club whose DJs spin pop and classic rock tunes, sits on Luard Road. Kindred who prefer high-rollers to the trendy will find plenty of pinky-ringed VIPs sipping drinks by indoor fountains at Club Celebrity on Lockhart Road.

One common attraction is the karaoke bar. Originally a Japanese craze, sing-along bars are now popular throughout Asia. Patrons go up on stage and sing Chinese, Japanese, or Western songs (usually ballads), backed up by pre-recorded instrumental music. Setups range from laser disc players

complete with video screens displaying lyrics and light shows to simple cassette players with a microphone. Performance quality can be loud and drunken, but the singing creates camaraderie among all the patrons.

A Cainite of uncertain lineage and nationality, known only as Tom, is a well-known karaoke singer. He frequents a different bar every night, and not only is his voice superb, but his stage presence is electrifying. He often brings along his ex-mortal lover and Progeny, Carlos, to sing duets. Unfortunately, Carlos couldn't carry a tune if his Unlife depended on it.

Wanchai is the home of Hong Kong's Anarch community. Its outstanding member is Lin Jun. Born in northern China, Lin was already something of a sorceress when, while visiting Paris in 1909, she was taken by the Toreador in a plot against the Tremere. By the greatest of luck she survived, but has been fleeing ever since. The Tremere would like to see her dead; they regard her as a traitor and a thief of knowledge. But Lin is crafty and powerful in both Tremere magic and her own, unique sorcery. The Taipan refuses to help the Tremere hunt her, glad to see a thorn in the Warlocks' side.

Lin Jun is highly respected by the other Anarchs, especially those who know and understand her background. She is aloof and prefers to study magic rather than get involved in Kindred politics. If she were to choose a more active role,

many Anarchs would follow her; many young Licks are "into" mysticism and Chinese magic. However, her attitude is domineering and intolerant (after all, she was Embraced by a Toreador), and the younger Kindred would find her leadership chafing after a time.

Most of Hong Kong's Anarchs are also refugees, fleeing Blood Hunts or other persecutions. There are three prominent exceptions, all the Get of Robinson, whose Havens are in Wanchai. Kwan Sze is a fanatical Nationalist; his street gang has ties to both the Guomindang, the political party defeated by the Communists in 1949 and now ruling in Taiwan, and the 28K triad, which runs most of the prostitution in the city. Mai Lai claims to have royal blood (from the Ming dynasty); she is noted for her great beauty and sense of style. Will is a huge, strong Samoan who is infamous for making a trip to Guangzhou, well inside the Chinese border (and telling lies about hordes of red-eyed demonic Eastern Kindred). Although the three have divergent interests, they share a strong familial unity and look out for one another.

Relations between Anarchs, Taipan, and Elders have been quite strained in the past. The conflicts have commonly centered around political and racial lines. The last few years have seen an easing of tensions as 1997 approaches. The Taipan's hated restrictions on Havens in Hong Kong will disappear along with his rule (or so the Anarchs hope). For his part, Pedder sees no reason to risk himself opposing these Fledglings in his final years in the East. Elders who are not evacuating, like the Tremere, hope they can learn about the Eastern Kindred by observing their contact with the bar-crawlers of Wanchai. They see the Anarchs as a buffer between themselves and the unknown.

However, the Tremere may be in for a rude shock, if some of the rumors whispered in the dark alleys and abandoned warehouses of Wanchai are true. It is said that some of Hong Kong's Anarchs, particularly Robinson's Brood, have been in contact with the Easterners and have formed an alliance. With their help, the Anarchs believe they can overthrow the old order once and for all.

Stories in Wanchai

1: Tom invites the characters to a karaoke bar. Will they risk ridicule and sing? A group of Toreadors, come to hear Tom's stirring rendition of "Mack the Knife," try to kidnap Carlos in order to keep him from ruining the show.

2: Kwan Sze asks the characters for help. He and his gang are being watched by agents of the PRC. Is he just paranoid? Perhaps the watchers are reporting to the Taipan or other Elders about Kwan's relationship with Eastern Vampires, or perhaps they are Eastern Vampires themselves...

3: The characters need a spell or object to lift a curse, and only Lin Jun has it. Are they being used as cat's-paws by the Tremere as part of a plot to get at her?



Hollywood Road

Snaking through the Western District, following the curves of a hillside a half dozen blocks from the waterfront, is Hollywood Road. It is packed with curio shops, art dealers, and antique merchants, whose wares spill out onto the sidewalk. The goods range from tacky stone lions and bronze tigers suitable for lawn ornaments to fine paintings, pottery, and century-old furniture. Rarely, some of these shops may come into the possession of arcane artifacts or books of lore. One has to know who to ask, scams are common, and prices are extremely high for items of true value.

The shops on Hollywood Road close fairly early, but a different kind of merchandise can be found nearby at all hours. A stone staircase across from the Man Mo Temple leads to a narrow alley several blocks in length called Lascar Row, or the Cat Street Market. Originally known as the Thieves' Market, this alley was once the main area for fencing stolen goods. In Gothic-Punk Hong Kong, it retains that character. Beneath run-down rooming houses and the worst kind of brothels, sharp operators of all types hawk their wares on the cobblestone street. Their blankets are covered with cheap jade and salvaged junk for show. Not openly displayed but also for sale are guns, drugs, stolen merchandise, policemen, judges, ID cards, arm-breakers, second-story men, and information. *Caveat emptor...*



Cobb

The Man Mo Temple which stands at the entrance to Cat Street dates from early colonial times. It is dedicated to Man, the god of literature, and Mo, god of war. Less widely known is its strong association with the Ghosts of the Five Tigers triad. The head priest is usually one of the five triad leaders, and the triad headquarters is located in a warehouse immediately behind the temple.

The Ghosts of the Five Tigers, though they do control a piece of Hong Kong's illicit gambling action and "protect" the shopkeepers along Hollywood Road, are less a crime gang than an occult secret society. The Ghosts claim to have roots as far back as 10th-century Zhejiang province; today, their members (Chinese, as a rule) hold jobs and lead normal lives at all levels of society. Initiates learn martial arts and, at upper levels, ritual magic. The triad leaders, the Sons of the Five Tigers, are accomplished geomancers and know some extremely powerful rituals.

The goals of the Ghosts are not known to outsiders. They know of the Kindred (and perhaps other supernatural entities), try to stay out of their way, and expect the Kindred to do likewise. The Tremere scoff at their mystical abilities and regard the Ghosts as little more than a silly club, like the Masons. Indeed, the Ghosts have their share of hand signals and code phrases, and every member bears a tattoo of a pale tiger's paw.

There is one store, just off Hollywood Road, that is open only at night. It seems like any other apothecary, offering traditional Chinese medicines, herbs, and charms, but looks can be deceiving. Its proprietor, Gordon Smith, was once a London physician. At the end of a long life, he was Embraced by a Malkavian. Though quite sane in his early life, senility had taken its toll by the time of his Becoming.

Gordon moved to Hong Kong on the advice of his "friends," a family of dark faeries who have "adopted" him. He delights in their company, and is a willing accomplice in the practical jokes which the cruel and malicious faeries enjoy pulling. Often these jokes begin with an unusual potion sold to an unwitting customer, and can end in serious loss, injury or even death. In his senility, Gordon does not realize how thoroughly he has been Dominated.

Stories in Hollywood Road

1: A shopkeeper has a wonderful item but refuses to sell. The characters are approached by a powerful Kindred (The Baron or Aleksandra, see below) and promised a great reward if they can acquire it. If they try extortion or theft, they will have to deal with the Ghosts, to whom the shopkeeper pays protection money; in fact, their employer might really be using them to provoke the triad.

2: While shopping for an Uzi on Cat Street, a character is offered a "special health drink." The peddler disappears, and the drink turns out to be Vampire blood of an ancient vintage. Where did it come from, and why is it for sale? Perhaps an Elder is trying to Blood Bond the characters.

3: (from outside HK) A faerie ally of the characters is captured by Gordon's dark family. To end their friend's torment, the characters must find and deal with the mad Malkavian.

Aw Boon-haw Gardens

Off Tai Hang Road, near Causeway Bay, lies a labyrinth of cement grottos, rocks, and stairways, grotesque plaster statues, and garish multicolored wall carvings that illustrate the torments awaiting sinners in Hell. The builder of this monstrosity was Aw Boon-haw, a millionaire who made his fortune from the sale of Tiger Balm. His statue stands at the top of the highest fake boulder, looking down on his Asian Xanadu. The grounds are completed by a swimming pool and a few more conventional flower gardens.

Aw Boon Gardens are closed at night, but the guard has been Dominated so often that he lets Kindred enter with barely a second glance. Anarchs enjoy partying at poolside, and crueler Cainites have been known to release prey inside and hunt them through its warrens.

A small cave near Aw Boon-haw's statue, in an off-limits area, is the Haven of Subitai, a sixth-generation Nosferatu. Subitai was a Mongol chieftain, noted for his ferocity even by other Mongols. He was Embraced in Poland during the 13th century. Subitai wandered the world, then settled down in the gardens soon after their completion in 1935; it pleases him to live in a place even uglier than he is. Subitai's travels and age have dulled the raw edge of his anger, but he has felt his temper rising at the loud intrusions on his Haven by younger Kindred.

Subitai hunts in a squatter's camp on the hillside near the Gardens. Public housing projects were constructed in the 50s, providing shelter for the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Communist oppression, but the Taipan did not wish to see such prime hunting grounds go to waste. He blocked construction of enough tenements that a half-dozen good-sized shantytowns remain, allowing the Vampire population of Hong Kong to be slightly higher than normal.

The refugee slums are places of squalor and despair. Here are the old and sick, waiting to die; children born in camps and knowing no other existence; the lame and the blind; scavenging dogs, scavenging mortals. Some have jobs, but most are on welfare. Sanitation is practically nonexistent.

Not least among the afflictions of these camps are the half dozen or so Caitiff that live and hunt in their confines. A few may have been Embraced by other Caitiff, but most were Sired by George Robinson. Robinson, a British Brujah, knew the Taipan before Pedder arrived in Hong Kong. Robinson came to the island around the turn of the century, at the Taipan's invitation. For years Robinson was a strong ally, and helped Pedder consolidate his power over new Kindred arrivals.

At the same time, Robinson developed a growing admiration for the Chinese people and culture. He began collecting

porcelains, learning Cantonese, and making friends among the native intelligentsia. The racist Taipan tolerated his friend's new obsession, even allowing him to create some Chinese Progeny. After the Chinese revolution, though, Robinson became a Communist and the relationship soured.

By 1960, Robinson was calling for a simultaneous revolution against both Kindred and kine authority. He gained a few allies, mainly among the small Anarch community of Kowloon. However, his support quickly evaporated, and the Taipan gave him a choice: exile or destruction.

Robinson left for Macao, but came back in 1967, at the height of Cultural Revolution-inspired anti-British riots. He posed as one of the thousands of new refugees fleeing the new terror in the north, in order to arrive unnoticed. He spent a month in the camps, and, taking a page from the Sabbath's book, Embraced as many refugees as he could. Robinson's attempt to create an army of proletariat Kindred failed. The riots died down, a Blood Hunt was quickly called, Robinson was destroyed, and most of his inexperienced Caitiff were slain within a few years.

Since then, the Taipan has encouraged all Cainites to hunt and destroy the remaining Caitiff. The few remaining are the strongest and wildest. Young Kindred still occasionally stalk them, hoping to drink the blood of an earlier Generation. Many of these would-be practitioners of Diablerie have met



Cobb

their Final Deaths at the claws of the dirty, depraved, and desperate Caitiff of the slums.

Stories in Aw Boon-Haw and Refugee Camps

1: Toreador generally despise the Gardens; many feel physically ill when viewing their garish splendor. One Toreador (a player or Storyteller character) has an epiphany in the Gardens one night and starts claiming that the vulgarity of the depictions of Chinese hell only enhances their artistic value. Her bold statements create a crisis in the Toreador community, with most Artistes vehemently denying the worth of the Gardens and the Poseurs trying to turn the dispute to their advantage. Can a new trend be started?

2: The Taipan and other Elders suspect Subitai serves Eastern masters. At the very least, he traveled in China in the teens and 20s, and may have valuable information. They send a young Nosferatu character, with or without the character's knowledge, to try to get in the cranky Mongol's good graces and find out more.

3: A character or mortal friend of a character receives word that a long-lost relative is living in a refugee camp. The relative is frightened of a dark figure that seems to be following him at night. When the characters encounter some of the refugee Caitiff, will they take pity or be tempted by the lure of Amaranth? Are the old mortal bonds of family strong, or will new ties be forged in the world of the Kindred?

The Jockey Club

At three in the afternoon every weekend, thoroughbreds thunder down the track at the Happy Valley racecourse, nestled in between the island's two hills and overlooked by ancestral graveyards. Races have run on the site since the earliest days of the colony. Staggering sums are gambled daily; rich and poor alike are obsessed with horse racing.

But while the poor pack the bleacher seats, the rich watch their ponies run above the masses in the luxurious surroundings of the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club. The Jockey Club is a social center for Hong Kong's powerful elite. Its twelve stewards are retired multimillionaire merchant kings. Its multiple restaurants and bars are packed with bankers, government bigwigs, visiting dignitaries and shipping magnates making deals over their cigars and brandy. It is said that the Jockey Club is the true seat of government in Hong Kong.

Indeed, one quiet room on the top floor is the primary meeting place of the Primogen of Hong Kong. In addition to the Taipan (who can often be found at the Club gambling on Wednesday night races), the Primogen includes the Tremere Aleksandra, the Toreador known as the Baron, the Nosferatu Subitai, and, when he cares to attend, the Gangrel Gwyedd.

Hong Kong's Primogen functions much like any other. The Elders have divergent interests and rarely step on each

others' toes; they are united by concern for enforcing the Masquerade. There have been a few squabbles over the granting of Hong Kong Havens to favored Ancilla, as well as arguments between Pedder, Aleksandra, and the Baron over possession of occult books and items recovered from the mainland. The impending evacuation by Pedder, the Baron, their cronies, and other Kindred has lessened the friction in both areas, although the Baron fears that the Tremere may try to steal some of his collection just before he leaves. Their departure is sure to change the structure of the Primogen, and the Tremere plan to grab most of the power while they can.

The Jockey Club is part of the Elysium. Other places in Hong Kong off limits for feeding or conflict include the City Hall and Hong Kong Club in Central, the Hong Kong Arts Centre in Wanchai, the University of Hong Kong in Western District, the Victoria Peak Gardens, and, unusually, a hotel: the Mandarin Oriental, 5 Connaught Road, in Central. Opened in 1963, the Mandarin is elegant, refined, discreet, and blessed with excellent service. It has a reputation as one of the best hotels in the world. Important emissaries from the Camarilla and visiting friends of the Elders usually ride out the day in its tasteful rooms. The hotel manager has some knowledge of the nature of these visitors, and personally ensures that his "special guests" have a safe and pleasant stay.

Other big hotels, the Convention Centre, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, and



other centers of business and commerce are not officially part of the Elysium, despite the Taipan's many requests. However, Kindred who hunt excessively in such places or do anything to disrupt the flow of money into and out of the colony will face the Taipan's wrath.

Certain institutions in Kowloon on the mainland (the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, the Science Museum, the Chinese University, and the Hong Kong Museum of History) are nominally part of the Elysium. The Elders rarely make the trip, due to fear of Chinese Vampires. Still, these places are under the protection of the Primogen, and lesser Kindred tend to respect their sanctity.

Stories at the Jockey Club

1: The characters, perhaps with criminal backgrounds, bet on a sure thing at the racetrack. Amazingly, their fix fails; a bigger fix was in. Is an Elder at work?

2: The manager from the Mandarin has a problem: a tabloid reporter keeps bothering staff and snooping about Suite 666. Here's the chance for the characters to do the Taipan a favor, and perhaps meet a Justicar or other Camarilla bigshot. Can they deal with the tabloid reporter without endangering the Masquerade?

3: If the characters have Status in the Camarilla or serve the Prince of another city, there are any number of matters they could be sent to discuss with the Elders of Hong Kong: sightings of Asian Vampires, business deals, or the pursuit of a wanted fugitive.

Victoria's Peak

A view of Hong Kong Island from a boat in the harbor is dominated by the twin hills which soar above the water, studded with high-rise condos and squat tenements. The western hill is the highest, both literally at 788 feet and figuratively as the most elite residential district in the colony; it remained whites-only until well into the 20th century.

Victoria's Peak can be reached by road or by the Peak Tram, which departs from near St. John's Cathedral in outlying Central District and runs all night.

A walk around Harlech and Lugard Roads, which circle the Peak, offer breathtaking panoramic views of the city and harbor as well as glimpses of bungalows and mansions set back in the greenery. Among the millionaire philanthropists, movie stars, drug lords and bank presidents that dwell in these rarified surroundings are the Havens of the most powerful Kindred of Hong Kong.

Just off Lugard is Skyhigh, the palatial Haven of Baron Tomas Essex. The Baron, as he is commonly called, is a Sixth-Generation Toreador. He is known as a patron and collector of the arts in the mortal community; the extent of the collection stored in his neo-Moorish fortress would stun any human dealer who knew. For the Baron, collection is a

mania; he will collect anything, of any value, without much regard for artistic quality or rarity (though some of his possessions epitomize both). His vaults hold so much treasure that he employs three full-time assistants who catalogue and care for it all — and appreciate it for him, some say. The Baron's Lineage includes talented artists and performers, two of whom live at Skyhigh.

A much lower-key but still large bungalow on the south side of the Peak houses the Tremere Chantry. The ranking member is known only as Aleksandra, a magician of great skill and iron will. Her powers have increased with knowledge gained during nearly a century of dwelling in the Far East. She is one of the Tremere's best outside Vienna, for the Clan views the "Eastern problem" as one of the utmost importance. Whether the Eastern Kindred are a threat to Clan Tremere's plans of domination or can be used to further them, the Clan Elders will not be caught flat-footed.

Accordingly, they have chosen a plan of strength and have been slowly building up their presence in Hong Kong with an eye towards '97. They plan to have at least a half dozen potent Kindred waiting to greet the Easterners. Currently, Aleksandra has two lieutenants: Franklin Reece and Beatrix Bijou. Aleksandra favors Franklin, but he secretly covets her position and would not hesitate to embarrass or upstage her before the Elders. Beatrix is loyal, but thinks Aleksandra may be too traditional and inflexible to deal with the unknown Easterners.

Much of the summits of the two hills are part of four connected country parks. Roaming their ancient paths and rocky slopes is the shaggy form of Gwyedd. A Gangrel of the Fifth Generation, Gwyedd is so reminiscent of the Beast that he has been mistaken for a Lupine at first glance. Other Cainites stay out of these parks, for Gwyedd is believed to require Kindred blood for sustenance. True or not, the ancient Gangrel has a mean streak a mile wide and does not appreciate intruders.

Lesser Gangrels can make their Havens in Victoria Park in Causeway Bay, the Zoological and Botanical Gardens near Central, or in various golf courses and cricket pitches. Most choose to prowl in the New Territories, nearly half of which is parkland.

Stories on Victoria's Peak

1: The characters have a work of art suitable for sale to the Baron. One of his assistants denounces it as a forgery. Is The Baron trying to cheat them, or were the characters ripped off by their dealer?

2: An enemy of the characters tricks them into going into one of the hilltop parks, where they will find out firsthand if the rumors of Gwyedd's Diablerie are true.

3: If the characters are Tremere, they could be sent to Hong Kong to strengthen the Chantry. Alternatively, they could be sent by another clan (like the Ventruie) to keep an eye on the Warlocks.

The South Side

Behind the hills lies a more undeveloped and sparsely-populated countryside. The village and harbor of Aberdeen have been modernized and now include amusement parks and brilliantly lit floating restaurants. In the even more overpopulated Gothic-Punk Hong Kong, additional urbanization has taken place.

But even in this dark world, scenes of natural beauty abound on the South Side. Stanley remains a small fishing village, its only tourist attraction a street market where designer-label counterfeits are sold. Sandy beaches are packed with bathers on weekends; small coves, once pirate hideouts, line the shore. Outside of Aberdeen, the nightlife is minimal; few Kindred can be found.

One exception is Virginia Brown. Embraced in the 19th century while still a teenager, this Brujah fled New York City after the Sabbat takeover. Now she seeks Golconda in an unused maintenance shed adjoining the butterfly house in Ocean Park, Aberdeen. An unlikely location in which to seek salvation, perhaps, but Virginia has nearly reached the end of her quest.

Another Cainite who frequents the South Side is Lars Thorwald. A Gangrel with a mystical bent, he has been hoping to make contact with a tribe of sea sprites who sometimes play and dance in a cove near St. Stephen's Beach. Since the faeries only appear during the day, and even then only rarely, Thorwald's mission has not been easy. On auspicious days, he dresses from head to toe in heavy clothing and risks serious burns by going to the cove just before twilight. So far, the shy faeries have avoided him.

Staying at the resort in Repulse Bay are three agents of the People's Republic of China. Posing as sport-fishing enthusiasts and business consultants from America, their assignment involves tracing the complicated financial webs that link the big banks, merchant houses, and government agencies. Although they have no knowledge of any supernatural beings, they have begun to realize that vast portions of Hong Kong's wealth are controlled by one or more behind-the-scenes operators (the Taipan). The agents are potentially highly trained witch-hunters with vast resources behind them, should they stumble onto the existence of Vampires. So far, neither Kindred nor Kine suspects their true identity, unless they are known to Vampires of China.

Stories on the South Side

1: Characters with an interest in faeries might hear about the sea sprites and decide to investigate. Undoubtedly they will encounter Thorwald. Will he welcome their aid or resent their interference? Can the benign faeries find common ground with the Undead?

2: The characters reveal themselves to the Chinese agents, who have been watching them in their service to the Taipan's

financial empire. They will be in serious trouble, and might find themselves captured and sent to Beijing for study.

3: While seeking Golconda, the characters might hear about Virginia and ask her for aid and advice. She would be much easier to locate than a member of the Inconnu.

Islands

Hong Kong Island is part of an archipelago of over two hundred islands. Most are small, rocky, and uninhabited. Others are home to fishermen and Hakka boat people who anchor their sampans (small, two-oared fishing skiffs) in tiny harbors.

Some of the larger islands are popular weekend getaway spots, with beach resorts, lover's nests for rent, and open-bar pleasure cruises on the way. By far the most outstanding pleasure island is Macao. The earliest European stronghold along the China coast, Macao is distant from Hong Kong, but high-speed hydrofoil ferries make the trip a short one. The main attractions of the tiny island are its casinos. Other than horse racing, gambling is illegal in Hong Kong itself; the rich and desperate who seek high stakes flock to Macao's carpeted roulette rooms daily.

As a Portuguese possession, Macao has historically been a refuge for those who have difficulty with the Hong Kong authorities. The Taipan has a few agents there to keep an eye on things, but his rule, too, does not reach Macao, and Kindred fleeing his wrath have been known to hole up there. Veronique d'Orleans has done just that. An ally of Robinson's during the 60s, this beautiful Brujah has since become disillusioned with socialism. She still maintains some ties with Robinson's brood and will undoubtedly be a major player in the scramble for power following the Taipan's departure; she may even be in contact with Chinese Kindred.

Of a different character entirely is the holy island of Lantau. Several Buddhist monasteries and convents are located on its slopes. The grandest is the Po Lin Monastery, complete with a 34 meter high bronze Buddha and roller rinks in the nearby Tea Gardens. The last few remaining Chinese Trappists dwell in the more modest Trappist Haven of Our Lady of Joy on Lantau. (A branch of the Christian Cistercian order founded in France, Trappists live extremely ascetic lives and take a vow of silence.) It is rumored that an ancient Malkavian lives among their silent ranks, selling milk and cookies to tourists.

On a tiny, barren island near Lantau is a small cave which shelters Cassius, a Nosferatu Inconnu. Cassius' Obfuscate is difficult for even an Antediluvian to penetrate, one reason he was chosen to observe the expected arrival of the Eastern Kindred in '97. He lives off the blood of fish and seabirds and has no contact with the lesser Cainites of Hong Kong, although he has aided Virginia in her quest for Golconda.

Ferry services run regularly between the major islands. Those who put to sea in a wind-powered boat — yacht or junk — could encounter the ghostly vessel of T'o Ngoh. A

pirate captain who met his end at the guns of the Royal Navy in the late 19th century, T'o Nghoh still cruises the waters of the Pearl River Delta with a crew of ghostly buccancers. Nghoh can magically take the wind out of a ship's sails, and when his shimmering war-junk approaches, most mortals are literally frozen with terror. His pirates then board and rob the numbed passengers.

Of course, the ghosts have no use for material wealth, but they act out the behavior patterns learned in life. Nghoh and his men will recognize jewelry, cargoes like sugar or drugs, and even paper money as loot, but credit cards, electronic goods, and other 20th century wealth are ignored. The pirates usually only attack vessels with non-Chinese crews and passengers. Nghoh is especially hostile to European military or naval personnel, who would be unlikely to survive an encounter.

Victims are unable to remember exactly what happened, only that they fell asleep and awoke to find their wallets empty. Dreams of distant cannon fire, grappling hooks, and pale, sword-waving Chinese are sure to haunt them for weeks.

Stories On Other Islands

1: A millionaire invites the characters for a cruise on a yacht. T'o Nghoh attacks, and the characters are helpless against the ghosts. The players have an incentive to learn more about local history, legends, and folk magic: there is a festival on Cheung Chao island during which huge towers of sweet buns are built to keep away ghosts, and also a "hungry ghosts" festival on August 23. If any characters are beautiful women or young boys, they might be taken as booty, leading to a rescue attempt. But where do phantom buccancers make their hideout?

2: The characters might go to Macao for many reasons as a messenger to Veronique from the Anarchs, or as a spy for Pedder. A trip to Macao is an excellent opportunity to get them even more tangled up in Kindred intrigues. The Taipan will certainly suspect them of working with the Anarchs, even if they just wanted to gamble and do not know about Veronique. Macao is also the logical place for Eastern Kindred to contact them, offering positions of power in return for aid in '97.

Geomancy

Geomancy, the art of feng shui (wind and water), is a common part of life in Hong Kong. Part animism, part engineering, part superstition and part community activism, feng shui deals with the balance between the artificial and the natural, yin and yang, in order to keep the earth spirits happy and farm animals healthy. Even the most affluent banker must consult a geomancer during the design of his new branch office; if the construction disturbs the feng shui, workers will walk off the job and customers will stay away.



Geomancy is quite complicated in its practical application. A geomancer may declare that a building must face in a certain direction, that a certain number of windows must be placed on the south side, that sewer lines must run under this ridge and not that one; colors, proportions, shapes and angles may all be dictated. Geomancy is handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation; in recent years, many geomancers have become secularized, without any real supernatural knowledge. Some even use computers.

Still, a few can use the disciplines of *Auspex* and *Thaumaturgy*. Common paths include Geomancy (described below), *Spirit Thaumaturgy*, *Weather Control* and *Neptune's Might*. Most powerful geomancers hide their true knowledge, and will only create permanent enchantments for astronomical costs, a good cause, or both.

There are many other forms of religion in Hong Kong. Buddhism is common. Buddhism, founded in ancient India, has many believers of different creeds, sects, and nations; Buddhism teaches that the material world is a trap, a distraction that prevents spiritual development. Reincarnation binds a soul to material existence, and is not necessarily a reward. While some Buddhist individuals might possess a Faith rating, the religion seems unlikely to produce either witch-hunters or spellcasters (although you never know). If you wish to add more magic and mystery to a local religion, try the worshippers of Tin Hau. Tin Hau is a god who protects those who make their living from the sea: fishermen, sailors, windsurfers, etc. On an island territory, obviously, Tin Hau

has a lot of believers. Even the smaller islands in the archipelago have a temple dedicated to him, and there are at least a half dozen Tin Hau shrines on Hong Kong itself.

Geomancy Path

A geomancer may bless or curse an individual (Kindred or kine), raising or lowering the recipient's difficulty numbers on all rolls associated with a specific Trait. For a blessing — making the recipient luckier — the geomancer must roll his Intelligence + Manipulation against the Trait + 2; to place a curse on an unwilling victim, the difficulty number is the Trait and is resisted by the victim's Willpower. If successful, the difficulty numbers for all the target's actions using that Trait are raised or lowered by the number of successes on the casting roll. The geomancer must spend a Willpower point whether he succeeds or fails.

Example: A geomancer wishes to help a 98-pound weakling survive a fire. The geomancer must match her Intelligence + Manipulation of 7 against the weakling's Stamina of 1 + 2 for a difficulty of 3. She gets 4 successes, and whenever the weakling must make a Stamina roll (Soak, for example) his difficulty number is reduced by 4. Note that only the difficulty numbers, not the Trait itself, are affected. The weakling may only roll one die to Soak, and his opponents still only need to roll against a 4 (his Stamina + 3) in order to inflict damage on a hit. He's probably still going to bleed quite badly.

Difficulty numbers can never be raised above 10 by a geomantic curse. If the Trait is a Knowledge, the difficulty to recollect a particular fact is not affected, but research or other active processes are. The duration of the effect is up to the Storyteller's discretion but generally should not last longer than a scene. Physical contact (or Telepathy) is required. With each step in the path, the ability to affect different traits is gained:

- Resistance to magic — affects Willpower only
- ** Any social Attribute
- *** Any physical Attribute
- **** Any Talent
- ***** Any Attribute or Ability

Geomancy Rituals

Geomancers may use any Thaumaturgical ritual they can learn, but they also have their own unique rites which give permanence to their blessings and curses. Botched rolls on rituals lead to no spectacular results but mean that all material preparations must be started from scratch. The cost for these preparations can run into the thousands or even millions of dollars for a large building.

Protect the Tomb — 1st level

A gravesite must be dug or constructed in a proper location, with appropriate materials, and by selected workers.

After a body is interred, the geomancer conducts a three-hour ritual, burning incense and inscribing the grave with symbols. Any later attempt to affect the dead mortal's spirit (through Spirit Thaumaturgy or other means) has its difficulty increased by 5. If the grave is physically altered or defaced, the protection will be lowered according to the extent of the damage. (This ritual has no effect on a Kindred or her Haven).

Ward Magic — 2nd level

Through this ritual, the caster can create a charm for a specific person that will protect that person from hostile magic. The geomancer must construct a piece of jewelry, usually an amulet, from expensive or rare materials (one recipe calls for gold, ivory, birds' eggs, and ground crocodile teeth). Then in a 15-minute rite, the charm is attuned to its wearer. The geomancer rolls for successes as if blessing the wearer under the first step of the path. The charm bearer will be protected by the number of successes for up to two weeks. Removing the charm breaks the spell.

Curse of the Outcast — 3rd level

This curse is powerful and long-lasting. The geomancer must collect a piece of paper touched by the victim daily for 10 days — any paper will do. Each day, the geomancer must spend an hour writing on the paper, which is then burned. On the 11th day, during which the geomancer must fast, a 12-hour ritual is performed in the geomancer's workshop. At its conclusion, the caster rolls against the victim's highest Social Attribute (resisted normally by Willpower), and the victim's difficulty number for all social actions is increased by the number of successes. The curse is visible in a victim's aura. It will gradually fade at the rate of about a point a month, or more quickly if the victim leaves the geomancer's community, where the effect is strongest.

Harmonize Building — 5th level

A potent enchantment, with this ritual a geomancer can lower the difficulty numbers for a certain Trait for all individuals who use a certain building. The geomancer must be involved from the planning stages of construction and take elaborate steps to properly site the building in the feng shui; for structures bigger than a small house, assistants are required. The geomancy will add approximately 50 percent to both the time and cost normally required for the construction, plus the geomancer's fee. The selected Trait must reflect the building's function. For example, a stock exchange might be harmonized to lower the difficulty of all Finance rolls.

Reports of The Chinese Vampires

I first saw one of the blighters in August, 1922, in Shanghai right off the Bund. We were on our way to meet an old Fu Manchu type in the Old Town about an ancient mirror; our resident Oxford sort thought it might be something he'd read

about in some dusty tome. We always travelled in strength in those days. There were plainclothed sepoy — native troops — all around our carriage, a loyal sidekick of mine and a few Neonates riding up front. Well, they jumped us and gave us a good wolloping. Mostly mortals who looked just like the common Chinaman until they had their knives in our sepoy and the Neonates. The carriage burst into a huge ball of flame, I don't know how, and I beat a hasty retreat to the Embassy. I saw one of them near the burning carriage. It was tall, with some kind of strange headdress and an awful, demonic red face. No, I'm sure it wasn't a mask.

Well, I pulled out a few years later after a few more such incidents. The Tremere captured one in '25 or so. It would only say that it was the Third Judge of the Afterworld and would get us on the other side or some such nonsense. It didn't seem to feel hunger for vitae, at least not for the fortnight the warlocks managed to hold it. It got loose, and they had to kill it before it wrecked their Chantry.

— Charles Farthington, Clan Ventrué, overheard in a private club in London

...research in folklore continues to be unfruitful. We have established that the Records of Strange Things were definitely altered sometime between the 12th and 14th centuries. We suspect that the Eastern Vampire society has been slower to change, at least until recently, as my predecessor indicated. There is much room for error, but the data we have suggest that Chinese Kindred do not create as many Progeny as those of the Camarilla are wont to do. Whether this is due to stricter social control or some unknown physical/supernatural shortcoming is not clear... We have devised a new model to account for the Thaumaturgy known by the Chinese Kindred. They seem to have a tightly controlled hierarchy, complete with flowery official titles. It is misleading to focus exclusively on the resemblance of this hierarchy to Chinese mortal bureaucracy. We propose that they "administer" the spirit world instead, and this is the basis for their practice of magic. If this model is correct, certainly their knowledge will prove quite useful to the Clan; it may help us master spirits once and for all.

— excerpt from a report from Aleksandra to the Council of Elders in Vienna

...ai ai yai! Spare me your silly woman's gaspings. For someone educated in the heartland of European civilization you are superstitious and naive. You see what you wish to see, what your culture has taught you to expect. A hooded figure at a roulette table, a strange smell and a glimpse of a fox's head under the hood, the ball falling on double zero with each spin...Aha! The alien, mysterious, demonic Other, so different from you! How eagerly you lapped up his whisperings of alliance!

Don't be surprised, Vero, if when your new friends arrive in '97, they throw back their hoods and turn out to be normal, everyday children of Cainé like you and me. Don't be surprised if they did it all with incense, masks, and magnets...

— excerpt from a rant by Kwan Sze directed at Veronique d'Orleans

Hong Kong Facts and Figures

Total Population: Six million. On Hong Kong Island itself there are just over two million residents.

Population Distribution: 98 percent Chinese, 1 percent other Asian, 1 percent European and American. The Chinese population is young (25 percent under 24 years old); about half were born in Hong Kong. Four main races are represented: Punti (Cantonese), Hoklos, Hakkas, and Tankas.

Kindred Population: 22 on Hong Kong Island (plus about five slum Caitiff), 20 or more on the mainland.

Currency: The Hong Kong dollar (\$HK), which is pegged to the US dollar. 7.5 SHK = 1 SUS

Language: English is the language of government; most street signs, etc. are printed in both English and Cantonese (a southern Chinese dialect). The Asian majority speak either Cantonese or another dialect; many also speak at least a little English, especially if well-educated or it is useful in their jobs (i.e. taxi driver, shopkeeper).

Transportation to Hong Kong: By ship to Victoria Harbour, by train from Guangzhou (and points beyond), or by plane to Kai Tak Airport in Kowloon.

Transportation within Hong Kong: By car (left-hand drive, and traffic is awful), subway and bus, or taxi (taxis are plentiful and rather cheap). The famous rickshaw is almost completely extinct. The Star Ferry crosses the harbor between Tsim Sha Tsui (in Kowloon), Central, and Wanchai regularly, 24 hours a day. There is also a cross-harbor tunnel for cars.

Additional Traditions of the Taipan:

Thou shalt not cross the border into China, nor take any action nor speak any words which might antagonize our Eastern cousins.

Thou must report any sightings, knowledge, or encounters with our Eastern cousins to thine Elders without delay.

Chronicle Notes

If you are already running a Chronicle and wish to incorporate a story or two in Hong Kong, there are many ways to introduce the island to your players. If your characters are already mobile (as in a Wanderers or Refugees type of Chronicle), Hong Kong is a logical stopover point for Kindred travelling across the Pacific region because of its geographical location and the safety offered by the Taipan's control of shipping and air travel.

In each area of the colony which is detailed in this guide, one of the story suggestions is specifically geared towards a campaign which is set elsewhere. Some of these hooks

provide motivation for only a single Story; others could provide the transition for a whole new phase of your Chronicle.

If you do decide to set a Chronicle in Hong Kong, whether as a continuation of a previous game or with a brand-new set of characters, it will be necessary for you to do the work described in Chapter Eight of the *Vampire* rulebook.

Much of the setting for your Hong Kong Chronicle is already described for you in this guide. A travel book, such as *Fodor's Hong Kong*, will fill in many blanks. Maps and more information can be obtained from the Hong Kong Tourist Association. The HKTA can be reached at 590 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10036; there are additional HKTA offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago.

If you are starting with new characters, consider restricting them to a single clan. A Tremere group has potential, but free-willed players would become restless. One of the Taipan's lieutenants could have created the characters in order to help her take Pedder's place as Prince following his departure. If the players want to run Chinese characters, mortal clan or triad ties could unify them. If your players don't mind being dirty and downtrodden, they could take the roles of the slum Caitiff seeking to better their lot.

The plan for your Chronicle depends on your concept, but in any set of Stories, 1997 looms in the future. Make sure

your players never forget that no matter what they accomplish, the Eastern Kindred may come screaming in like demons from hell and destroy everything. What really happens is entirely up to you — they might infiltrate slowly, or not even show up at all — but the players should feel pressured to prepare whatever defenses they can. As the various factions of Elders and Anarchs, Chinese and Europeans scramble for advantage, the characters will have to take sides sooner or later.

Hong Kong is a city of contrasts, and these contrasts can be made into powerful themes and motifs. The overarching conflict between East and West can be trite if you draw it too heavily. Look for smaller contrasts, like rich versus poor, superstition versus science, efficiency versus tradition, technology versus art, and differing concepts of the relationship between individual and community. These contrasts can illustrate the East/West dichotomy or contradict it (there are plenty of rich Chinese and superstitious Westerners).

Life in Hong Kong has a frantic, chaotic quality to it which you may wish to reflect in your Chronicle. Whenever the players start getting comfortable, change gears. There are always more mysteries to explore, whether they are on the stock exchange or in a Buddhist hermitage.

Hong Kong: Gaki

Written by Lee Gold, Art by John Cobb

(Recovered from a not quite thoroughly munged floppy disk, found in Tokyo.)

It's a good thing this computer is battery-powered; I can't plug it in. Japan turns out to have 240 volt current. At least my recharger will still work.

I checked into the youth hostel at 8:30 p.m. Tokyo time, which is 1:30 p.m. San Francisco time; after the long flight, my head said it was bedtime. I woke up at 3 a.m., starving to death. I got dressed and went out to look for something to eat. The restaurants were all closed, but I found a row of vending machines, all nicely labeled — in Japanese. I had a bunch of hundred-yen coins, so I played three of them. Result: one bottle of sake, one bottle of mango juice, one can of iced coffee with cream and sugar. I said thank you to the gods of chance and drank all three of them.

Then I heard a voice behind me say, "You need help maybe? You are lost?" I turned around and saw a Japanese guy in a black kimono. I told him my story, and he said he knew a place where I could get breakfast. Then he took me to a subway station. We got off a few stops later and went into this big building, taking an elevator to Floor 13. I said something about bad luck and he laughed and told me that in Japan the unlucky numbers were 4 and 9.

I wasn't too surprised when the breakfast spot turned out to be his apartment, or even when breakfast turned out to be scrambled eggs, a hamburger and white rice, with green tea on the side.

By the time I'd finished eating, I'd told him about how my parents had died in a plane crash and how I'd decided to spend the insurance money by travelling awhile before I got a boring job as a computer programmer. He told me his name but my tongue kept tripping over the syllables, so he told me I could call him Hey You. But I wrote it down and I'll put it in here now; it's Heike Yusuke Saburo.

Then he put his arm around me and pulled me close and I felt his lips warm on my neck and my world turned upside down. After that, we started the language lessons as he sipped slowly at my blood. The Japanese word for lord is *daimyo*: big name. The English word for someone who's dead but still gets around and who drinks blood is vampire. I asked him what the Japanese word for vampire was.

"The scholars say *jiki-ketsu-gaki*," he said. "Most people just say *gaki*. It means the hungry dead. It also means a spoiled child. Do you like my games?"

"It's the most exciting breakfast I've ever been to," I told him.

A little before sunrise, he called a taxi for me. I went downstairs to the first floor, but that was still one floor too high, just like in England. They drive on the left side of the road in Japan too. I started to open the taxi's door, and it sprang out at me. I had to jump back to keep from having it hit me. The driver has got a button on his dashboard that opens up the curbside door. I had the cab take me to the Ginza. The driver wouldn't let me tip him; he said it was all in the bill.

I spent most of the day shopping. The good silk kimonos are more expensive than suits. I got one anyway. Early evening, I took a taxi back to the youth hostel and stored my new goodies away. Then I went out and had dinner before the restaurants closed up. My spaghetti came with a side of white rice.

Afterwards I went to a little postage stamp park down the street. The full moon was bright enough to type by so I doubled back to the youth hostel and got my computer. I'd gotten the first page of this diary written when I noticed the woman standing next to me. She had short black hair and a white blouse with dark grey jacket and skirt. Her eyes were

sparkling. She admired my computer. I saved my file and brought up one of the games I had on it, to show her. She sat down beside me on the bench and let her head fall on my shoulder as she watched me play. Each time I killed one of the bad guys, she undid one of her buttons. Then she started in on my buttons. After a while, I turned off the computer and we went into the shadows and she held me in her arms. Her hair was soft and warm as fur. Her lips were even warmer.

I couldn't see the moon any more, just her eyes. I couldn't feel the grass under me, just her hands on my skin. The world started to drift away, and my thoughts wouldn't hold together for more than a phrase or two. I was too tired to do anything but just lie there and feel her lips kissing me.

Then he came.

She snarled at him. He laughed and drew a sword. It shone in the moonlight. She crouched on all fours, hissing defiance, then ran off, sinuously graceful, her long tail lashing.

"Cats are bad luck," he told me. "Especially long-tailed ones." He got me to my feet and put an arm around me to brace me. I said something about the computer, and he picked that up for me. On the way, he told me about cats.

The Japanese believe that the cat is the most ungrateful of all animals. "It was the only one who wouldn't come to say goodbye to the Buddha when he lay dying. It was too hardhearted and selfish. It wouldn't come until it had finished washing its fur. By the time it got there, the Buddha had died."

The Japanese believe that a cat should have its tail trimmed short when it's a kitten. Otherwise, it won't die of old age; just get older and older until one day it figures out how to transform into a human being. "Sometimes they choose the form of a beautiful woman," he told me. "Sometimes they take the form of someone they've studied: your best friend or your grandmother or your boss. They like having sex; they also like giving orders." But transforming into a human doesn't come free to them; they use up their *ki*, their life force, to do it. They recharge their *ki* by sucking it out of some victim. Like me.

By the time he'd finished we were back at his apartment house again. It hadn't seemed that close the night before. Time didn't seem to be moving at the same rate now. I looked at my watch as we rode up the elevator and it was 9 p.m.; the next time I looked it was 2 a.m.

That morning, when I left he gave me a book of matches with a map on it showing the apartment building and its address in Japanese. "If you come back tonight," he said, "bring along anything you don't want to lose track of."

I went out that day and played tourist. A little before sunset, I went back to the youth hostel. I paid my bill and got my duffel bags. I got another taxi and showed the driver the matchbook, and he took me to the apartment building. I've brought this travelogue up to date in the lobby. When I'm done, I'm going to go up to the 13th floor.

I don't know what'll happen from then on in, but I know it won't be boring.

The Gaki

Buddhism teaches that after death people reincarnate into one of the Six Realms of Existence. Some go to a heaven or a hell or to the Realm of Fighting Spirits. The rest reincarnate into our mortal world: some as humans or animals and some, for their sins, as Gaki, hungry spirits.

Buddhist lore lists many different sorts of Gaki besides the *Jiki-ketsu*, the blood suckers. There are the *Jiki-niku* who eat flesh, the *Jiki-da* who eat tears; the *Jiki-fun* who eat excrement; the *Jiki-doku* who eat poison; the *Jiki-fu* who eat wind; the *Jiki-ke* who eat smells; and the *Jiki-ka* who eat fire.

The only known Gaki are the *jiki-ketsu*. They claim their bloodline stems from the firstborn child of Izanagi and Izanami, the Kami who created Japan. Japanese legend records that when these two first experimented with sex, the female Kami initiated it, and their child was a blood-sucking leech. The next time, the male Kami initiated sex and their child was Amaterasu, the Kami of the Sun, the founder of the Japanese Imperial Line. Some Gaki harmonize this myth with Western Vampiric lore by equating Izanagi with Cain and Izanami with Lilith, Adam's first wife, the Semitic demon goddess who sucked children's blood by night. They therefore consider Japan to be the original Land of Nod.

The standard Gaki initiation is held in a Gaki Buddhist temple, in front of the bloodparents' friends and kindred. The new Gaki swears an oath of loyalty to the bloodparent for at least one lifetime and to the parent's Daimyo for seven lifetimes. The priest officiating then creates an *ihai*, a memorial tablet, bearing the Blood Name of the new Gaki. After the ceremony, this is kept in the temple. Due to the powerful psychological and mystical factors involved in the ritual, repudiating the oath sworn during the ceremony causes a Derangement if not a loss of Willpower as well.

The new Gaki may undergo four or five years of euphoria in which social rules seem meaningless, much like the Japanese university student who revels in academic freedom and then, after graduating and getting a job, settles down. Perhaps this early maturation is due to being oathbound. In any case, a Gaki is accepted as a responsible member of immortal society almost immediately after becoming initiated. But until every mortal friend or relative or lover has died, a young Gaki is still called a *wakamono*, an apprentice, bound by ties of affection as much to the mortal as to the immortal world.

Most Gaki are samurai, oathbound to a daimyo. A Gaki who is not oathbound to a daimyo is called *ronin* (literally wave-person, someone whose life is as unsettled as an ocean wave). So is a Gaki who was repudiated by their daimyo, usually for 12 years, though sometimes for as long as a century. Sometimes such repudiation is conditional: "You

are no samurai of mine as long as you permit this insult to me to go unavenged." A humiliated Gaki who has lost significant Status in the eyes of friends and daimyo may vow to go ronin until they have accomplished some notable deed. Or perhaps the Gaki will vow to go on a pilgrimage to 33 Chibo temples. If the humiliation is too great, the Gaki will commit suicide, since a newly reborn Gaki has standard Status.

The two noble bloodlines of Gaki began in the 12th century when the great wars between the Heike and Genji shook Japan. The final combat was at the bay of Dan-no-Ura when the Genji triumphed over the Heike, and Emperor Antoku and his followers leapt into the sea rather than surrender.

Today each major Japanese city has two Gaki daimyo who try to ignore one another's existence: one Heike, one Genji. Smaller cities only have one daimyo — usually a Heike in the west, near the old Imperial capitol of Kyoto, a Genji in the east near the modern capitol of Tokyo. Some cities have daimyo named for one of the major feudal clans, such as the Takeda or the Oda.

The Heike are proud of their ancient heritage and follow the old traditions, including loyalty to their samurai. Of course, they expect similar loyalty in return. At home, they usually dress in traditional Japanese garb, delighting in the arts of flower arranging, samisen playing, and swordsmanship and thinking of engineers and programmers as new sorts of magicians. All of them have at least one level of Dominate or Presence.

The Genji also pride themselves on their noble birth but are more interested in creating a glorious future than in dwelling on the past. They are the conspirators who helped drive the Japanese into making first cheap and then high-quality cars, televisions, VCRs, and other high-tech items. They are interested in computers, and it has been rumored some of a near-supernatural ability with electronics and hi-tech items. All of them have some talents similar to Dominate or Presence.

These two bloodlines, besides greatly affecting the growth of technology in Japan, have begun looking for ways to expand Japan's influence (and thus their own). Despite the fact that for most of their history they have remained on Japan and its associated islands, during and after World War II they have expanded into Hong Kong, Shanghai and other nearby areas. Indeed, they are making a concerted effort to become the primary force of Undead on Hong Kong when it is turned over to China, a fact which does not sit well with those other Eastern Vampires aware of their plans.

The other Gaki bloodlines do not have as great an interest in areas outside Japan as do the Heike and Genji, but members of their houses have made trips to Hong Kong.

The Iga and the Koga are ancient ninja clans, organized into groups of one or two dozen people. Some Iga groups serve the Heike, some the Genji; some Koga groups serve the Heike and some serve the Genji. All Iga pay tribute to their



clan chief, the Iga Kashira, who is not allied with either Heike or Genji. All Koga likewise pay tribute to the Koga Kashira. At times Iga and Koga cooperate, but it is an uneasy alliance; they are old enemies. Some of them know the new lore of technology. All of them are experts in the martial arts and stealth; many are experts in drugs and poisons.

The Chibo are Buddhist priests, who have a special scripture, unknown to other Buddhists: the Blood Sutra. They chant Na Myoho Ketsu Kyo (Hail the Famous Blood Sutra) and are experts in Maho rituals (similar to Western Thaumaturgy).

Other major Gaki bloodlines are affiliated with various of the zaibatsu, the companies which dominate Japanese business and politics. The zaibatsu guarantee employment for the employee's lifetime, and those affiliated with a Gaki bloodline may arrange for exceptionally loyal employees to stay on with the firm even after they've died. A few bloodlines are affiliated with various yakuza mobs, gambler gangs controlling Japanese crime much as the Mafia runs it in the United States.

The Gaki do not number their generations, because adoption is too widespread a custom: a Gaki's status depends on the current bloodparent, not the initial one. Some Gaki have two bloodparents: their first contact and the city's daimyo. Some Gaki were initiated by the daimyo but then adopted by someone of lower Status. Vampire sociologists claim the distribution of Generations is much the same among Gaki as among Western Vampires, but that their youngest Kindred appear to be 10th generation or even earlier.

Most Gaki are prejudiced against non-Japanese, even against people of pure Japanese ancestry who were brought up in another country and do not speak the language fluently. They distrust *gaijin* (foreigners) as donors, partially due to the rumor that many of them carry the HIV virus. A *gaijin* who has the Linguistics points to speak Japanese still counts as having a Speech Impediment and must gain an additional Linguistic point to be able to read Japanese or count as Illiterate. They are one level lower Status than usual as seen by Japanese.

Some Gaki believe that Hengeyokai, shapechanging Cats, are above them in the karmic order. But they still consider themselves more cultured than Hengeyokai and believe that their donors enjoy a better life, particularly since a Gaki is able to give immortality to a donor, while an animal cannot.

A few Gaki have persuaded Hengeyokai Cats to serve them. Mostly, Gaki have mortal servants, sometimes hirelings, sometimes old friends or lovers who serve them out of affection. A number of Heike and Genji have mortal families who pride themselves on being samurai to the undead. No Japanese Gaki are known to have vitae-fed mortal servants like the Western Vampire's Ghoul.

Key Differences Between Gaki and Western Vampires

Gaki have a highly limited class of potential victims. They can only feed from people who have the right temperament to become Gaki themselves. The Chibo priests explain that this is part of the Karmic Wheel, which punishes sins of Unrestrained Desire with one or more lifetimes plagued with the Hunger. Certainly, the Gaki cannot feed upon people either too young to desire fame, power or pleasure or too enlightened for such desires. Gaki also do not feed on the blood of animals or of other Gaki. As yet, no research has been done to indicate if Western Vampires are able to feed on the blood of Gaki.

The Hunger affects Gaki perception. If they are down to two or fewer Blood Points, their vision becomes focused on seeking a Donor. They literally lose sight of the rest of the world and see only potential victims and drifting fog. They can temporarily focus on the blurred world only as an act of Willpower. A direct and active threat will break this tunnel vision for the length of combat or flight plus one additional turn.

Gaki are virtually immune to sunlight in any region of heavy smog, such as that of Tokyo or Los Angeles, as long as they wear sunglasses and a high SPF sun cream over any skin not covered by clothing. Even with only light smog, they take only half the damage points from sunlight that a Western Vampire would take.

Gaki fear sleep and seldom do. What sleep they do get is troubled by nightmares of mingled desire and fear: trapped in a wilderness with nothing to drink but the blood of their dearest friends, or running endlessly over a field of bones from the approach of Fugen, a Buddhist spirit wreathed in fire and whose sword is a long flame. Avoiding sleep is an Easy Willpower roll, but one that must be repeated each noon the Gaki is at maximum Blood Points, safe from attack, and without any ongoing project.

While sleep remains a problem for them, Gaki can eat and drink as do normal humans. They can enjoy the food; it just provides them with no nutrition. Additionally, they are forced to excrete what they take in since while they digest, they cannot turn the food into energy.

Socially, most Gaki respect Japan's two native religions, Shintoism and Buddhism. They cannot pass under the torii gate marking the entrance to a Shinto shrine, which is taboo to anyone ill, injured, in mourning, or bleeding (including menstruating women). Most Gaki cannot enter a non-Chibo Buddhist temple or any room sealed with *o-fuda*, strips of papers on which the Buddhist scriptures have been written.

A few Gaki honor some Western figures as among the Buddha's many incarnations. For instance, one temple in Tokyo honors the Buddha as incarnate not just in Gautama but also in Jesus, Socrates and Einstein, Gaki who patronize

this temple will also honor o-fuda inscribed with the writings of Jesus, Socrates and Einstein as much as those inscribed with the Blood Sutra.

The few Gaki immune to these religious effects claim that the others are only superstitious, but it should be noted that these Gaki seem to be the ones most out of touch with their former humanity, the ones most dominated by what a Western Vampire would term the Beast.

All too sure of reincarnating after death, many Gaki will commit suicide to wipe out a humiliation, expiate a wrong, protest against a wrong that they cannot stop a superior from committing — or to forestall death by a more painful method. This suicide is not termed *seppuku* or *hara-kiri* (both meaning literally belly cutting) but *jisatsu* (self-destruction).

Hima

Gaki believe that if they die by fire or sunlight they will be reborn as Hima, Fire Demons, with a lifespan of one month for each person they have murdered in Hunger or Frenzy. This belief is reinforced by the fact that in the Japanese language, *hi* (fire) is the same sound as *hi* (injustice). When the Hima's fire goes out, the spirit is reborn as Gaki again, still bound by any Blood Oaths whose term has not yet

expired. Only achieving Enlightenment will permit the spirit to reincarnate to a higher state.

Sometimes Hima appear as small flames floating in the air and leading travellers astray like the Western will-o'-wisp. Sometimes they appear as flaming wheels or paper lanterns which float in the air and spit deadly flames.

Hima appear only at night, usually either in the wilderness or in graveyards, though a few haunt abandoned buildings or the scenes of murders. They are especially likely to appear at the Hour of the Ox, 2 a.m. in the Western time-scheme.

A Hima's fire vaporizes the victim's blood into flaming life force which the Hima drinks. The fire is a threat to mortal and immortal alike; it does 5 Blood Points damage per turn to a Gaki or 2 Blood Points damage per turn to a mortal or Hengeyokai. Treat the attack as Difficulty 6, Rate 1, Range 50. Remember that the Hima is in a constant state of Frenzy and Hunger, which will affect perception and aiming as well as level of Willpower.

Hima shun Shinto shrines but are frequently found in the graveyards associated with Buddhist temples. They can be injured by water, especially by rain or snow which they react to just as the Vampire does to sunlight. They cannot enter any area sealed with o-fuda. A few Gaki are rumored to have found a way to bind Hima to pacts and to use them as servants.

Cats

There are many Japanese folktales about animals clever enough to learn to transform themselves into human form. Some of these are kindly creatures who take on human form to repay a benefactor. Others are used as messengers by one of the Shinto Kami, like the white foxes who are messengers of the Inari, the grain Kami. But most of these tales depict selfish animals who delight in confusing human beings. Often such selfish animals return night after night to suck out a mortal's ki, the life force, until the victim dies.

The only known Hengeyokai are shapechanging, long-tailed cats. They can take on the form of any person they've met or whose picture they've seen. They can also take on any human form they can visualize: young or old, male or female, pretty or ugly. All Cats have mastered at least one level of Auspex. Their usual Abilities include Dodge, Animal Ken and Stealth.

Shapechanging is a special Hengeyokai Cat ability, not the Discipline of Protean. It requires both a Willpower roll and a Wits roll. A Willpower failure indicates the animal's surface control of its appearance has lapsed, creating minor discrepancies an observant person may notice. For instance, the hair may start to feel like fur, the ears may seem pointed, or the creature's tail may become visible. A Wits failure indicates the animal has fallen into a nonhuman behavior



pattern, like lapping soup up with its tongue instead of holding the bowl up to its lips to drink. Cats who fail their Wits roll may flee from dogs or, even more revealingly, chase mice. A Cat who is in great pain will usually revert back to its true form.

Most Cats will never feed on the grounds of a Buddhist temple or Shinto shrine, but they do feel free to enter there. Cats have been known to tear up o-fuda sealing off an area to permit Gaki to enter there, in exchange for a favor done for them (usually in advance) by the Gaki.

A Cat cannot die of old age and is not vulnerable to sunlight but can be killed by any of the standard methods used to kill a mortal animal.

Cat Society

All Cats are creatures of grace, elegance and beauty, but some cats are superior to others. The leaders of Cat society are pure white from nose to tail. Some claim they began life with darker fur but grew whiter as they grew older and that black Cats are still very young and tend to act foolishly.

Many Cats pretend to be domesticated by human beings, so they can more easily obtain luxuries. Almost all prefer life

in the city with its myriads of human conveniences to that in the wilderness. A few Cats do spend significant periods of time in the wilderness, some viewing this as a way of getting in touch with their truest nature, others as an ascetic discipline.

Each city's Cat population is dominated by a King or Queen whose court meets each night the moon is visible. Court life is full of splendid singing and dancing, often accompanied by wild orgies. Sometimes human pet mice are brought to these festivities so that their masters can be amused by their reactions.

Some Cat Kings or Queens claim to be manifestations of Tsuki-Yumi, the Shinto Kami of the Moon. A few have even established Shinto shrines at which the Moon Kami is worshipped. Mortals may attend these shrines, not realizing that many of their co-worshippers and most of the pretty priestesses are really shapechanging Cats.

Cats like to play with their food before eating it. Even if they have decided to drain all a mortal's Blood Points, they customarily only take one every half hour or so. Often they allow the mortal to seem to escape their clutches, then reappear later and easily subdue them again.

Cats respond to defeat or humiliation by ignoring it. Faced with strong opposition, they may run off to do something they have just decided would be much more interesting, or perhaps will begin to groom themselves in order to perfect their beauty. This is not to say they never fight. If they think there is a chance of winning, they fight fiercely, undeterred by any conception of rules of fair play.

Key Differences between Cats and Vampires

Cats are highly sensual creatures, with a strong sex drive. Perhaps because of this they cannot feed on the energy of people who are not sexually active. This includes not only children, virgins and ascetics but also people who are too tired or sick to be able to engage in sex. They cannot feed on the life energy of Vampires and Gaki. They can feed on the life energy of other animals, including that of other Cats.

Cats do not suffer nearly as much as Gaki from the Hunger. They regain a number of lost Blood Points (roll D10 for how many) every time the moon rises at night.

Vocabulary — Gaki

Gaki refer to normal humans either as "mortals" or sometimes as "carrots" (a pun on the resemblance of "ninjin" (human being) and "ningen" (carrot)).

A mortal utilized as a blood source is most politely referred to as a Donor, most rudely referred to as a nomimono (beverage). The victim of a Hengeyokai, especially if not suitable as a Gaki blood source, is usually termed a "mouse."



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The passage of a mortal into immortality by becoming a Gaki is termed Initiation. The initiator is the bloodparent. The new Gaki is termed an apprentice until all the people they cared for are either dead or also Gaki.

A Gaki who is oathbound to a daimyo is a samurai. A Gaki who is not oathbound to a daimyo, or whose oath has been repudiated, is a ronin.

The conflict which Vampires term Beast vs Human is usually spoken of by Gaki as Beast vs Buddha Nature, the pure spirit within each mortal which is believed will eventually find Enlightenment and reach Nirvana.

Some Gaki refer to their traditional creation myth by calling the Emperor "nephew" and by calling death by sunlight "the younger sister's kiss."

Vocabulary — Cat

Cats refer to Gaki as leeches (an irreverent allusion to Gaki legend) or as babies (because of their dependence on donors). A mortal who still bears the aura of having been a Gaki donor is called a baby bottle or baby toy. A Gaki which has lost most or all of its Humanity is called a shark; sometimes, so is a Gaki in the depths of Hunger or Frenzy.

A mortal who has given a Cat life force is a mouse. One who has an ongoing relationship with a Cat is a pet mouse. If the Cat has grown genuinely fond of a mortal, it may ignore the fact that a mortal can never become a Hengeyokai and call them "kitten."

Rift

The Gaki's personal nightmares, so horrible they avoid sleep at all costs, remain a part of them even in their waking hours. These nightmares are no mere constructs of their own brittle psyche; they manifest as actual dimensional rifts, personalized for the individual Gaki. Since making contact with the West, some Gaki have compared their own situations with that of the Christian damned, caught up in an individual hell.

Each rift differs substantially from any other. Based on the Gaki's own traumas, fears, shames and guilt, the rift epitomizes all the tragedy of her existence. When they sleep, their mind fills with images from this realm — demons, fears, shames; all the travesties they have perpetrated return to them a hundredfold.

However, the Gaki manifest at least some control of their rifts. Young Gaki learn to extend their rift out to touch other people. As they grow older, they learn to draw others in. Using the realm of one's own nightmares can be terrifying experience. Use of any of the powers listed below, successful or not, requires a Courage roll against a difficulty of the power's level; failure costs the Gaki a minimum of one Willpower point, and botches can send the Gaki writhing in disgust at her own sins.

Level One:

The Joining: Sometimes called *tsutaeru* by the Gaki, this power allows them to silently communicate with both those around them and other Gaki. While this does not allow mind reading, attempts to communicate with Gaki are automatically successful unless the other Gaki is blocking such contact, and can be made over any distance. Communicating with non-Gaki requires the user of this power be within eyesight of his target and make a Wits + Linguistics roll against a difficulty of 7.

Level Two:

Glimpse of the Pain: With the second level of Rift, the Gaki begins to draw others into her realm of agony, if only for a moment. This power, called *tsukamu*, allows (forces) a target to see the Gaki's own rift. This look at a whole microverse of guilt, sin, frustration and horror is often more than most can handle. Being blind or closing one's eyes can lessen the agony, but the rift is a complete sensory and psychic experience, so the victim may still be affected (Storyteller's discretion).

The target, if a Vampire or Gaki, must make a Courage roll with a difficulty of his own Humanity + 2 not to fall into a Courage frenzy. For others, the Gaki must make a Perception + Intimidation roll with a difficulty of 6, resisted by the target's Willpower roll against the same difficulty. Each additional success the Gaki achieves means the target is incapacitated for an additional turn, frozen with horror at the monstrosity just seen.

Level Three:

Crossing the Iron Bridge: At this stage in a Gaki's development, she begins to deal with her own inner demons. This power allows her to enter into her rift, confronting all that which makes it such a hell. The Gaki actually disappears from the place she was, and will reappear there shortly.

This is by no means a pleasant experience, and the character must make a Self-Control roll with a difficulty of her own Conscience for every turn they remain here. Some Gaki use this power for protection, some use it to deal with their own guilt, and some are rumored to have entered into their rift never to return again.

Level Four:

Journeying the Iron Bridge: When a Gaki first becomes able to Cross the Iron Bridge, all he can take with him are those inanimate items which have a personal connection — clothes, keepsakes, etc. — and these for just a short time. With the fourth level of this power, the Gaki can take anything with him, but he must make a Stamina + Survival roll against a difficulty of 6. Failure means any item brought

in falls from wherever the Gaki was holding it. In addition, the Gaki can stay in the rift for as long as he wants ... or can.

Level Five:

Passing the Inner Realm: At this point the Gaki begins to learn how to manipulate the rift, using this horror to her own advantage. While the rift is not infinite, it is subject only to the limits placed on it by the Storyteller. Thus the Gaki can travel through it, invisible to the outside world, to any he point he could see before entering the rift. She can even enter the rifts of other Gaki she could see before using this power.

This movement takes as long as crossing the distance physically would, but the Gaki can avoid barriers, reappear behind foes, avoid attacks, etc. To use this power before an attack can hit requires a Wits + Dodge roll against the opponent's Dexterity + 1.

Level Six:

Collection: Now the Gaki can manipulate objects without having to enter the rift. Collection allows him to send inanimate objects he touches into the rift or call back items which have been stored there.

Transport: Similar to collection, a Gaki able to Transport can touch an object and send it through her rift to any point she can see. Targeting with this power requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll against a difficulty of 7. Botches may mean something else comes out.



Level Seven:

Eyes of a Thief: An offshoot of Collection, this power lets the Gaki take any object he can see and send it into his rift. This requires a Perception + Alertness roll against a difficulty of 7.

Doorway to Hell: Generally a Gaki's rift comes with her wherever she goes. However, with the Doorway to Hell, the Gaki can create a physical entrance to her rift somewhere, one that anyone can enter. Setting up the doorway requires a location with an entrance way and the loss of a Willpower point — permanently. Note that the Gaki can still Cross the Iron Bridge normally, and can then exit the rift through the doorway instead of having to reappear at the spot she first went in. Others entering through the doorway are affected as though they had a Glimpse of the Pain.

Level Eight:

Touch of Sin: Now the Gaki can actually grab others and bring them involuntarily into his rift with a Manipulation + Brawl roll against the target's Humanity + 2. Those brought in by this power experience the same effects as someone getting a Glimpse of the Pain, but each turn she remains in the rift, the difficulty of her Willpower roll increases by one and the Gaki's decreases by one. Every time the victim botches a Willpower roll, she gains a Derangement. The victim can leave if she gains more successes on her roll, or the Gaki leaves the rift.

Gateway: With Gateway, the Gaki can send others through his rift just like he does when he uses Passing the Inner Realm. This costs two Willpower points (one to send the target into the rift and one to get her back out), and the target must deal with a Glimpse of the Pain along the way. The Gaki must make a targeting roll of Perception + Empathy to get the target to the right place, and must first touch her.

Level Nine:

Imprison: A victim imprisoned by the Gaki is caught in the rift until the Gaki cares to release him (or the victim manages to find a Doorway, if there is one). Imprisoning a victim in the rift requires the Gaki make a Manipulation + Intimidation roll against the Willpower of whoever it is she holds. Three successes means the victim is sent to the Gaki's rift as in Touch of Sin, except the Gaki need not spend Willpower to keep him there. Note that since many who are imprisoned are guaranteed to go mad if left in a Rift too long, this is a good way for Gaki to lose Humanity.

Level Ten:

Manifest the Horror: Now the Gaki can not only pull others into his rift, but can open his rift onto the outside world. The actual effects of this power vary based on the individual Gaki, but he can loose any sort of torments found in his rift.

This can include *oni* (demons), Hima, giant multi-headed, lightning-breathing lobster-eagles, whirling tornadoes of fire and light or anything else the Storyteller's fiendish imagination can come up with. However, everything that enters the world from the Gaki's rift costs the Gaki a Willpower point, and may even be hostile to him (it is from his own version of hell, after all). However, the Gaki can usually control the manifestations with a Charisma + Empathy roll with a difficulty of 7.

Maho (The Demon Arts)

Ihai Creation — 1st level

Like the standard Buddhist *ihai* (wooden memorial tablet), the Chibo *ihai* does not show the dead person's mortal name but only a spirit name given by the officiating priest. A Gaki spirit name is sometimes called a Blood Name, probably because it always contains the ideograph for blood, pronounced either Sotsu or Chi.

The *Ihai* is calligraphed with ink brush and ink onto a piece of wood. A drop of the new Gaki's blood and a drop of its bloodparent's blood must be added to the ink. The ritual leaves the wood rock-hard but still flammable.



Gaki may conduct their social life under their old mortal name, their new spirit name, or any other name that pleases them. It is customary for a Gaki to take a new name on significantly rising (or falling) in Status.

Change Ihai — 2nd level

If a Gaki is formally adopted by a new bloodparent, a priest will perform a ritual which changes the name on the *ihai*. Again, a drop of the Gaki's blood and a drop of the new bloodparent's blood must be added to the ink.

Three Nights in a Moment — 3rd level

This ritual can be used on a mortal dying from life force loss inflicted by any immortal. It will not save the mortal's life but it will save their personality, allowing the Chibo priest to initiate them as an apprentice in one moment, instead of the customary three nights. Usually this traumatic experience results in the new Gaki having at least three De-rangements. It also requires the priest performing it leave the new Gaki with at least three Blood Points.

Destroy Ihai — 4th level

This ritual expels the Gaki whose Blood Name is carved on the *ihai* from the mortal world into the Realm of Fighting Spirits. It requires several priests to perform it, for it costs one Blood Point for each point of Humanity, Willpower and Blood the victim has. Which priest loses each Blood Point is determined at random; the ritual fails if a priest dies before it is completed. This ritual is traditionally only performed at a *daimyo's* request.

Shinjutsu, the art of the Kami

Japanese Shinto shrines symbolize Kami by one of three shapes: mirror for female Kami, sword for male kami, and jewel for either. Hengeyokai Cat priests' rituals are inspired by this.

Consecrate Mirror — 1st level

This ritual creates a mirror which reflects the gazer as incredibly beautiful. It requires one Blood Point from the Cat who will be linked to it and another Blood Point from its maker. A Cat who uses it can transform to an awesomely beautiful human shape. Or it may be given to seduce a human or even a Gaki into narcissism; whoever looks into it must make a Willpower roll or lose life energy to the Cat the mirror is linked to.

Consecrate Sword — 1st level

This ritual creates a sword which gives anyone wielding it an additional level of skill. It requires one Blood Point from the Cat who will be linked to it and another Blood Point from its maker. It may be used by a Cat for fighting, or given to a human pet, or even to a Gaki or Western Vampire. Each time the sword draws blood, half of the Blood Points the victim loses go to the Cat the sword is linked to.

Consecrate Jewel — 2nd level

This ritual creates a jewel which gives anyone who wears it an additional level of Charisma. It requires one Blood Point from the Cat who will be linked to it and another Blood Point from its maker. A Cat may use it to raise its own Charisma, or it may be given to tame a human or even a Gaki: anyone who wears it loses three levels of Charisma when interacting with the Cat the mirror is linked to.

Haiti

Written by Andrew Greenberg, Art by Josh Timbrook

*And when the voices told her when and where to act, she said:
'I've lost control again.'*

— Joy Division, *She's Lost Control*

The desolation and horror perpetrated upon Haiti by its mortal rulers may make the atrocities of some Vampires pale by comparison, but the Kindred of the island do their best to keep up. While they may not cause as much mayhem in a single day, they have the weight of eternity on their side, and can rest comfortably knowing they have centuries of depravation ahead while time binds the country's rulers.

Christopher Columbus arrived on Haiti during his first trip to the New World. Within a century the Spanish had killed off the million native inhabitants of the island. Local legend has it that one of the last native shamans cursed its new inhabitants, calling the same destruction and disease which had exterminated his people down on whoever would live there.

Vampires first came to the island in the 17th century, finding its gigantic slave population perfect for their bloody needs. The overwhelming disproportion of slaves to exploiters (31,000 whites, 27,000 freed slaves and 465,000 slaves) could not be maintained, however, and in 1804 the Haitians freed themselves from French rule.

Up to this point, most of the Kindred of the island were members of the Camarilla, with Toreadors and Ventrués being the most common. While the island had been attractive to the Undead, not enough had arrived to keep the country in check, and those who had were killed off during the years of revolution.

The slaughter of Haiti's Vampiric establishment must have appeared like a beacon in the night to the Followers of Set. A century later, one survivor of Haiti's earlier culture made the claim that the Followers of Set must have been behind the revolution because of the speed with which they took advantage of the void, but other witnesses have indi-

cated that while the Setites took advantage of the upheaval, they were not the instigators.

Whatever the case, a number of Setites set up temples on the island during the 50 years following the revolution. Some of these have disappeared with the passage of time, while new Followers have established replacements. In any event, the Followers of Set have become an integral part of Haitian culture, shaping the country and region as they want (though their individual desires often clash).

One area of Haitian life in which they have become especially prominent is the people's practice of Voodoo. Once as much a revolutionary movement as a religion, under the influence of the Setites Voodoo quickly became another prop maintaining a corrupt establishment. Setites wormed their way into societies organized for the worship of *loa* (spirits) or formed their own.

The first to come to the Island established his temple secretly among the slaves in the mid-1700s. Once this was ready, he summoned one of his neonates to the island. She in turn set up the temple from which most of the other Setites spread. Indeed, many Kindred falsely believe her to be the first Setite on the island.

Ezuli

Ezuli first joined the ranks of the Undead in Ethiopia, the land of her birth. Embraced by a Setite who wooed her with words of love, Ezuli found the ways of the Followers repulsive. Their fascination with lies and corruption, their apparent hatred and disdain of mortals, and the plots and schemes they played against each other were completely contrary to her own nature.

Indeed, shortly after her Embrace, Ezuli suffered a madness so deep that she slipped into torpor, where she, like some other Kindred, may have remained for all eternity had it not been for a summons from her creator. After almost 500 years of sleep, his call pulled her from her deep grave, and in 1790 she joined him in Haiti.

For 15 years they shared a temple and drew the secret worship of the islanders. He stood as the *loa* of death, while she took a subordinate role as his mistress and lover. Still, without any desire on her part, the mortals who came to worship began to approach her as they did her Sire. She could join them in the frenzy of possession just as he could, and to many of the kine who came to their hidden temple, she seemed far more approachable.

This splitting of the worship entertained her Sire at first, but as it continued and the worship of Ezuli grew, he became less and less amused. By 1805 his resentment and jealousy had grown so strong that Ezuli was forced to flee into the island's interior. She kept a low profile for a number of months, but soon established a new temple and began drawing worshippers from the surrounding area. Shortly thereafter another Follower, Ogwon, who she knew during her first years of immortality, joined her.

With Ogwon's aid, Ezuli found herself able to build her worship as strong as she wanted without having to fear the wrath of the one who Embrace her. Within a decade her worship spread across Haiti, though she has kept her temple near the border with the Dominican Republic.

While Ogwon eventually left to start his own temple, he spread the news of Ezuli to other members of the Clan. Those who have come to the island since have usually spent at least a year or two with her before going off to find their own worshippers.

In this way Ezuli has passed the last two centuries. She believes herself reconciled with her Sire though the two have little to do with each other. She has very good relationships with the other Setites on the island, generally staying above their feuds and conspiracies. She has shared blood with all of them, but remains bound to none.

The Cult of Ezuli

Haitians involved in the Voodoo culture of the country worship a number of spirits, most of which have no tie to Vampires. However, the worship of Ezuli is intrinsically tied to her vampiric nature.

Her worship ceremonies consist equally of males and females, young and old, married and single. They begin with songs of invitation designed to bring Ezuli to the site of the ceremony. All present take part in these songs, though they are led by a *manbo* (priestess). There is little dancing or playing of instruments at this point, though most of the participants clap their hands or begin swaying with the rhythm of the songs.

The second stage of the ceremony involves songs of welcome, again led by the *manbos*, but this time with the accompaniment of instruments. Worshippers begin dancing and moving about, either singly, in couples or in groups. Those who have specific requests to make of Ezuli become especially active, throwing themselves into the center of the dance and adding their own songs of supplication.

As the songs of welcome begin to end, the *manbos* begin to repeat the names of those beings thought to be sacred to Ezuli. The rhythmic repetition of the names of spirits, saints and ancestors adds to the general tumult as more and more worshippers begin dancing wildly, the beating of the drums increases and the songs become more desperate.

Soon all present have joined the writhing, thrashing mass of dancers. Lacking much room to move, bodies jam up against each other as the dancers, hot and drenched by both the temperature and the crush of people, continue their mad rampage. Some crash to the floor as the heat overwhelms them, others peel the protecting clothes off themselves and others, and quickly the site fills with the smell of blood, pain and ecstasy from battered worshippers.



Then Ezuli, if present at the ceremony (usually invisible and hidden, but occasionally taking an active part in the dance), will lock eyes with one of her worshippers. As she takes possession of the crazed dancer, the smell of the blood and press of bodies overwhelms her senses, and her body collapses as her new form flies into frenzy.

Despite the mad activities of all present, the actions of the possessed stand out like a beacon. Ezuli, her frenzied mind allowing no thought of the consequences to her worshipper's body or reputation, tears through the undulating crowd. Unable to stop herself, she moves with crazed abandon, thrashing, slamming and flailing past all around.

However, even at her most frenzied she still retains her essential sensuality. Her powers of Presence take command, sending out waves of awe and majesty which overwhelm all present. Within seconds the other dancers have stopped, frozen by the incredible sight before them. Finally her frenzy calms and she returns to her body.

Sometimes she flees into the night directly after the possession, while other times she will move invisibly through the crowd, taking a sip of vitae from here and there as the fancy strikes her. Those worshippers not blessed with a Kiss often do not notice the sudden ecstasy on the faces of those around them as they continue their singing and dancing.

Following the possession, the ceremony calms down as the worshippers begin songs of thanks and relaxation. Soon the ceremony is over and the mortals head their separate ways.

Unfortunately, Ezuli does not always manage to hold back her frenzy until she takes over a mortal form. Those times when the Beast grabs her before she makes eye contact, while few and far between, are horrid to behold.

For the unlucky worshippers, the first sign they have that something is wrong comes when a black clawed hand whips out of the air to smash at their throats. Then all goes dark as Ezuli tears the blood from their bodies.

Within seconds the ceremony turns red and deadly as blood begins to fly from all directions. Worshippers run screaming from the fray, killing even more in the stampede to escape. Minutes later Ezuli has calmed, but for dozens of her worshippers it is too late.

The Kiss of Death

Despite her moments of weakness, Ezuli sees herself as a great benefactor to those who worship her. She hears their prayers and appeals, and occasionally she acts upon them. Except for those times when the Beast takes control, she never kills, and usually takes what blood she needs from healthy worshippers, many of whom set aside a room in their homes for her. Usually she takes no more than a point of blood at each feeding, and spends some nights going from home to home, taking what she needs. Often she leaves little

gifts for her victims as well as advice on how to attract those they are interested in.

Her worship has had one effect she never expected, however. Considered the spirit not only of love but of sex and sensuality as well, she attracts young, attractive worshippers who emulate her own promiscuity with their own. Thus Ezuli has recently noticed that she sometimes feels weaker after feeding than she did before. She has even caught herself coughing, though she has not had need to breathe in more years than she can remember.

Indeed, Ezuli has become a carrier of doom, as she flits from house to house with the blood fresh on her teeth, or sips from numerous worshippers during ceremonies in her honor. She herself has no idea how the spectre of death has taken to following her, and has never heard of the AIDS virus. Unfortunately, she has become the reason so many of her worshippers across the country have heard of the dread disease.

The Kindred of Haiti

While Setites are not the only Vampires in the country, they are a majority of the 30 or so in Haiti at any one time. Less than 10 of the Followers have formed their own temples,





while others, generally younger, help them with their plots and schemes.

The other Kindred in the country are fairly evenly split among members of the Camarilla, Sabbat and neutrals. None play as significant a role as the Setites.

The Web

From Ezuli's temple have sprung the others of Haiti, and they remain interconnected despite their frequent battles. Ogwon established the first of these offshoots, and his remains one of the more powerful. From this temple he can send orders out to his many followers in positions of power around Haiti and the Western hemisphere.

His most loyal followers are the members of Ferraille, one of the oldest secret societies on the island. Its leaders, primarily current and former army officers, hold positions in government and business as well as the military. Branches have spread throughout the Americas and even into France, where several members have begun smuggling drugs into Marseille.

In Haiti, the Ferraille ensures Ogwon remains unmolested while battling his foes. Recently it backed first Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier and then his son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, as dictators. However, Baby Doc's attempts

to attract the support of the upper class and the Catholic church led the dictator to meet with at least one representative of the Society of Leopold in 1985. Shortly thereafter opposition to his regime reached new heights, and at least two Ferrailles were seen carrying a coffin with a sign saying "Jean-Claude Duvalier, you belong here."

By 1986 Baby Doc had been driven from power, and within a matter of years democratic elections took place leading to the election of Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide. However, this Roman Catholic priest was soon driven from power, and a new coalition of military officers took command. One member of the coalition is a known Ferraille, while several others are also believed to be involved in different secret societies.

Aside from the role they play now, the Ferraille has always played a major part in the political upheaval which so often wracks Haiti. They instigate and lead riots, attack enemy groups (especially those which extol peace and compromise) and take advantage of the opportunity to exterminate personal foes.

Additionally, a number of Ferrailles are *ongans*, Voodoo priests of no small renown. Not only do the *ongans* personally fulfill Ogwon's commands, but they also allow the Cainite a great deal of control over the general populace. Thus, even

in times of peace the Ferraille can motivate the general public to acts of destruction just through the commands of these spiritual leaders.

People visit the *ongans* for spiritual and material advice, help in important matters, and when seeking revenge on others. The priests flavor their advice with instructions which may aid Ogwon in his continuing fights or just give support to his mortal allies.

The mere presence of *ongans* among Ogwon's followers helps deter attacks against them, and ensures that most will do nothing to cross them. Finally, the priests' alleged prowess with the powers of Voodoo also serve their Vampiric master well. When mortal weapons have no effect, those of the spirits will.

The Battles

Ogwon has not organized the Ferraille just to give a bunch of military men the chance to take power. The constant battling and jockeying for power among the Setites has been going on since the early 19th century, and for every move Ogwon makes, he can be sure the others will try to counter and make their own.

Thus his Ferraille spend as much time watching the Bossus, the Mounanchou and other secret societies as they do hatching their own plots. When political unrest shakes the country, the Ferraille use the cover of the riots to attack members of enemy societies (which is an enemy and which is an ally varies from year to year, and sometimes from day to day). They ambush members, trash their businesses and raze their homes.

Of course, the other societies are busy doing the same things to them, so the Ferraille devote an equal amount of time to protection. Additionally, for a fee, they will protect non-society members as well, though this protection generally just keeps the insured safe from attacks by the Ferraille. Still, there are sections of cities and large rural stretches completely under Ferraille protection, and these areas generally remain safe from outside attack.

Indeed, in peacetime, the secret societies provide passports to their members. These passports, given to protect members planning on entering hostile territory, are usually respected by others. Not only does possession of such a document mean the weight of a secret society can be brought to bear on those who violate it, but *ongans* make the passports, adding symbols of great power and prayers to mighty spirits. Fear of the occult protections guaranteed by the paper deter as much as does the fear of attack by the secret society.

Still, membership in a Setite's secret society, while it has its benefits of power and influence, remains a particularly hazardous lifestyle. Each Setite, in the constant quest to have

the dominant temple on Haiti, would willingly sacrifice any of the pawns in a play for further power.

When members are not beating each other up, the society leaders are sending them out on reconnaissance missions, all aimed at ferreting out the even more powerful enemy pawns — those who actually play a role in the other Setites' temples. While the greatest pleasure may come from corrupting the pure, further degrading the already perverse brings its own special delight. Thus the Setites make special efforts to attract those who are actually members and leaders of each others' hidden temples.

Special promises of future pleasures constantly tempt mighty *ongans* and priests of the temples, while surveillance of these worthies gathers information more for corruption than for physical attacks. For this reason the Setites of Haiti put as much effort into defense as offense. Indeed, considering the strength of their defenses, the relatively large number of Setites extinguished in Haiti surprises some on-lookers.

The Goals

The Setites of Haiti may seem more fractious than most, but none can deny the success they have had corrupting this beautiful Caribbean country. They might not gather for the moonlit ceremonies their brethren in Egypt and other place engage in, but they have no need for such moral builders. They know they have been successful, and it feels good.

However, there are other reasons The Followers of Set have become so divided here. In most areas where they are a power, one Setite pioneered entry into the area and remains their leader. In Haiti, however, Ezuli rejected a leadership position and, while she remains cordial with all those who have come through her temple, does nothing to stop their internecine wars.

Setites on the island other than Ezuli and her Sire are all Seventh Generation or younger, and physically they are all of equivalent strength. Even Ogwon, though generally considered one of the most powerful of them, does not have the might necessary to bring the Clan members together.

Occasionally they can work together — the ruling council which took over when Aristide was driven out is one example of this cooperation. This fragile coalition, formed after no one power could seize control and in response to the threat the reverend posed, mixes mortal Voodoo leaders, military strongmen and Vampiric followers.

Even within this alliance, however, the Setites continue to jockey for power. Each mortal member looks for any opening to increase his own power, and their Undead masters carry their fights into arenas both natural and supernatural. Thus the Setites continue their seemingly endless struggle to

become the most corrupting, with perhaps their only hope for true unity being an outside threat.

The Threat

Unfortunately for the Setites, their greatest threat is internal not external. Ogwon knows of Ezuli's Sire, though they never had the opportunity to meet. He remembers the great fear Ezuli once felt of this ancient, and has memories of their battles with him. Since leaving Ezuli, however, he has had no contact with her Sire, and takes this absence to mean departure or torpor.

Ezuli's Sire is still present, however. The temple is secret now, hidden and obscured from the world at large. The secret society is diminutive, with the smallest of cells in major areas. Those few Kindred who have become aware of it found Final Death the only reward for their detective work, and even Ezuli believes her Sire to no longer be a threat. All this is as it should be, for Ezuli's Sire plots a vengeance made all the more terrifying for lack of warning.

Ferrailles, Bossus, Mounanchous and other secret society members appear dead in one another's territory, their passports stuffed down their slashed throats. *Ongans* find themselves the victims of spirit attacks of unprecedented power. Businesses go up in flames, churches machine gunned, and politicians assassinated. Thousands abandon the island, only to be returned to face the vengeance of those from whom they fled. Daily the tension will rise until none, Kindred or kine, can prevent the explosion.

Wild Cards

The Setites are not the only powers on the island. While they control some of the country's Voodoo leaders, the most powerful ones are not tied to any one *loa* or Vampire. Living apart from humanity, alone with their spirits and dead servants, these *ongans* are well feared by both Kindred and kine.

No plan can be made without taking into account how these dread forces may react. Setites have learned through sometimes terminal trial and error to back off when they may be crossing some forbidden line. When true Voodoo ceremonies are under way, the Setites can only sit back and hope the *ongan* has no special reason to hate them.

The forces summoned up during these ceremonies can be far more than any Setite on the island would care to anger. If directed at a Kindred or her minions, the spirits can possess her, forcing even a Vampire to take actions ranging from the embarrassing to the fatal. Other spirits can attack her and her followers, disrupt their businesses, families and friends, or even just follow them around, harassing them at every opportunity.

Additionally, these spirits can possess followers of the *ongan*, greatly enhancing their strength and making them a match for any ghoul and even the Kindred. These possessed worshippers, also known as *serviteurs*, carry out their masters' wishes with no regards to their own safety or lives. Furthermore, they are often aided by the *ongan's* other tools,



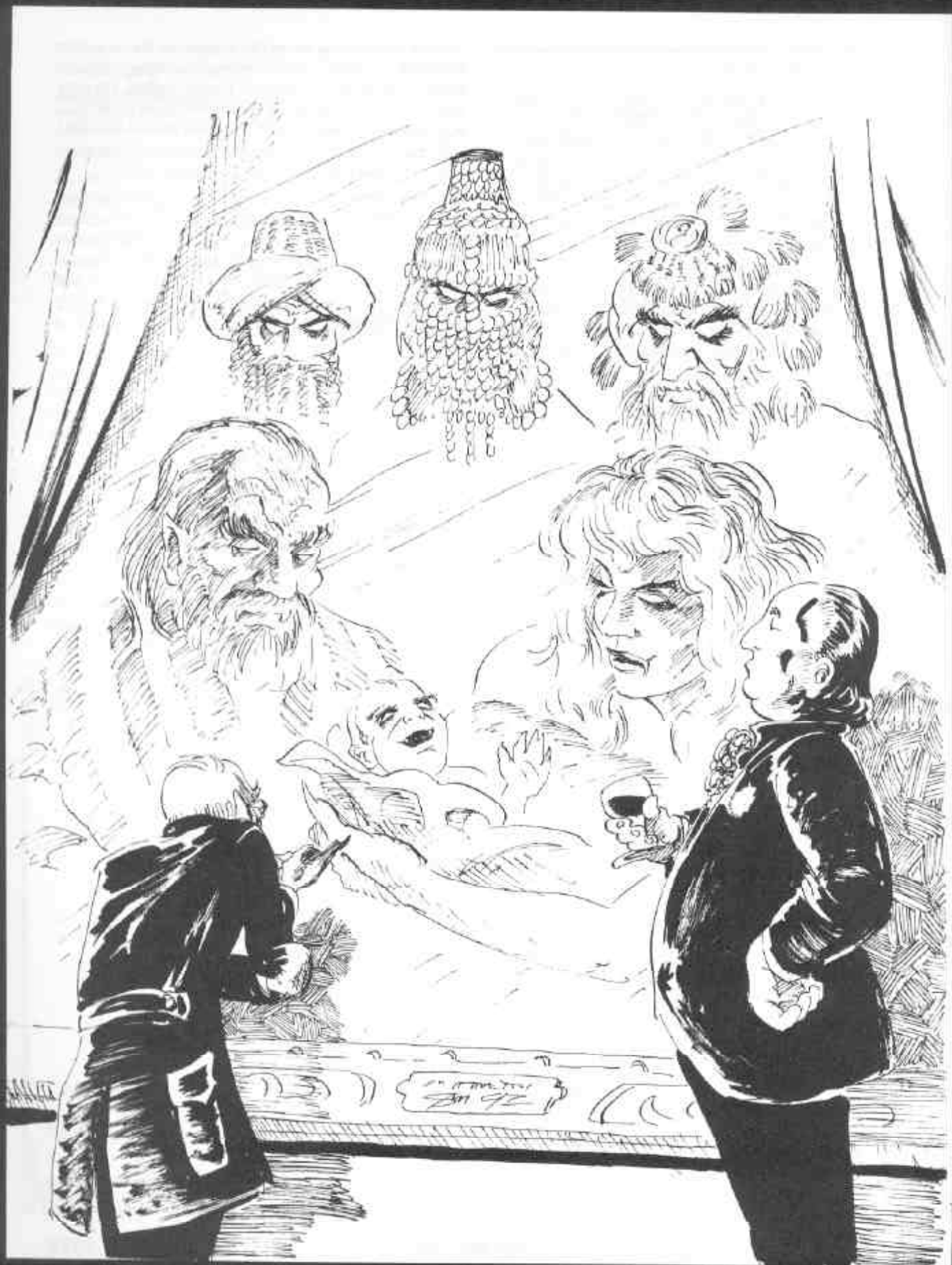
including animals under similar possession, elementals, and even animated, non-sentient corpses.

Luckily for the Cainites of the country, it is a very rare event an *ongan* will send out these supernatural death squads. Still, the Setites remain on guard against the spies of these priests, and send their own spies to find out what they plan. There is a great deal of competition for worshippers, and some Setites, despite the efforts they put into manipulating their followers, are never completely sure who is loyal and who may follow one of the independent *ongans*.

Even with the threat these priests pose, however, Ogwon and some other Setites go to great efforts to involve them in various plots. After all, the independent *ongans* often view themselves as pure followers of Voodoo, and there is little Setites prefer to corrupt than those who consider themselves pure.

Other supernatural forces like lupines and faeries exist in the country's interior, but their strength is nothing compared to that of the mortal and immortal Voodoo leaders. The same may well be said of the non-Setite Kindred on the island, most of whom are centered around the capital of Port-au-Prince. Still, they must be considered in any Setite plan, and none can ever be sure they have taken all threats into account.

Finally, the Society of Leopold has long worried about Vampiric influence on the island, and the fall of Aristide has increased their concern. Currently, a number of their agents have come to the island, using the strength of the Catholic church in the country to aid them. Few are aware of their presence, however, and some hope Haiti may finally give them the evidence they need to prove the existence of Vampires to the world.



The Vampire Club

Written by Frank Frey, Art by Jon Skoglund

It's an odd thing that anyone who disappears was said to be seen in San Francisco. It must be a delightful city and possess all the attractions of the next world.

—Oscar Wilde

Introduction

Unlike many other clubs where both mortal and Kindred mix, the Vampire Club of San Francisco is exclusively for Vampires and their Retainers. The Club, famous world wide for its "open door" policy, welcomes any Vampires in relatively good standing with the rest of the Kindred. This gives the Vampire Club its unique cosmopolitan flavor where Los Angeles Anarchs rub shoulders with London Ventrue to the background of a babble of different languages and accents. All manner of dress and costume can be seen. Whatever your tastes, the Vampire Club can usually accomodate them.

History

The Vampire Club began its existence as, of all things, a luxury yacht. In 1902, Lord Cyrus Wakefield, a virtually penniless English nobleman, settled in San Francisco. Within two years, he rebuilt his fortune by investing in foreign trade. To celebrate his regained fortune, Lord Wakefield commissioned the building of a luxury yacht. He christened it "The Royal Phoenix" and intended it to be a floating palace. His idea was to be able to sail wherever he wished and still be able to maintain his luxurious lifestyle. He wanted to show the world that he had indeed risen from the ashes.

The yacht itself was a technological marvel of its day. Steel-hulled, with twin oil-fired steam turbine engines, the Royal Phoenix boasted every modern luxury, including electric lights and gold plated toilet fixtures. The ship could do an impressive 18 knots top speed. "She was a beautiful ship," one maritime historian commented, "with the speed of a greyhound and the dignity of a clipper ship."

The Royal Phoenix was launched on December 18, 1905. A week later, Lord Wakefield held a gala Christmas party

that was the talk of the town and set sail for Hawaii the next day. On the way there, he celebrated New Year's Eve in grand style. He returned from his "Christmas Cruise" at the end of January. From then on, he declared he would live aboard his yacht, and live he did. It wasn't long before rumors began circulating about his debauched behaviour. His private parties aboard the yacht became the subject of much speculation, but then this was San Francisco and you could get away with just about anything as long as you did it with style.

Reality, however, began to close in on Lord Wakefield. Beginning in the middle of February, 1906, his investments began to go bad. At first, this seemed to have no effect on the high-living patrician. He continued his rounds of merrymaking as if there were no tomorrow. As his fortune dwindled, Lord Wakefield seemed determined to enjoy himself as much as possible. He indulged in all manner of vices including opium smoking and pedophilia. His family in England wanted little or nothing to do with him.

The bill came due on March 23. Lord Wakefield's attorneys informed him that he had no money left. He was bankrupt. According to his attorneys, if he sold everything he had, he might just have enough to live in genteel poverty. Wakefield was thunderstruck at this news. He tried desperately to borrow money from his friends but they had none they were willing to lend him; his unsavory reputation had caught up with him. Unable or unwilling to face the reality of his situation, Lord Cyrus Wakefield blew his brains out on April 10, 1906 in the owner's suite of the Royal Phoenix.

Several of Wakefield's creditors laid claim to the yacht. Among them was Vannevar Thomas, a wealthy Vampire who had helped bankroll several of Wakefield's investment schemes. He used his Dominate Discipline to gain control of the yacht and succeeded on April 15 in gaining title to the Phoenix. He immediately began to make plans for turning it

into his own floating Haven. Nature, however, had other ideas.

April 18, 1906, is a date that lives forever in the memories of the people and Kindred of San Francisco. On that day, a massive earthquake rocked the city, followed by two days of fires. The Phoenix was lifted from its moorings by a gigantic wave and slammed ashore in the Marina District. The yacht suffered some structural damage but remained largely intact, due primarily to her reinforced steel hull. The major problem facing Thomas was that the Phoenix was on dry land, requiring a massive effort and a great deal of money to make her seaworthy again.

Vannevar Thomas had other more pressing problems. There were a number of Kindred and their Retainers who needed help in rebuilding shattered Havens or finding new ones. Salvaging the yacht was put on hold, though Thomas did purchase the tract of land the yacht sat on. He still wanted to see the Royal Phoenix restored but, as one of the Elders of San Francisco, he had responsibilities to the Domain.

In 1908, a powerful English Vampire and his retinue came to visit San Francisco. This Kindred, who called himself Endymion, was a Fifth-Generation Toreador and well-known poet. He and his people enjoyed their stay and the hospitality that they received. The highlight of the visit came when Endymion Presented his Neonate, another English man of letters named Sebastian Melmoth, to the Prince in a grand occasion with splendor and revelry still talked about today. Shortly thereafter, Endymion and his retinue returned to England. However, his Neonate, Sebastian Melmoth, wished to remain in San Francisco. Sebastian had visited San Francisco in 1882 when he was mortal, and the Prince graciously granted his request. Thus Sebastian became a resident of the Domain.

With his sharp wit and keen mind, Sebastian quickly became a favorite with the local Kindred. Among his close friends was Vannevar Thomas, who had enjoyed and admired Sebastian's work as a mortal author and was glad Sebastian had chosen San Francisco as his home. Unfortunately, Vannevar did not have much time to spend enjoying Sebastian's company. San Francisco was rebuilding and Thomas was busy helping with the reconstruction.

One of the major problems facing Thomas was what to do with the Royal Phoenix. The ship had settled deep into the muck and debris. It would cost a small fortune to salvage and Thomas was undergoing a temporary money crunch. When construction began on the Pacific International Exposition site, Thomas had to make a decision. He decided to bury the yacht and write it off as a loss.

At this point, Sebastian approached him with an idea. Why not turn the Royal Phoenix into a gathering place for Kindred? It would be a place where Vampires could come and socialize with each other without having to worry about breaking the Masquerade — a club devoted exclusively to Kindred. Thomas thought about it for a while and finally

agreed that it would be an interesting idea. The Vampire Club was born.

Vannevar Thomas began building an exposition hall above the yacht. After sunset, specially Dominated crews of workmen would go below to do the major work of restoring the yacht. The engines and machinery had already been removed and disposed of, so the majority of the work was cleaning out the accumulated muck and getting the interior ready for the decorators. Once that was done, Sebastian and several other members of the local Toreador Guild began planning the interior design. It was a labor of love for them, and much time and money was lavished on the club. This was to be someplace special.

The opening date for the Vampire Club was scheduled for October 31, 1917. A special Grand Ball was planned and invitations were sent out to many prominent Toreador Guilds. Other members of the Camarilla were also invited. Before the affair, however, Sebastian Melmoth and Vannevar Thomas sat down and had a long planning session regarding the operation of the club. It was decided that only Kindred should be allowed down into the club, allowing the Kindred to act more freely without having to worry about mortals.

Now there was another problem to be solved. What to do about the Retainers who would be "upstairs" waiting for their Kindred? Thomas thought about it for a while and came up with an idea. Why not take the exposition hall and turn it into a private club for Retainers? Sebastian liked the idea. Not only did it give the Retainers some means of entertainment (thereby keeping them out of mischief) but it also kept them close at hand. Thomas named the new enterprise the Alexandrian Club in honor of his mortal birthplace of Alexandria, Virginia.

On the evening of October 31, 1917, the first guests began to arrive. The Princes and Primogen of several major cities were in attendance as well as several renowned Toreador Artistes. For hours the cream of Kindred society mixed, talking, joking, plotting and scheming. Just before all the guests sank into sleep for the day, everyone proclaimed that they had had a wonderful time, and the Vampire Club was off to a rip-roaring start.

For the first few years, the Club was the scene of a number of sophisticated revels. Then the scene began to change. The Domain of Los Angeles was coming under siege from the influx of Anarchs. The Domain of Seattle was also beginning to show signs of strain. By the mid-1920s, the Vampire Club was becoming a favorite meeting place for members of various factions as they wove their webs of plots and counterplots. Sebastian and his staff were hard pressed at times to keep things peaceful. Fortunately for the Vampire Club, Vannevar Thomas was now Prince of San Francisco. He brought the resources of the Domain to bear when needed.

Even the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression could not put a damper on things. With the Prince's help, the Vampire Club acquired an adjacent apartment building for use as a staff residence. The partying went



on and so did the intrigue. By the time of the Club's 25th Anniversary, in 1942, the Domain of San Francisco had gained a reputation as the "Casablanca of the West Coast." If the Domain was Casablanca, then the Vampire Club was surely Rick's Cafe.

When the Domain of Los Angeles finally fell to the Anarchs in 1944, business at the Vampire Club slowed down. Despite Sebastian's best assurances, many members of the Camarilla cancelled their plans to visit the Club out of fear that Anarchs would strike them down. Weeks would go by with no new visitors. Still, Sebastian maintained his tradition

of the "Open Door". It was his dream, his vision, and he was not going to see it changed.

The end of World War II brought a new "life" to the Vampire Club. With tens of thousands of American servicemen and women passing through San Francisco on their way to the Pacific during the war, the city became the happy hunting ground for many Kindred. It showed the Camarilla that despite the anarchy surrounding it, the Domain of San Francisco was still a relatively safe place to visit. Business at the Vampire Club picked up again and soon things were back to normal. The intrigue took on an international flavor as a

number of European Kindred would meet at the Club to discuss the situation on the Continent and what to do about it. Sebastian was delighted as his and the Club's prestige grew once more.

During the postwar period, the Vampire Club became the scene of one of the most dramatic episodes in recent Camarilla history. In 1946, a Conclave called by the Prince of San Francisco led to several weeks of heated negotiations. The end result, the Palatine Treaty, was signed in the Main Salon and gave the Domain of San Francisco an unheard-of amount of autonomy.

The Palatine Treaty not only made the Domain of San Francisco but the Vampire Club as well. The Club was now recognized throughout the Kindred world as the place to come for business and pleasure. In 1967, Sebastian staged the Kindred version of the "Summer of Love" to celebrate the Club's 50th Anniversary, bringing Elders and Anarchs together from throughout California and across the world. Many of the Camarilla stayed away but those who went came back with a better understanding of Anarchs and their motives. The Anarchs, at least the more intellectually inclined, gained new perspectives on the Elders. All present came up with new schemes to do in the others with. Several prominent Camarilla members, including Lodin, Prince of Chicago, boycotted the Club and still do to this day.

The Earthquake of 1989 did little to harm the Club. While several blocks of the Marina District were devastated, the Vampire Club, the Alexandrian Club and the Westminster Apartments escaped with only minor damage, though the Club did suspend operations for a few weeks until the media frenzy died down. Today, the Vampire Club is still going strong after 75 years. As the Club's creator, Sebastian Melmoth says, "We've survived Prohibition, anarchy, and earthquakes in the first seventy-five years. Who knows what the rest of eternity may bring? It should be interesting, to say the least."

Exterior Description

Structurally, both buildings are quite sound. They were built in the period following the Great Earthquake of 1906, and have walls made of triple-layered brick with reinforced window and door frames. The windows are constructed from doubly thick bulletproof glass and the doors are massive solid oak with brass fixtures. Both buildings give a general impression of age, gentility and durability. On the wall next to the main gate is a large brass plaque which read "The Alexandrian Club. Founded 1917. Private. Members Only." There is a security guard at the gate 24 hours a day.

The grounds themselves are well-kept and the small lot between the Alexandrian and the Westminster features several pieces of sculpture by various artists. The centerpiece is a metal sculpture by Alexander Calder. There are several benches and tables there for use by the club members. There is also a small flower garden with a stone walkway for those who appreciate the beauty of nature.

Interior Description

The interior of the Alexandrian Club is even more impressive than its exterior. No expense was spared on its interior decoration. The rooms are as follows:

Foyer and Reception Area

This large (35 x 50 foot) area is the first thing guests see. Paintings and photographs adorn the oak-panelled walls and a large Persian carpet covers the parquet wood floor. There are several sofas and chairs for the comfort of the guests.

Off to the right, in an alcove, is the courtesy desk. This is a large, classic mahogany desk where guests check in. A staff member on duty 24 hours a day not only registers guests but helps Kindred and their Retainers with a number of services, including car rental, tours, tickets to various social events and hotel reservations.

Behind the courtesy desk is the office of Michelle Stevens, the day manager of the Alexandrian Club. The office decor matches that of the rest of the foyer. Michelle can be found in the office from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on most days. Any problems that crop up during the day are handled through her.

The Main Lounge

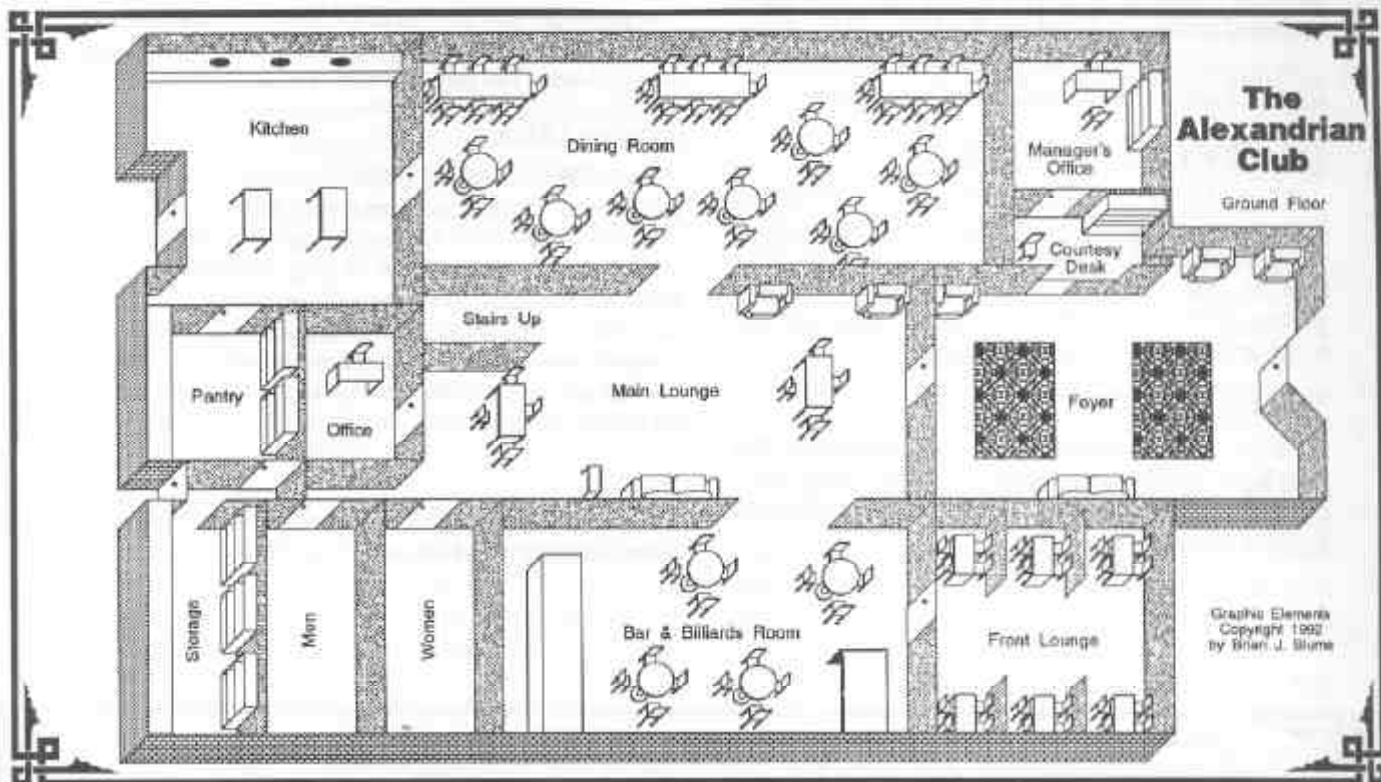
Through the large double oak doors at the far end of the reception is the main lounge. This is a large area with wall-to-wall carpeting and teakwood paneling. Large easy chairs, coffee tables, and sofas dot the area. Massive burgundy velvet drapes outline the windows and are drawn every evening at sunset.

The overall atmosphere of the main lounge is one of quiet gentility. Here, the Kindred and their Retainers can relax, catch up on local gossip, plan their activities, and generally take a break from the frantic pace of unlife. Rowdy, boisterous behaviour is frowned upon. If the offending parties persist then active measures are taken by the security staff to bring them into line.

The Dining Room

Off to the right of the main lounge, another pair of double doors leads to the Dining Room. The decor here is much the same as the main lounge except that tables and chairs take the place of the sofas and easy chairs of the main lounge. The linen, crystal and place settings are of the finest quality. Every now and again one of the silver place settings finds its way into a guest's luggage; although officially frowned on, such incidents are treated more as pranks than anything else.

Meals are served buffet style from long tables filled with various types of dishes. The cuisine is uniformly excellent. The breakfast buffet is from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., lunch is from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and dinner is served from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.. After sundown, the dining room is closed off from the main lounge as many Kindred find the sight and smell of food to be repulsive.



From midnight to about an hour before sunrise, the back half of the dining room is partitioned off. A buffet of cold cuts, fruit, cheese, and bread is set out for any Retainers or Kindred who feel the need for a late-night snack (other than the obvious). The front half of the dining room then becomes an extension of the main lounge, but can also be reserved for special occasions between midnight and four. One of the most recent examples was when a coterie of Ventrué from Atlanta staged a wine-tasting party for their Retainers.

In back of the dining room is the kitchen. It has been recently remodeled with new grills and other improvements. The kitchen staff is on duty from 6 a.m. to midnight. There is also a well stocked pantry/wine room.

At the back of the main lounge is the night manager's office. Every night from dusk to dawn, Tex R. Cainen oversees the operations of the Alexandrian Club. Tex, an Eighth-Generation Toreador, serves as host, entertainment director, and plays a mean blues guitar to boot. He is especially skilled at working with mortals and is frequently taken for one (much to his amusement).

Bar and Billiards Room

Off to the left of the main lounge is the Bar and Billiards Room. This large room is decorated in the style of a high-

class, turn-of-the-century San Francisco bar. There is plenty of oak, brass, red velvet, and Tiffany glass. The massive bar is made of mahogany with a brass rail around the bottom. The bar is well stocked with only the finest liquor, as befits the overall genteel hedonism of the club. The tables and booths are also made of oak.

Towards the rear of the bar is a large classic billiards table. Originally part of the fixtures on board the *Royal Phoenix*, the table was brought up from the yacht when the Alexandrian Club was built. Although many of the more modern Kindred and their Retainers prefer video games, the table still draws quite a crowd. Sebastian Melmoth himself has been known to put in an appearance every now and again for a game or two.

At the front of the bar is another door leading into a very different kind of lounge. The decor here is very modern, with chrome and black leather in abundance. Lighting is very dim and there are no tables, just booths and alcoves. It has recently gotten the nickname of "Ten Forward." This is a place for quiet and intense conversations (not to mention intrigues and plotting).

The bar is open from noon to 2 a.m., seven days a week. During the day, there is only one bartender on duty. After sundown, there are two. There is no waitstaff so patrons just

belly up to the bar, get their drinks and find a seat. Although some may find this an inconvenience, it does cut down on the number of people required to run the place.

At the far end of the Main Lounge is a large, ornate staircase leading to the facilities on the second floor.

The Library and Reading Room

A large, L-shaped room lined with floor to ceiling with bookshelves, the reading room features comfortable chairs and small tables for furniture. The books themselves range from the great classics of literature to the latest techno-thrillers. There is also a wide selection of magazines and newspapers. This room is open all day.

The Map Room

Next to the library is a smaller room with large tables. This room houses a collection of maps and atlases both antique and modern. There are also a number of city guidebooks available here as well.

Gallery

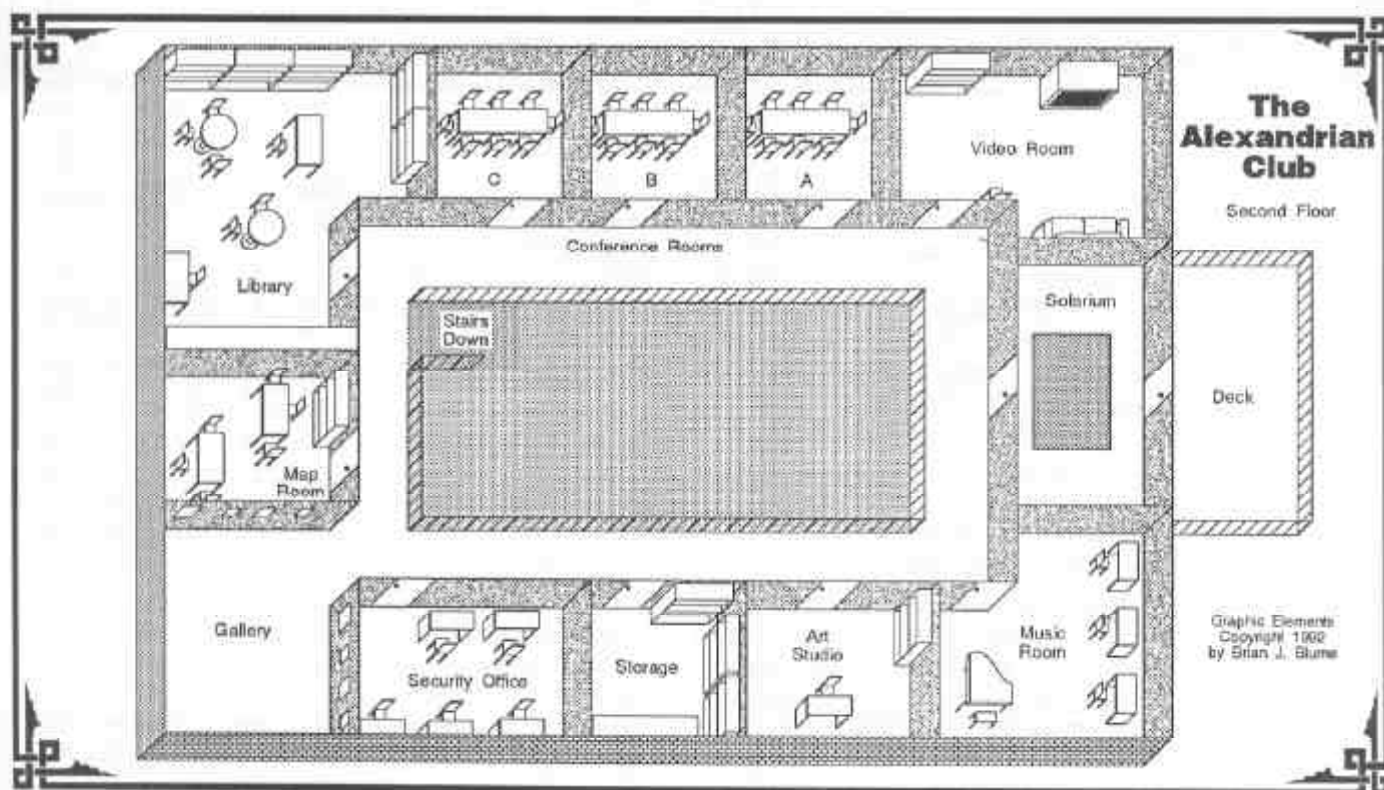
A large open area devoted to the display of various works of art, it is considered to be a status coup to have your work displayed here. The gallery is also open at all times.

Security Office

This room is not open to guests. The door, walls, and floor are heavily reinforced. Inside are several desks with computer terminals, two banks of TV monitors and a communications console. The weapons locker is well stocked with eight tasers, six H&K MP-5SD submachineguns, a dozen sharpened stakes, and various other restraint devices. There are always two security personnel on duty here with several more roaming around the club. All telecommunications into and out of the Club go through here.

Storage

Just as the name implies, this room is not open to guests either. Usually the club keeps nothing of interest here, but on



at least one occasion, a guest, staked after getting out of hand, was left here for several days.

Art Studio

A small but well-equipped art studio is provided for the use of the guests. There are several lockers containing art supplies of various types. The studio is available by reservation only.

Music Room

Actually more of a mini-recording studio, complete with grand piano, synthesizers and a state-of-the-art mixing board. The walls are soundproofed and there are plenty of electrical outlets for plugging in. Guests are expected to provide their own sound technicians. Like the art studio, this room is available by reservation only.

The Solarium

A large open room with a hardwood floor and pastel walls, the Solarium is generally used as an exercise room by the guests. There are a number of mats and several exercise machines for those who wish to improve or maintain their physiques. Two large French doors lead to a sun deck for those Retainers who wish to work on their tans. The view of San Francisco Bay is spectacular no matter what time of day or night it is. Many Kindred find the deck a great place to enjoy the night and its beauty.

Video Room

The Video Room was originally designed as a small screening room for movies. As electronics technology became more and more common, the room was remodelled in 1982 to accommodate a large screen television. A satellite dish on the roof of the club provides more viewing channels than anyone could imagine. A video cassette library of over 5,000 titles caters to all tastes. There are also several private viewing booths as well. The decor is art deco at its best (or worst, depending on your tastes). The Video Room is open at all times and can also be reserved for special viewings.

Conference Rooms

There are three spacious conference rooms on the second floor. The decor is Victorian, with a large oak table and highbacked chairs in each one. There are also several couches and easy chairs as well. The walls are panelled in oak and are soundproofed to insure a measure of privacy. Once a day, a member of the security staff electronically sweeps the rooms to remove any unwanted listening devices. Over the years, these rooms have been used for everything from plotting the overthrow of a Prince to marathon poker games to romantic trysts. They are available through reservation although they are usually kept open when the Club is exceptionally busy.

The Vampire Club

Under the staircase in the main lounge of the Alexandrian Club is a small alcove. In this alcove is a large oak door marked "Private". In 75 years, no mortal has ever gone beyond that door and returned alive. It is the doorway to the Vampire Club itself.

Beyond the door is a passageway leading down with 13 stone steps. According to tradition, the steps represent the 13 clans of Vampiric lore. On the right hand wall is a mural depicting Orpheus' descent into the underworld, while on the left is a mural depicting the various stages of Vampiric existence. The lighting is provided a few electric candle holders. The overall impression is that of a descent into the underworld. Well, it is.

At the bottom of the stairs is another massive oak door. Carved into it is a depiction of Cerberus, the three-headed dog legend says guards the gates of Hades. There is a large brass ring which serves as a door knocker in the mouth of the middle head. According to tradition, Kindred must knock three times. The door then swings open.

To a first-time Kindred guest, the Main Salon may seem rather bizarre after the passageway. It looks like the main salon of a luxury yacht, which it is. The decor is best described as "Victorian Excess." Paintings of various sailing ships hang on the walls, giving the whole room a somewhat jaunty nautical air. There are couches and chairs and even a large crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The port-holes are sealed. Any Kindred looking through them will see nothing but blackness.

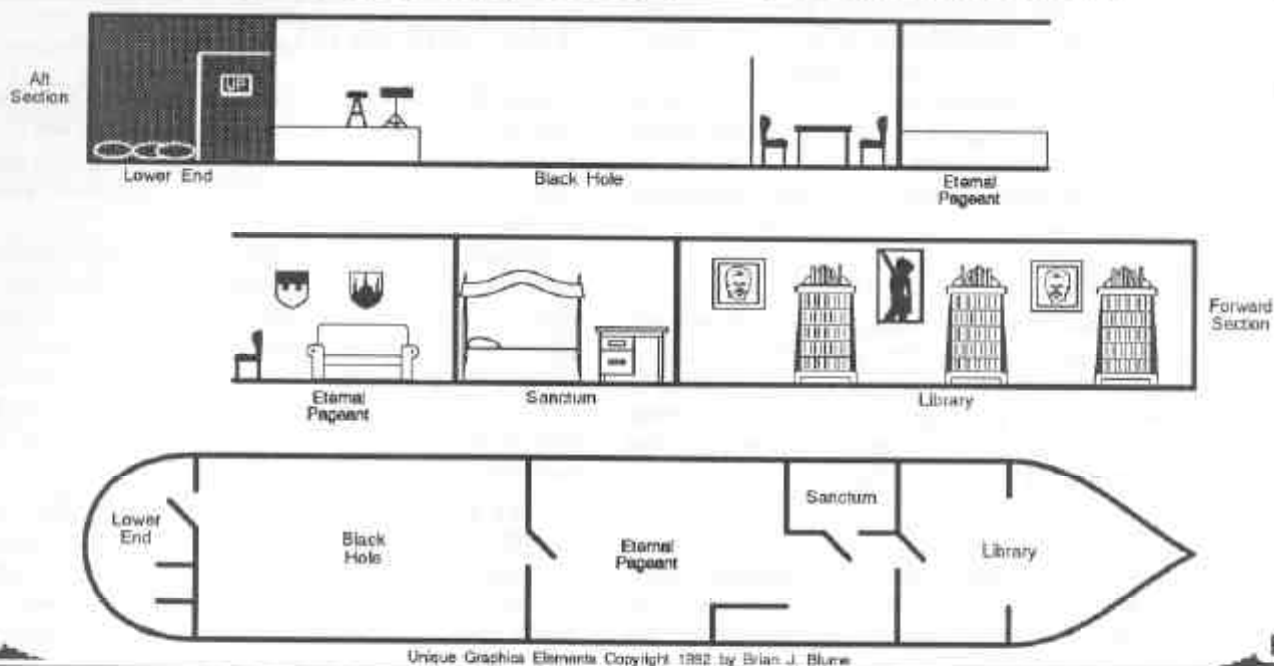
Forward of the Main Salon is the Da Vinci Salon. The theme of this room is the Renaissance: period furniture is everywhere, along with various pieces of sculpture. Most notable are life-size statues of Niccolò Machiavelli and Dante Alighieri. On one wall are portraits of the Borgias and the DeMedicis. In a small alcove is a portrait of an unnamed Eastern European nobleman.

On the other wall are several large murals. The first is a dark parody of the Nativity Scene. The Child is a young Kindred, while his parents are representations of Cain and Lilith. The Three Wise Men are represented as a trio of demonic figures while the "cattle" in the Manger are human beings.

The second mural depicts a strange version of "The Crucifixion." In it, a Christ-like Cainite is shown hanging from a cross while a rather animalistic Roman centurion drives a stake through his heart. A hauntingly beautiful Mary Magdalene looks on. The entire scene is dark and gloomy.

The third mural shows a bestial-looking figure erupting from the ground in front of a cave. Bat-winged angels look on

THE VAMPIRE CLUB - LOWER DECK



and a shadowy group of Kindred form a choir. These murals have stirred some controversy among the Kindred, but none can deny their sinister beauty and compelling power.

The ceiling of the Salon is painted in a dark parody of Michaelangelo's "The Creation," and the walls at either end are hung with small tapestries. Lighting is provided by electric candles and is designed to accentuate the paintings and sculpture.

At the far end of the Da Vinci Salon is a classical Greek doorway. This door leads to the Parthenon Room where the theme is the Ancient World. There are no chairs here, just couches to recline on. There is a representation of a classical Greek stairway at one end of the salon. Here, Kindred philosophers may present their ideas in an appropriate setting. Busts of famous figure from the period, including Homer, Plato, Hannibal, Caesar and Alexander the Great, line the walls.

The walls themselves are covered with mosaics depicting scenes from ancient history. The Siege of Troy, the Fall of Carthage and the Fall of Rome are represented. One wall is devoted to the Odyssey while part of another wall tells the story of the Aenead. One of the most interesting mosaics shows the founding of Carthage. Lighting comes from a number of electric braziers located around the room.

At the other end of the Main Salon is another doorway that leads to the Voltaire Salon with its theme of the Enlightenment. The decor is classic French and the artwork complements it. Busts of Voltaire, Rousseau and Hobbes are to be found here. There is a large portrait of Lord Byron on one wall while the other has several smaller portraits of figures such as John Keats, Frederick the Great, Catherine the Great of

Russia, and of course King Louis XIV of France. There is a small mural on the other wall depicting the signing of the Declaration of Independence with a bust of Thomas Jefferson located next to it.

There is a harpsichord in one corner of the room along with several music stands. Above it hang portraits of Mozart, Bach and Beethoven. The room is generally much more brightly lit than other parts of the club.

On the other side of the Voltaire Salon is the After House. There is no particular theme to this room. Several Impressionist paintings hang on the walls, and the couches and chairs are large and comfortable. It is designed primarily as a quiet place to sit and reflect on what one has seen and heard. The lighting is dim and the overall air is one of quiet contemplation. Behind the After House is the Upper End. It is a small relatively cramped area that is kept constantly in total darkness. It is used as a storage area, though many a visiting Nosferatu have found it to be quite comfortable. There is a small staircase here which leads down to the Lower Deck.

There is a large staircase in the Main Salon which also leads to the Lower Deck. At the bottom of the stairs is a large area called the Eternal Pageant. The lighting is a dim blood red. Along one wall are 13 large paintings, each one representing one of the 13 clans. On the other wall is a large mural representing a Vampire's progress towards Golconda. There are chairs, couches, tables and cushions in all styles. A small stage is in one corner of the room.

Here the ongoing psychodrama of Vampiric life is played out. It is hard to tell at times what is artistic fantasy and what is grim reality. Sebastian considers himself the author and

many Kindred think he deliberately manipulates them for dramatic purposes. Others do not care. To them the Eternal Pageant is a place to revel in their existence. Gossip, plots, intrigues, even the occasional Frenzy are all played out here in song, dance, drama and verse.

Forward of the Pageant is a small, heavily-armored room. This is Sebastian's Sanctum. It is furnished in late-Victorian style, complete with a four-poster bed. Here Sebastian sleeps away the daylight hours and prepares for the night's revels. No one but Sebastian and his current lover are allowed in. The door is kept locked during the night and only Sebastian has the key.

Beyond the Sanctum is the Library, occupying the forward end of the yacht. The decor is French Provincial. There is a large portrait of a young, nude, Mary Shelley on one wall, and interspersed among the bookshelves are photographs and portraits of famous authors. Among them are Bram Stoker, Edgar Allen Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, Ambrose Bierce, Stephen King, Robert Bloch and Clive Barker. Some are even autographed.

There are more than 2,000 volumes here, all concerning horror and the supernatural. The primary emphasis, of course, is on Vampires.

Aside from fiction, there are numerous "serious" works by such authors as Charles Fort and Montague Summers. There

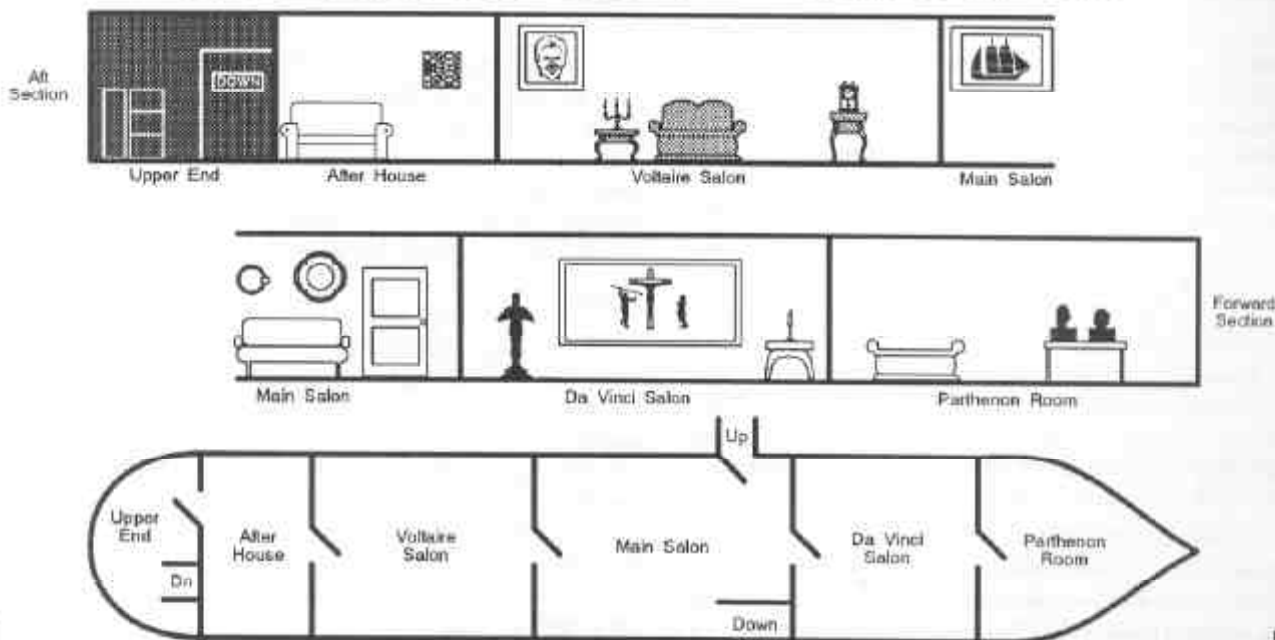
is also a large "History of the Camarilla." It should be noted that this book is regarded as a work in progress. There are also several diaries and Clan books by Kindred themselves. Only the authors know whether they are fact, fiction or a mixture of both.

At the other end of the Eternal Pageant is a doorway leading into The Black Hole. This room got its name from the fact that it used to be the engine room of the yacht. Traditionally, the boiler room crews on board a vessel are known as the "Black Hole Gang." Sebastian liked the name and he kept it. Over the years, the Black Hole has served as the dance room of the Vampire Club. There is a small stage in one corner of the room which has had virtually every type of Kindred musical group perform on it. From classical string quartets to Dixieland jazz to rap groups, the stage has served as a showcase for aspiring musicians.

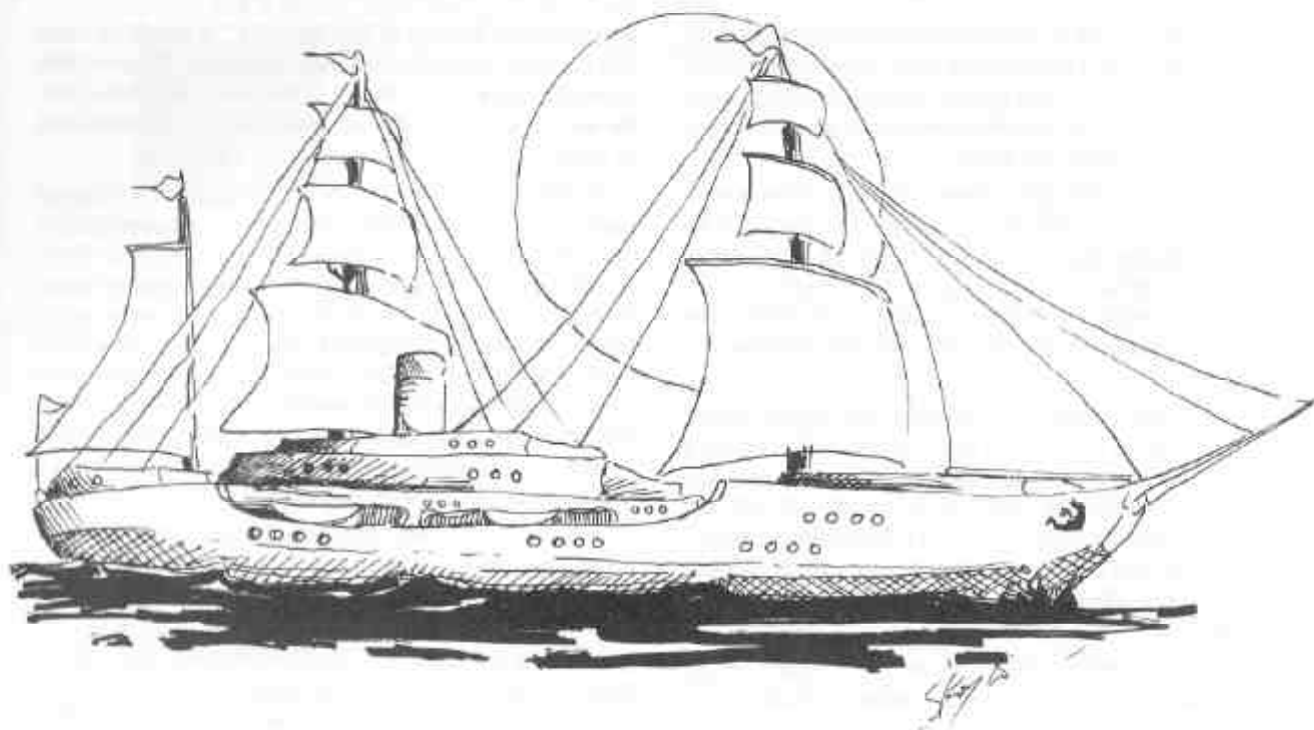
The walls are heavily baffled and painted black. The floor is steel, painted a dark burgundy. Small booths line the wall and the lighting is dim to nonexistent. This room is favored by younger Licks who enjoy dancing, socializing, and complaining about their Elders. The Black Hole has also been the scene of some epic Brujah Rants. Sebastian has been known to join in on occasion and has gained the respect of a number of Brujah for his wit and insight.

Behind the Black Hole is the Lower End, which is pretty much like its upstairs counterpart. This room is always kept

THE VAMPIRE CLUB - UPPER DECK



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in total darkness. There are numerous cushions scattered about the floor. Here, many a Kindred couple have shared blood and engaged in other amorous pursuits.

Socializing

Etiquette

As Sebastian Melmoth is fond of saying, "I don't care what you do here as long as you don't annoy the other guests and don't endanger the Masquerade." Discretion is the key word for the Alexandrian Club and Kindred are responsible for the behaviour of their Retainers. While a certain amount of rowdiness is to be expected, too much will draw the attention of the security staff. The first time the offending Kindred and their Retainers will be warned. The second time usually results in a temporary barring from the club. The third time – well, the least severe of the consequences is being black-balled from the club.

In the Vampire Club itself, just about anything goes. After all, the only ones to see you are other Kindred. The one thing not permitted down there or anywhere else on the club grounds is Diablerie. There are no warnings for this. Offenders will be disposed of on the spot.

There is no "official" dress code for the Club. It is pretty much come as you are or want to be seen. It is not uncommon, however, for Kindred and their Retainers to dress their best for an appearance at the Club. This is especially true of the Ventrue and Toreador Clans.

Customarily, out-of-town guests notify the Club management ahead of time about their plans to visit. This gives the staff some lead time to make any special arrangements necessary. Local Kindred generally just show up, and many of them are long-time habitués of the club. Their habits and tastes are well known to the staff. On the average, about six to 12 Kindred and their Retainers can be found visiting the club at any given time. During special occasions, such as the Grand Masque Ball on Halloween, this number increases dramatically.

As Kindred are responsible for their Retainers' behaviour, they are also responsible for paying their bills. The Club offers food and drink at reasonable prices. The cost of using the facilities varies, but is generally inexpensive. Any damage done to club property and personnel is also expected to be paid for. Credit can be extended but only under special circumstances. Kindred themselves, of course, pay nothing.

Security

As one might expect, security at the club is extremely tight. The outer grounds are crisscrossed with a maze of sensors and there is a security camera at every gate. The guardhouse at the Main Gate is heavily reinforced with bulletproof glass. There are a series of sensors in the Foyer and Reception Area that give the Security Office a good idea of who's Kindred and who isn't. There is an alarm system for the entire building that gives the exact location of any breakin. Every room can be sealed off to isolate any potentially explosive situations.

Fire protection for the Alexandrian Club is provided by a sophisticated detection system. In the event of an outbreak of fire, the room is sealed off and flooded with inert halogen gas.

Over the years, there have been only a few minor fires at the Alexandrian Club and these have been quickly dealt with.

The security for the Vampire Club is even more stringent. The upper door is oak with a steel core, and has three deadbolts. They are secured every morning by the Alexandrian Club's night manager, Tex R. Cainen, while on his way down to the Vampire Club. He is also responsible for unlocking them every evening and greeting the waiting Kindred with a cheerful "Hello devils, welcome to Hell!" There is also a TV camera discreetly located over the door, with a monitor located in Sebastian's Sanctum. The passageway itself has a low-light television camera to help keep an eye on the comings and goings of the Kindred guests. The door at the bottom of stairway is built the same way, complete with three heavy-duty deadbolts.

Inside the Vampire Club, the doors to all the rooms can be closed and locked by remote control. Sebastian carries the electronic key around with him, a fact which has proven especially helpful when things get too rough-and-tumble in the Black Hole. In the event of a major brawl, Sebastian just seals off the doors and lets everybody in there get by as best they can. By means of a TV camera, he keeps an eye on the violence, making note of who does what and to whom. If it dies down to a civilized level, he will open the doors again. If it goes on, he leaves instructions for a specially trained security team to come in during the day and "tidy the place up a bit." The members of this team are the only humans Sebastian would allow down in the Club. He has not had occasion to use them ... yet. None of the guests know of the existence of this team. It is Sebastian's ace in the hole.

Fire protection is the same as for the Alexandrian Club. Considering the fact that there is no circulation down in the Vampire Club, what air is down there is rather on the stale side. But after all, who breathes down there anyway? (The special security team uses oxygen masks.) In the unlikely event of a fire, a halogen gas system is used like the one upstairs.

The security staff consists of eight men and four women. All are ex-military, and are now Ghouls Blood Bound to Sebastian. They are well-trained in the martial arts and weapons use. The security staff is quiet and unobtrusive most of the time. They only make their presence felt when necessary. They are tastefully dressed in black and gold (the colors of the City of San Francisco) like the rest of the staff.

Given the level of security and fire protection, it is not unusual for Kindred guests to use the Vampire Club as a temporary Haven. Sebastian doesn't mind since there is generally plenty of room and it means the party keeps on going the next night.

Kine Relations

The 75 years of the Vampire Club's existence have been marked by low-key relations with the mortal world. Any and all contact is handled through the Alexandrian Club. There

has never been any trouble or any cause for the police to be called. The Alexandrian Club pumps money into the local economy and keeps a low profile, a policy that reaps great dividends in San Francisco. The buildings and grounds are well-kept, fire and health inspectors are either bribed or Dominated to look the other way and the relevant food and liquor licenses are kept current while any local, state or federal taxes are paid promptly.

Several years ago a group of civil rights crusaders applied for membership. When they were turned down, they threatened a lawsuit. At a private meeting, they were informed by officials to forget the lawsuit because they did not have a leg to stand on. The manager of the Alexandrian Club, Michelle Stevens (a black woman) attended the meeting. She told the activists the club was multiracial but membership was strictly limited. The group decided to go ahead with their lawsuit anyway, only to have it thrown out of court.

Kindred Relations

The Vampire Club and the Palatinate of San Francisco have a long and cordial relationship. The Palatine Council often meets at the Club and will mobilize its Vigilance Committee to assist with security at the Club if necessary. In return, the local Retainers may always visit the Club at no cost.

When political clout is needed, as in the case of the civil rights suit, the Council has always backed the Club. They have even gone head to head with some of the Camarilla, a fact Sebastian appreciates and responds to, in kind, whenever he can.

One of the most interesting relationships is the one between the Vampire Club and the Assamite Clan. In 75 years, no Assamite has performed an assassination anywhere on club property. Rumors abound as to why this is so; some say that Sebastian pays them off, others say the Assamites like to use the Vampire Club as a place to meet potential employers. Whatever the reason, only Sebastian and the Elders of the Assamite Clan know the truth, and they are not telling anybody.

Incredibly enough, even a number of Anarchs hold the Club in respect. They like it because it is a neutral meeting ground. Here the laws of the Camarilla are secondary to the laws of "civilized behaviour." There have been several attempts in the past by groups of younger Anarchs to "crash and trash" the Club, but such attempts have always ended in dismal failure. Current rumor among the Anarchs is that someone or something very powerful is protecting the Club. Somehow, it is just not worth the pain and the trouble when there are other, easier targets closer to home.

Magi Relations

The Vampire Club has always tried to maintain cordial relations with the mystical orders of San Francisco as well as



other groups throughout the world. Many magi find the Club to be fascinating while others regard it as a blasphemy. No matter what the opinion is, however, magi leave the Club and its guests alone.

Patrons

Kindred

The Vampire Club is considered by many to be the place to go. It is a monument to the Damned and their existence unlike anything else on earth. It is a place where Neonates are taken to learn what being a Vampire is all about.

The Toreador and Ventrue Clans are the main patrons of the Club. For many aspiring Toreador Artistes, having your work displayed at the Club is considered a step up. Being asked to perform there will definitely raise one's status and that of one's Sire as well – but be careful, because failure has a high price. Another way to gain status is to be asked by Sebastian to assist him temporarily in running the Vampire

Club. It is the sort of thing that Toreador Artistes dream about.

While the majority of Toreadors who show up are Artistes, the Poseurs will also put in an appearance. This usually occurs during a grand party, and often results in sharp exchanges with the Artistes. Sebastian considers it all part of the ongoing drama of Kindred unlife.

The Ventrue enjoy the Alexandrian Club as much as they do the Vampire Club. Indeed, a number of them very rarely venture downstairs. They like the elegance and class of the Alexandrian and will often party with their Retainers. However, when sunrise comes, most make their way to the safety of the Vampire Club.

The more intellectually inclined of the Brujah Clan find the Vampire Club an ideal place to exchange ideas. The younger ones find it boring and are the ones most likely to cause trouble. No one is certain why the Malkavians show up. They may not even know themselves. They do say they like the Vampire Club because it shows promise (whatever that means).

The other clans only put in an occasional appearance. The Tremere consider San Francisco to be a dangerous place because of the number and power of human occultists. The Nosferatu and Gangrel prefer their own company while the Followers of Set and the Assamites will show up only when business requires them to. The Giovanni have only attended once in the club's history, while the Ravnos find the club's security too restrictive. Caitiff, however, find the Club's open door policy to be a refreshing change from the usual social stigma that is their daily lot, but most Anarchs find the Vampire Club boring. When they come to San Francisco, they prefer to party at local nightspots like the I-Beam or DV8.

Magi

Occasionally, some of the members of the local occult orders will drop in at the Club. They never go downstairs, preferring instead the camaraderie of the Alexandrian Club. Usually, they are magi from either the Collegium Hermeticum or the Sisterhood of Salem. Sebastian encourages the Magi to visit. Recently, however, the visits have become more and more infrequent. It is a source of concern for Sebastian as to why this is so.

Other Places

There are two other Kindred-owned clubs in San Francisco. The first is the Bird of Paradise Lounge. Located in the heart of the seedy and rundown Tenderloin District, this club features nude dancers (male and female) and other diverse entertainments. It is owned and operated by a Seventh-Generation Malkavian, so the action can get pretty bizarre.

The second club is called Cafe Prague. This coffee house is located in the Haight-Ashbury District. It is a favorite meeting place for visiting Brujah who enjoy its "Radical 60's" atmosphere. The owner is a Ninth-Generation Toreador Artiste.

Personnel

Oscar Wilde ("Sebastian Melmoth")

The owner/creator of the Vampire Club was born October 16, 1854 in Dublin, Ireland. The son of a wealthy physician, Oscar studied at Trinity College in Dublin and at Magdalen College, Oxford. From his youth, Oscar showed an amazing talent for writing.

After college, he attracted a great deal of attention by championing the Aesthetic School of thought. This was the "art for art's sake" school of thinking. At this time, he also was beginning to attract the attention of the Toreador Clan. Oscar expressed his beliefs in his lifestyle. He indulged in eccentric dress such as velvet knee breeches and often appeared in public with a flower or two. He was such an outspoken and public figure that he was satirized by Gilbert and Sullivan in their musical *Patience*.

Oscar overcame the initial ridicule and began to be taken seriously as the "Apostle of Aestheticism." The first volume of his poetry, aptly titled *Poems*, was published in 1881. In 1882, he had a successful tour of the United States which included a stop in San Francisco, a city Oscar fell in love with. The feeling was mutual. In 1883 and 1884, he successfully toured the British Isles, and for the next several years worked as a journalist, primarily writing book reviews. From 1887 to 1889, he edited *Woman's World* magazine. In 1888, Oscar wrote and published *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, a collection of well-received fairy stories. In 1891, he published another collection called *The House of Pomegranates*.

Oscar was more than just a writer of poems and fairy tales. In 1889, he wrote *The Portrait of Mr. W.H.*, a theory about Shakespeare's sonnets. He wrote about social problems in 1891 in an essay titled *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*. He also wrote other essays noted for their wit and charm. His only novel, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, was published in 1890. It was widely criticized for its supposed immorality.

It is as a playwright that Wilde really made his mark. Although his first two plays, *Vera* (written in 1880) and *The Duchess of Padua* (written in 1883) were considered unsuccessful, Oscar continued on. His major breakthrough came with the 1892 production of *Lady Windemere's Fan*. His next three plays were even more successful and acclaimed than his first one; Oscar's star was definitely on the rise.

In 1891, Oscar met Lord Alfred Douglas, the third son of the Marquis of Queensbury. For reasons still unknown, he became infatuated with the young man and appeared everywhere in his company. Unfortunately, Lord Alfred dragged Oscar into the ongoing feud between himself and his father,

the Marquis. The uproar led to Oscar's suing the Marquis for libel. Unfortunately, the case collapsed in court. In 1895, Oscar was tried for homosexual offenses, found guilty, and sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labor. He also went bankrupt in November of that same year. The press, which had lionized him before, now vilified him with an even greater fervor.

After spending two horrendous years in prison, Oscar moved to France. He wrote of his prison experiences in the powerful *Ballad of Reading Gaol*. He also wrote two letters to the press advocating prison reform. Aside from this, his literary output dropped to zero. He was disheartened by the lack of social acceptance. He spent some time in Italy but nothing seemed the same. He lived a quiet life of comparative poverty, entertaining a small circle of friends.

Unknown to Oscar, one of these friends was a retainer of the Toreador Elder known as Endymion. Endymion had followed Oscar's career, and felt that perhaps the Embrace would give him new inspiration. Endymion approached Oscar in Paris in early October. At first, Oscar was sceptical of Endymion's claims but, after an appearance at the Paris Grand Ball on Halloween, he was ready for the Embrace. Oscar faked his own death a month later and joined the ranks of the Damned.

Today, as Sebastian Melmoth, owner/creator of the Vampire Club, Oscar enjoys a great deal of fame and respect among the Kindred. He is regarded by his fellow Toreadors as a prime example of what being a Toreador is all about. He is a major figure among the Artistes and even the Poseurs give him a grudging respect. After all, he's thrown the longest continuing party anyone of them can remember and, if he has his way, the party and the art will go on forever.

Sire: Endymion

Clan: Toreador

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Generation: Sixth

Embrace: 1900 (born 1854)

Apparent Age: mid-40s

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 6, Wits 7

Talents: Alertness 4, Empathy 4, Intimidation 2, Leadership 4, Subterfuge 4, Diplomacy 3, Intrigue 4, Poetic Expression 5, Seduction 4, Sense Deception 3,

Skills: Etiquette 4, Bribery 3, Carousing 4, Debate 4, Fast Talk 2, Game Playing 3, Journalism 3, Meditation 2, Public Speaking 4, Writing 5

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (San Francisco) 4, Area Knowledge (London) 2, Area Knowledge (Paris) 2, Art History 3, Bureaucracy 2, Finance 1, Law 2, Occult 3, Politics 2, Faerie Lore 2, History 3, Kindred Lore 4, City

Secrets (San Francisco) 4, Literature 5, Lupine Lore 1, Magus Lore 3, Theology 3

Disciplines: Auspex 5, Celerity 2, Dominate 4, Presence 6

Backgrounds: Allies 6, Contacts 6, Status 4, Clan Prestige 5

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self Control 2, Courage 5

Merits: Reputation, Prestigious Sire

Flaws: Intolerance (Poseurs)

Humanity: 7

Willpower: 6

Blood Pool/ Max Per Turn: 30/6

Notes: Sebastian is a force to be reckoned with in the world of the Kindred. As the owner/creator of the Vampire Club, he is privy to many secrets. Yet for all of that, he remains a gracious, fun-loving individual. He tries to spend as much time as possible with all the Kindred guests. Sebastian has a soft spot in his heart for Caitiffs, as he knows what it is like to be an outcast.

Image: A tall man with a slightly portly build. He wears his dark hair long and his eyes seem to sparkle with wisdom and merriment. He dresses in whatever suits his fancy. Lately, he has tended to favor black leather with silver chains.



Haven: The Vampire Club

Roleplaying Hints: Be as gracious and witty as you can. Be ready with appropriate replies and be sure to quietly sneer at any Toreador Poseurs who might cross your path. Use a lot of gestures and smile a lot except, when you talk about Art. Then become quite serious.

Tex R. Cainen (Carson Longbaugh)

Nobody really knows much about Tex. He just showed up one night in 1921 carrying a guitar and a burlap bag full of his belongings. He played for a while down in the Black Hole and became close friends with Sebastian Melmoth. He had an easy confident way with both kine and Kindred and, as a result of this, Sebastian asked him in 1923 if he would like to become the night manager of the Alexandrian Club. Tex accepted and has been there ever since.

Tex was born Carson Longbaugh in Brownsville, Texas in 1880. His father was said to be none other than Harry Longbaugh, the Sundance Kid. Carson never knew because his father was never around. As a boy, Carson used to hang around the saloons and bordellos and listen to the music. He loved music, and it was his escape from the poverty of his life.

Carson got his first guitar when he was just 10 years old. By the time he was 12, he was performing on the streets of Brownsville, where his snappy patter and smooth voice soon made him a popular figure. In 1906, he was playing music halls throughout the Southwest, and it was said that he could sing and play through the roughest brawls and gunfights. Nothing seemed to rattle him.

As the years wore on, so did Carson. The big break always seemed to elude him. No matter how smooth his patter or sharp his playing, Carson seemed doomed to always be a second-stringer. He had just about resigned himself to this fate when his life changed forever.

Lorena was a Toreador Anarch. She spotted Carson playing a little dive in Los Angeles in 1916. She took a fancy to the cowboy blues singer. Carson couldn't believe that someone as pretty as her would take a liking to him, but they became lovers. She offered him a chance to spend all eternity with her. It seemed like a good idea to Carson and she Embraced him. They stayed together for five years before disaster struck. Lorena was hunted down by the Prince of Los Angeles. Knowing that the end was near, she commanded Carson to go to San Francisco, hoping he would be safe there.

With tears in his eyes, Carson packed his bag and hit the road. He arrived at the Vampire Club and has stayed there ever since. To this day, Tex R. Cainen carries a small locket with Lorena's picture in it, and some Anarchs in the know talk about the role he played in the overthrow of L.A.'s Prince. To this day, Tex still harbors some resentment towards the Camarilla. He is, however, fiercely loyal to the Vampire Club and Sebastian Melmoth.

Sire: Lorena

Clan: Toreador (Artiste Faction)

Nature: Cavalier

Demeanor: Mediator

Generation: Eighth

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 1, Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 3, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2, Diplomacy 3, Intrigue 2, Poetic Expression 3, Sense Deception 2, Singing 4

Skills: Etiquette 4, Firearms 1, Melee 2, Music 5, Bribery 3, Dancing 3, Fast Talk 3, Gambling 3, Pickpocket 2
Knowledge: Accounting 3, Area Knowledge (San Francisco) 4, Area Knowledge (Los Angeles) 3, Economics 2, History 2, Kindred Lore 3, City Secrets (San Francisco) 3, Literature 2, Magus Lore 2, Bureaucracy 3, Finance 3, Law 2, Occult 2, Politics 3, Spirit Lore 1

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 2, Presence 5

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Retainers 1

Virtues: Conscience 5, Self Control 3, Courage 5

Merits: Calm Heart, Concentration

Humanity: 8

Willpower: 5

Blood Pool/Max Per Turn: 15/3

Notes: Tex's position as the night manager of the Alexandrian gives him a great deal of power, and he is proud of the fact that he has never betrayed that trust. Tex is partial towards Anarchs but his first loyalties are always to the Vampire Club. He has Sired one Childe, Alice Babylon, who runs the Cafe Prague over in Haight-Ashbury. Tex tries to spend as much time with her as he can.

Image: A medium-size man with sandy blond hair and a moustache. Tex has a deep, mellow voice and favors Western-style suits and cowboy boots.

Haven: The Vampire Club

Roleplaying Hints: Be mellow. Think mellow. Nothing bothers you. Speak with a deep Texas accent if you can. Always have a slight, enigmatic smile on your face.

Michelle Stevens

Michelle Stevens is the day manager of the Alexandrian Club. She is also Tex R. Cainen's Ghoul. Most Kindred very rarely see her because by the time they get up and moving, she's already gone to her apartment at the Westminster.

She has a two in all her Physical Attributes and threes everywhere else. She has Bureaucracy and Finance at three as well as Diplomacy at two and Empathy at four.

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