


C L A N B O O K :
NOSFERATU




A Sourcebook for **VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™**



Arthur Lering says of Nosferatu: "A kind of abstract thing of evil, he has no nobility, nor does he inhabit the dark world of majestic satanic villains. Instead, he is a lower kind of evil, an obscene and loathsome creature that dwells amid decay and slime and crawling rats."

— Malcolm South, *Mythical and Fabulous Creatures*



I've been watching you. I saw you pick up and open this vile book. Don't look around. You can't see me anyway. But, ohhhh, if you could

Don't go thinking you're special, though. I just wanted to see mortals' reactions when they read this book. I do hope you enjoy it. Just don't believe anything you read within these pages — for it's all true.

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CHAPTER ONE: ABANDON ALL HOPE

*He was a plug-ugly sonofabitch
With a fist where most folks get their face.*

— Big Black, "Deep-Six"

Perfect. I grin into the mirror. Six-one, dark hair, dark eyes, smile that can be sweet and wicked all at once. Hair meticulously arranged to look like it wasn't. Leather jacket, black shirt, black jeans, silver jewelry, black boots, just a touch of makeup. Shades for effect, although it's already close to midnight. Pretty goth boy going out on the town.

Still smiling, I drop the Mask, force myself to keep staring as the reflection in the mirror warps. Grin runs like water, takes on more twists than a mountain highway. Sharp outfit becomes whatever was in the Goodwill box 18 months ago. It patchily covers a gnarled tangle of limbs sticking out in various directions from a lump that would make Quasimodo climb to the top of his bell tower and praise the grace of God. Chest down to my waist. Yehh, that thing there — that scabby patch of crust with the pus dribbling from its cracks — used to be a face, once upon a time. Smell hits then — a perfume far different from the ones I wore as a mortal. "Eau du Nosferatu" is enough to make even me gag. I stand there and count to 10, slowly, like I do every night when I wake up. Gotta keep things in perspective.

Enough's enough. I'm good and pissed. I turn the Mask on again — Demon Lover reappears in the mirror. Time to hit the town. I know what I'm looking for, and I know where to find it.

I open the grate and slide into the sewer tunnels adjacent to my haven. My fingers slip on the algae and worse that line the walls. Creep along, splashing in the dark, occasionally stepping on something that squashes between my toes or wriggles away altogether. Not far to go until I hear the throb of Club Nocturne's backbeat, high above me like the music of the spheres or something. I know you're up there somewhere, flopping about on the dance floor like a wounded fish. I can smell you.

There's an access tunnel into Nocturne's maintenance room, one only me and the other Rats know about — and the goddamn Toreador think they run the place. I clamber up, like Satan crawling his way out of hell, and emerge amid wires and lumber and debris. The sound surrounds me — the backbeat hammer in my head and pisses me off even more. I check the Mask — I want to look real pretty for you. Yeah. I am a veritable artiste, as it were. Nonexistent boots glisten under the single bulb, and my nonexistent silver ankhs gleams against the black canopy of my nonexistent Dead Can Dance T-shirt. My grimace of disgust no doubt appears as a pretentious pout sure to charm you.

I walk out of the maintenance room, veiled in shadows. Slipping right past the bouncers, who don't see me because I don't want them to, I stroll—no, strut, gotta strut—down the adjoining corridor and onto the fog-shrouded dance floor.

I scan for you through washes of muted underwater colors changing a hundred times a minute. Purple and blue and green and stark white flash off my nonexistent sunglasses in time with the drum program of "Days of Swine and Roses." *Christian Zombie Vampire...* This shit, and the shit dancing to it, make me want to puke, though my reaction appears to you as a sexacious moan.

I brush past one particularly annoying little poser, a pallid little black-clad creep. His teased black hair is caked with dye, and his pimply face is smeared with white greasepaint. I can't tell whether he's trying to look like Robert Smith or the Joker. He's got a drink in each hand and as I pass him I drop the Mask for less than a split second—almost subliminally fast. The drinks go flying across the floor and the kid's face contorts in shock. Hope he pissed himself. Demon Lover once more, I glance back at him and smile sweetly into his disbelieving stare. He doesn't even notice the snickers of all the people who saw him spill his drinks.

But enough of pleasure. You're my business tonight. I cut through the crowds near the bar, feeling hungry eyes upon me. I could have just about anyone in the club tonight. *Your place or mine?* Oh, pardon the piles of excrement and putrescent cats.

But I don't want just anyone. I want you. I know you're here somewhere. I silently reject three imploring stares as I sweep the bar. And there you are, writhing seductively under the strobes.

Oh, you are perfect. Let me guess. You're twentysomething, but creeping inexorably toward the big three-oh, though you try to pretend you're not. You've got a day job in a bank and you try to pretend you don't, which is why you're dolled up like Siouxsie Sioux's little sister. Yes, you are stereotypically adorable. Neil Gaiman's wet dream, a cute little Death-doll tripping the light fantastic through the club scene and trying to forget about the inevitable—the husband and the real job and the 2.5 kids and the station wagon and the PTA membership and the couch in the house in picket-fence suburbia where you'll spend the rest of your life vegetating in front of the TV set till you die. But that's next year, right? Tonight is now.

You get off on this shit, don't you? The endless sea of cookie-cutter angst whirling around, trying to be alluring, trying to forget the half-lives that await them six, seven hours from now. At night, under the concealment of the

strobe lights, no one has to know about all the boredom and insecurity hidden under the leather and face and pancake makeup.

But you've read lots of Anne Rice too. Yeah, you've read the whole series, haven't you? You sometimes fantasize about Lestat and wish he'd appear to whisk you away into the night. You'd love to be a vampire, wouldn't you? That's the life, right? No job, no responsibilities, no need to deal with all the other annoying people, no wrinkles, no gray hairs, no crow's-feet. Just endless balmy New Orleans nights of whirlwind sex as the blood runs down your body like the food on that Basinger chick in *9 1/2 Weeks*.

Well, it's your lucky night, sugar. You're gonna live forever. Tonight you're gonna find out what being a vampire's all about.

I wait till the first melodic strains of "Tin Omen" envelop the floor and then maneuver myself opposite you. As predicted, you meet my sunglasses-shrouded gaze with a slow smile that attempts to evoke mystery and reveals only transparency. I thrash around with you and say something that you can't hear over the music anyway, and you nod and laugh. I move closer to you, and by the time This Mortal Coil starts playing, we're in each other's arms.

I lead you off the floor, lips locked. You're already pretty tipsy, and a few more drinks ensure that you're trashed. I'm not much of a conversationalist and you just don't have anything interesting to say, so I cut the preliminaries short and escort you out the door toward my waiting Camaro. You giggle and snuggle into the vise of my arm, putting your feet on autopilot, trusting my lead. You're pretty drunk, and not that smart anyway, so we're several blocks into the Barrens before you realize Club Nocturne's parking lot lies in the opposite direction. As the first glimmer of alarm illuminates your dull cow-eyes, I decide I'm tired of this game. No one around to hear you except the bums, dear. Time to take the masks off. Demon Lover disappears, replaced by Demon.

What's the matter, darling? Don't you want another kiss? A long, slow one? No one's going to answer your screams, but they're awfully irritating, so I clamp my right talon over your mouth. I pin you against the alley wall and leer at you. I want you to feel it. I want you to become fear. I won't let you faint—I want you conscious.

You sob and beat your fists against my breasts. Futile, dear. It's like socking lumps of gristle. But I don't understand. You look like a vampire, you dress like a vampire, you act like a vampire, you immerse yourself in vampire chic. And now I've introduced you to a vampire—a real, dead vampire. Don't you want to be a vampire—just like me?

Oh sure, there are "real" vampires, honey—or, at least, the kind you'd call real, the kind you ape in your condescending pretentiousness. Art-fag Toreador,

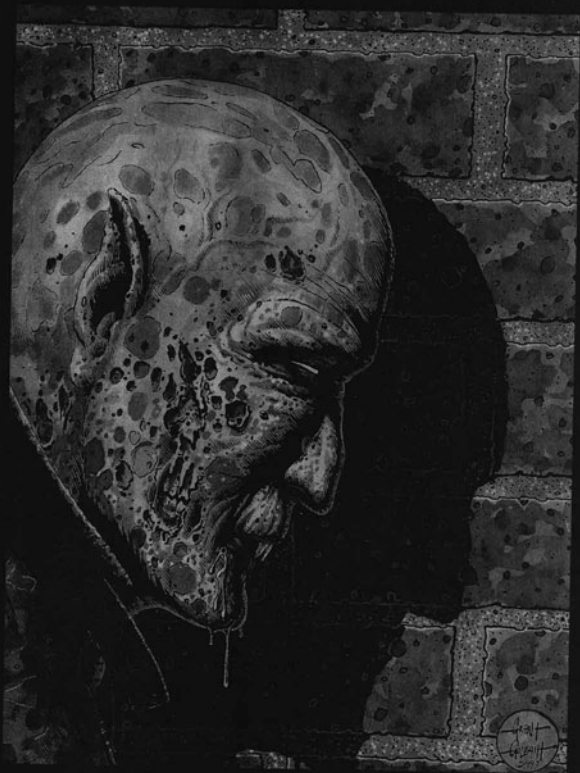
too-rich-for-your-blood Ventrue, *Lost Boys*-wannabe Brujah — the beautiful people. But they don't want you. They've got more important people to suck. Nope — you're getting a one-way ticket to hell courtesy of Clan Nosferatu.

I gouge my mouth into your neck — I'll give you the luxury of the traditional bite anyway, 'cause I'm such a

sweetheart — and your muffled shrieks subside to whimpers. Then there's nothing except your eyes, like those of a deer in the headlights, looking at me in confused horror, silently screaming, "Why?"

Why? I don't really know why. Guess it's 'cause assholes like you make me sick. And misery loves company.





CHAPTER TWO: BACK STORY

If one is continually surviving the worst that life can bring, one eventually ceases to be controlled by a fear of what life can bring; whatever it brings must be borne. And at this level of experience one's bitterness begins to be palatable, and hatred becomes too heavy a sack to carry.

— James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

A TREATISE ON THE PROBABLE ORIGINS AND PHYSICAL ANOMALIES OF SUBSPECIES *HOMO SAPIENS NOSFERATUS*

By Claudius Maximus, Clan Tremere

There are a great many mysteries concerning the origin of our breed, and certainly none moreso than the circumstances behind the genesis of the unfortunate and peculiar race known as the Nosferatu. The blasphemous acts that led to the affliction of these pathetic wretches are unknown; perhaps it is best they remain so. The Brujah, whose elder members are historians of no small repute despite their disabilities, have long held that the Antediluvian founder of the Nosferatu line was cursed by our Primal Father Himself. The precise nature of the crime committed remains in question, though it was no doubt monstrous. Based on my archaeological research and extensive study of Nosferatu progeny, I have formulated certain theories.

Do not the Nosferatu share the ability of the Gangrel (another tragic line, but of them I shall speak later) to establish a rapport with the lower denizens of the planet?

Verily, I have seen a Nosferatu crouched low amid her sewer haven, staring into a great rat's eyes for fully an hour. The Nosferatu communicate often and at length with their bestial comrades, and I believe that they have more in common with such creatures than with the humans from whom they have so tragically devolved. My own experiments have shown that Nosferatu skull and bone structures bear no small degree of resemblance to those of reptiles. As all of learning know, the reptile loathes the mammal as much as the latter detests the former. Is this, then, why the Nosferatu look upon other Kindred, and our clan in particular, with such venom and rancor?

Is it not indisputable that mortals who practice carnal relations with their own immediate kin beget progeny with deformities similar to, though not as pronounced as, those found among the Nosferatu? Certes, the creatures spend overmuch time huddled together in their dens and holes,

and while my own base passions were purged from me by the purifying flame of the Embrace, the same may not be true of the Nosferatu. As a side note to the above, Diagram 23-D depicts some of my more curious observations regarding Nosferatu anatomy.

Based on the aforementioned evidence, I feel secure in postulating that either vile incest or coupling with beasts lies at the root of the clan's curse. Strange it may seem, but things still stranger lurk in the world's corners, as the Lupines prove. Caine is a merciless father and does not lightly tolerate deviation among his grandchilder.

In any event, it is indisputable that whatever crime the Nosferatu forefather committed has been at least partially expiated upon the flesh of his progeny. While the Embrace for most of us is a blessed gift, endowing us with the boon of immortality and the elixir of potency, the Nosferatu are instead twisted and disfigured beyond human ken by the transference of vitae.

In my researches, I have catalogued an amazing variety of bizarre deformities generated by the Nosferatu Embrace. The origin of or link between these features, however, regrettably eludes me. Extensive vivisection reveals only that each of the creatures seems to be more twisted and grotesque than the last. It is a mystery to me why the race as a whole does not destroy itself in a paroxysm of self-loathing!

There seem to be no subspecies, familial patterns, evolutionary offshoots, sire-childre resemblances or other logical distributions of Nosferatu deformity. For every Nosferatu who loses digits to the Embrace, another sprouts two or three extra fingers per hand. For every Nosferatu whose eyes dilate to enormous, nictitating orbs like those of some deep-sea squid, another loses its eyes altogether to scabrous encrustations or cataracts. For every Nosferatu whose nose drops off into the dust, another's nose warps and elongates to three times its former length. I have recorded striations, maculations, tumors, warts, pustulant bags, orifices of unfathomable purpose, extra limbs or none at all,

scales like a lizard's, even prehensile tails and patagia. I know not what to make of such strangeness, and may only say that "there but for the grace of Caine go I."

Would that I could state that the Nosferatu temperament and character were somehow improved by the creatures' bodily purgatory. Alas, such does not seem to be the case. The Nosferatu are to a vampire graceless and crude. The refinements of the higher clans seem lost on the Nosferatu. Even their brute strength, which occasionally proves useful (see Diagram 5-P for anatomical details of Nosferatu skeletal muscle), is perverted by their brutishness.

Nonetheless, a certain low cunning pervades the Nosferatu character. The clan — for we of the Camarilla go so far as to grant the Nosferatu equal status in hopes of bettering the hapless race! — is infamous for its ability to garner and compile data of all sorts. I believe this penchant to be instinctual rather than premeditated, rather like bower-birds adorning their nests with all manner of gaudy debris. A Nosferatu overhears a half-understood snippet of information or gossip and then parrots it amongst his own kind without any real comprehension. Were this not so, then why —

[This manuscript was never finished and indeed seems to have been interrupted in progress by the untimely Final Death of Claudius Maximus. Our esteemed peer was discovered in his sanctum, strapped to his own dissecting table. It was evident that the instruments of Maximus' death were his own enchanted surgical apparatus, which had apparently been used to perform a crude caricature of a vivisection operation upon Maximus himself (the accompanying organ displacement lends weight to this theory). No positive identification of the perpetrator(s) could be found, but scrawled on the laboratory wall, in a fluid that Thaumaturgic examination has proved to be Maximus' own vitae, was the message, "I AM NOT AN ANIMAL. I AM SOMETHING WORSE!" The Manchester Chantry (and indeed all of Clan Tremere) mourns the loss of one of its most devoted researchers, and this matter will certainly be examined until satisfactorily resolved.]

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THE TALE OF HORACE SLATER, LOREKEEPER OF CHATAMAUGA WARREN

If there's a god — do you know his name?

*If there's a god — if there's a god — why do I feel so
ashamed?*

— Ellen James Society, "God in Heaven"

I'm telling this story like I heard it from my sire, who said he heard it from Vechi in Amsterdam, who we all know's full of it for all he brags about his Auspex, so take it for what it's worth. Still, over the years I've heard enough corrob — corrobor — enough stuff like it to make me think there's a grain of truth in there somewhere. Hey? You think you know any better, you get up here and tell it, smart-ass! You comin'? Huh? Yeah, didn't think so.

Anyway, IF everyone's through interruptin', this is what I hear tell about the guy what made us. The Eldest, the man, the myth, the legend, Mr. Nosferatu himself. What? A woman? Well, I don't know, maybe Nosferatu was a girl — I'm just tellin' this story the way it was told to me. Male, female — don't matter nohow. Now shut the hell up! Anyway...

In the early days of the world, Nosferatu — or whatever he or she called himself back then — was the greatest hunter of the land. He'd walk out of the caves — yeah, they was still in caves back then — armed with this big ol' flint spear. He'd go alone, 'cause he said everyone else'd get in his way, and he'd track down game for the tribe.

Now by game, you understand, I ain't talkin' about piddly little varmints — like that rat I saw you suckin' the other night 'cause you couldn't catch no kine, Herman. I mean BIG game, safari-ho game like lions and tigers and bears and bison and woolly mammoths. No, no dinosaurs — they were all dead. Even Caine ain't that old. Yeah, it was the Ice Age or somethin'.

Anyway, Nosferatu'd always catch whatever he set his mind to catchin'. He'd always bring back enough game to feed his people, and they all respected him. Notice that I said "respect" — I didn't say like. Way I hear it, no one liked Nosferatu at all — yeah, yeah, the more things change and all that. He was a scary guy. Kind of a freak, like those Malkavians. Guy hunted 'cause he liked to kill — more violent than a constipated Brujah on speed. Yeah, I know vampires can't get constipated — it was a metaphor, you

Philistine. Anyway, AS I WAS SAYIN', ol' Nosferatu was a real S.O.B. Yep, just goes to show ya: we were outta luck from Day One. Stop interruptin' me, dammit!

Anyway, one night ol' Nosferatu was out huntin' a sabertooth or somethin', and he chanced to come across one of Caine's childer who was also out huntin'. Actually, he didn't so much come across her as she kinda sneaked up on him. Well, yeah, I mean, he was sharp, but he was still a mortal at this point. Anyhow, she kinda licked her lips and got her claws ready to kill Nosferatu and do us all a favor, you know, but then he walked out under the moonlight and she got a good look at him. And she froze in her tracks.

Now I bet you're expectin' me to say that Nosferatu was so butt-ugly that she was petrified with fear, but that weren't it. Nope, she'd never seen a mortal man that good-looking before. Yep, Nosferatu was a regular Adonna or whatever that Greek guy's name is. And she knew, hell or high water, Caine or no Caine, she had to have him.

So she followed him, creeping through the undergrowth while he hunted that sabertooth. And the more she watched him, the more she wanted him. But she wanted to see whether he was as tough as he was handsome. So she waited while he tracked that tiger down and killed it in one-on-one combat. Nosferatu was good. Didn't get a mark on him — just stuck that spear in and dropped the kitty.

Now that was kinda a mistake, 'cause Caine's childer had been followin' Nosferatu a long time, and she was gettin' hungry. And when all that vitæ oozed outta the cat, she freaked. Changed outta the jungle screaming like a banshee for blood.

Nosferatu was a hunter, and real defensive about his kill. And he was a real arrogant bastard too. So instead of doing what anyone with a grain of sense would've done — which is, in case any of you idiots don't know, get the hell out of the way — he stood his ground. Now, like I said, Nosferatu was a great hunter, but he weren't no vampire.

Caine's child busted his spear like a Tinkertoy and backhanded him across the clearing and into a tree. Broke his spine.

When she'd finished drinking from the cat, she turned around. Nosferatu was writhin' like a maggot on the ground, gaspin' and moanin'. She was full now, and thinking rationally again, so she decided to finish what she'd been intending to do. She Embraced him then and there.

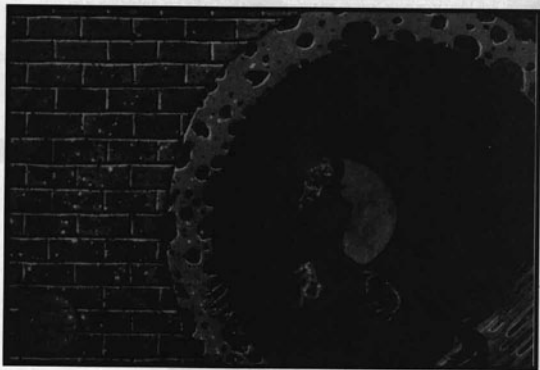
Nosferatu loved being a vampire. Made his hunting even easier. Didn't have a problem with killing folk, either — in fact, he got off on it, 'cause it was more of a challenge. Got real good at it, too. He was the first vampire to develop Obf'scate powers, and the best, and don't believe them Assamites when they say different, 'cause Nosferatu taught Assam everything he knows. He used Obf'scate to sneak into the middle of a tribe, and then he'd reappear and kill the lot of 'em. Yeah, like I said, Nosferatu was a sick S.O.B. and going through his growing pains.


There was only one problem. Nosferatu hated his sire with a passion. Not 'cause she'd showed him up when they'd first met — although that was part of it, 'cause Nosferatu wanted to be the best warrior in creation. No, he hated her 'cause when she popped him that one time, one of her claws left a mark on his face, and made a scar. Yeah, yeah, innit just tragic? Prissy as a goddamn Toreador. Not even a big scar, just a little white mark on his cheek that you could barely see even in bright torchlight — but as far as Nosferatu was

concerned, it ruined his perfect mug. This, by the way, was another reason he started gettin' so interested in bein' invisible and changing his looks.

All he thought about all night long while he hunted was how he was gonna get his sire back when Caine wasn't looking. 'Course, he had to keep his thoughts hid, but since he was sneaky anyway, and the only vampire what used Obf'scate, it weren't too hard.

Anyway, Nosferatu was arrogant, but he wasn't stupid. He knew deep in his black heart that he couldn't take his sire, even though he was now a vampire. So he mulled it over, and he realized that one of his kin — I think it was Trimisce, so we'll say Trimisce, 'cause it's not really that important — had discovered how to control his progeny through feeding 'em his blood. Nosferatu sneaked up on Trimisce one night and saw how this was done, so he started wanderin' the world, staying as far away from Caine and Company as possible, and makin' childer and Blood Bondin' 'em. Most of his childer were just like him — vicious and cruel. One was a mistake — an act of passion, when he discovered a beautiful woman bathing in a stream in the deep forest. He Embraced her, but she fled from him before he could Blood Bond her. She must've been fast as hell to escape. He chased her, but she lost him, and he finally gave up as the sun started comin' over the horizon.





After a while of doing this, he started thinkin'. Most of his childer weren't as powerful as he was — not that they could be, of course, 'cause he was the Great and Powerful Nosferatu — just like he weren't as powerful as his sire, who weren't as powerful as Caine. And he started puttin' one an' one together.

You see, back then, everyone believed in spirits and totems. Everyone and everything had a spirit, and you could catch other folks' spirits and bind 'em and all kinda craziness. Nosferatu had been a hunter, and he firmly believed that when he caught and ate a bison, he gained the spirit and power of the bison. And when he killed and ate a tiger, he got that tiger's spirit. So if he could get a hold of a vampire...you see where this is going?

So he gathered his "best" childer, the ones who were the fiercest and cruelest and most depraved, and left the rest to wander the world. He and his brood made a beeline back to the cave where Caine and his three childer and their childer were at the time (yeah, it was a cave — the Brujah and Toreador can talk up their First City crap till the Last Sunset, but it was just a cave). But he didn't show himself. He told his childer to stay hidden. Then he made himself invisible and spied on the others. And a real nasty plan popped into his head.

Nosferatu used his powers to mess himself up real bad — at least to make himself look like he'd been hurt bad. He waited till Caine was alone and then limped up to the Father, gaspin' and moanin' like nobody's business.


Well, Caine got kinda concerned, 'cause none of his childer or his childer's childer'd ever been really hurt before. He asked what had happened. And Nosferatu said:

"O my Father, long I wandered in the far south. And whilst I hunted I came upon a creature the likes of which I had never seen — a beast half wolf and half of man. And I approached it without malice and spake the words of peace unto it. And it heeded them not, but sprang upon me and did unto me what thou now seest."

Now of course, any of us modern Kindred woulda seen that story for the garbage it was, but things was simpler back then, and Caine was right taken. He rose up in a fury, swearing to find the wolf-man and destroy it. Guess he did, too, sort of, else why're them Lupines always howlin' for our hides?

So Caine took off a-rantin' and a-ravin', like that Tasmanian Devil on the cartoons, swearing vengeance on the wolf-creature and leaving the Three and the Thirteen on their own. Then ol' Nosferatu went off and hid in the bushes. He waited for a while, and then he started changin' his shape, like you and I do when we gotta go into a kine buildin'. 'Cept Nosferatu took the shape of his sire. And in that shape, he sneaked up on the other Twelve, one after the other, while they were out hunting. Then he jumped his brethren, knockin' 'em down and clawin' 'em up, but bein' careful to let 'em get away. Needless to say, they were scared bloodless by this turn of events — one of the Three tryin' to kill 'em. The other Twelve ran wailin' into the jungle, hiding in caves and holes.

Nosferatu tracked 'em down — he was the best hunter of the bunch — and took back his reg'lar shape. He spun a wild story about the Three goin' crazy — 'bout how they weren't content with the mortals anymore, but had a craving for vampire blood. He said that the Three wanted



Caine's love all to themselves, and then he said how he thought the Thirteen oughta join together and do unto the Three before they got done unto.

Like I said, those was simpler days. The other Twelve got all worked up, sayin' 'how, yeah, now that they thought about it, they had noticed that the Three had been lookin' at 'em funny the past few nights. Nosferatu had been spyin' on the others for quite some time, and he knew all their little annoyances

and
idiot-
sintricies and
stuff. Huh? Yeah,
that's a real word! I heard
the Tremere say it! Shut up!

Anyway, he kinda started insinuatn' things about the Three, and the Twelve, and Caine, and twistin' the conversation around to his own ends. Most of all, he was lookin' to make his sire seem like the villain of the piece. He said she lusted for vampire blood and had gotten Caine's other two childer in on a little scheme to wipe the Thirteen out.

Nosferatu organized the other Twelve, sayin' that there was safety in numbers and all that. He led 'em back to the cave — oh yeah, the First City — where the Three awaited Caine's return. Nosferatu took charge of all his brethren and taught 'em the secret of how to hide (though most of the other stupid bastards forgot later). Then they all jumped the Three in a big ambush.

Now there was a fight! Not all the wars in history were as savage as that first vampire fallin' out. Nosferatu waited in the bushes with his childer while the Three slugged it out with the Twelve. When he saw his opportunity, he ordered his own childer into the melee. Then, while everyone was distracted, he jumped onto his sire's back and sank his teeth into her neck.

Right about then, everything kinda froze. Even the birds and bugs stopped chirpin'. The only sound was the slurping noise of Nosferatu suckin' the life outta his sire. He was real bloodthirsty, was Nosferatu, and as he drank he kept clawin' her face up, same as she'd done to him. Thought it was a good joke. She had a lot of blood, and it took her a long time to die. By the time she was dead, Nosferatu had carved her face up into something unrecognizable. He was feelin' real good too, and I don't gotta explain why. He was feeling power.

Nosferatu stood there, clutchin' his sire, getting ready to drink the last of her blood and get all her power, when he was knocked down by a blow like a dozen elephants or mammoths or whatever they had back then. Caine had returned, and he was pissed. He looked down at his dead childer, all mutilated and disfigured, and he looked at Nosferatu and for the first time noticed the tiny scar. And he understood.

"For thy vanity thou hast committed the greatest crime of all," Caine said. "Thou takest pride in thy mastery over beasts — I take thee and make thee a beast. Thou takest pride in thy form — I take it from thee." And Caine touched Nosferatu's face and turned it into a living reflection of his anger and hate. He was the first and the worst of us. Ain't nobody in the world even been as ugly as Nosferatu. Then Caine said, "Thou hast created childer. I curse them, and thy entire line until the end of all things, as I do thee." And all across the world, the childer of Nosferatu fell to the ground in agony as they changed. Even the one childer who remained free of the Blood Bond, the woman in the stream, was cursed. It was she who sired us all, all who now call themselves Nosferatu.

Nosferatu staggered to his feet, and all the other vampires blanched. He turned his face from them in shame and ran howling into the deepest caves, where he will lie until the end of time. But he wasn't through — not by a long shot. He had Blood Bound all his childer, except that one I mentioned earlier, and through them he vented his wrath upon mortals and vampires alike. His Blood Bound childer's curse was stronger than ours. They took on all of Nosferatu's crimes and became the Nictuku, who hunt us until the Last Night.

Nosferatu himself's still down there, lyin' in the caves somewhere. I hear that Caine cursed him so that even in torpor he has nightmares of his own face. He sends out dreams and nightmares to the Nictuku, and he hates us — the Nosferatu clan, that is. 'Cause see, somewhere in his madness, he got the idea that if he can destroy all his progeny and present the deed to Caine as a sacrifice — just like Caine gave Abel to God — Caine will forgive him and remove the great curse. Even now, he's out there somewhere, commanding the Nictuku to hunt us down. They and their childer have been seeking us since that night, trying their damndest to devour us all. But we're pretty good at staying hid ourselves, and until the coast is clear we ain't never gonna come out.

THE NICTUKU

And everything human's necessarily wrong.

— Swans, "Amnesia"

And what, again a Nosferatu has asked, of Nosferatu's other childer, the Nictuku? Did they die out, or do they still lurk in the dark corners of the world? The Nosferatu certainly believe in their existence, and many a night in the warrens is spent telling tales of these horrible and malign beings.

The precise roster of the Nictuku is unknown, though there are many. A few names have been passed down through the ages: Abraxes, Lord of Mists; the cannibal hag Baba Yaga; Nuckalavee the Skinless; Gorgo, She Who Screams in Darkness; Echidna the Mother of Foulness.

According to the stories, each Nictuku has its own unique characteristics and appearance, but all are monstrous. Though the Nictuku are, or were, vampires, they possess a far greater quantity of the original Antediluvian vitae and have thus been transformed far beyond the ken of most "pure" Nosferatu. The Nictuku are monsters in the truest sense of the word.

The Nictuku, so the stories go, are all Blood Bound to the sleeping Antediluvian, and all are consumed with the desire to destroy the entire Nosferatu line. Only then will Caine's curse be lifted and Nosferatu's face restored.

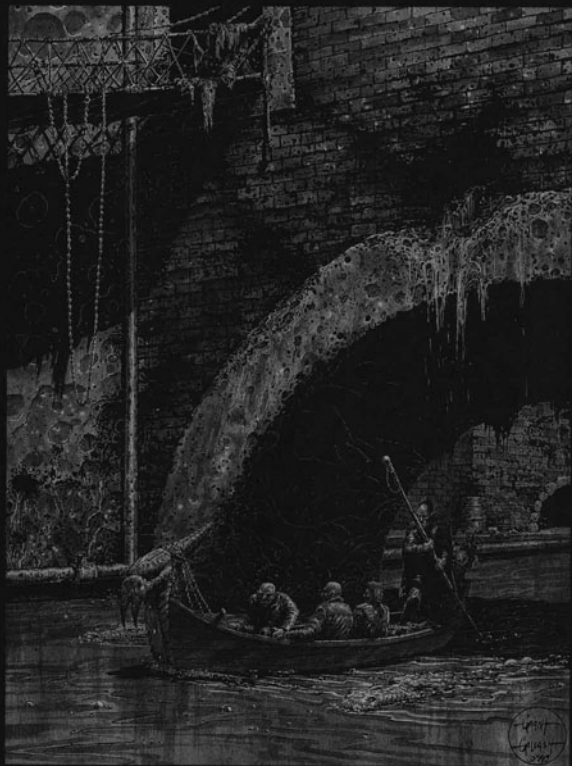
The existence of the Nictuku is still conjecture, but it cannot be denied that Nosferatu who choose to operate apart from the clan often disappear mysteriously. There have also been instances of entire Nosferatu warrens disappearing without a trace.

Few non-Nosferatu have heard the legend of the Nictuku; those who have heard it largely scoff at the idea, considering the entire tale an exercise in self-gratification ("the beasts just want to believe that there are things out there even more repulsive than they are"). The Nictuku themselves are seen as mere bogeymen whose purpose is to enforce clan unity. Most Nosferatu, however, take the Nictuku very seriously indeed.

Fear of these creatures is the primary reason the Nosferatu spend so many of their nights in hiding. The threat of these monsters also does much to explain why the Nosferatu are so obsessive about garnering information — for the Nictuku strike silently from the dark, and fade into the dark again. The Nosferatu believe that constant vigilance against these creatures is the only way to prevent their attacks. Rumors of strange creatures and inexplicable occurrences are snapped up by the Nosferatu.

A few Nosferatu have devoted themselves to protecting the clan from these evils. They spend their nights investigating any rumor that might hint at the presence of the Nictuku, tracking these ancient predators and relaying warnings to clan members. Some have even teamed up with members of other clans, using their allies' contacts and powers to help the Nosferatu.





CHAPTER THREE: SUBCULTURE

*Let us go then, you and I
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table.
Let us go through certain half-deserted streets
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And squalid restaurants with oyster shells.*

— T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Of all the Kindred, the Nosferatu are perhaps the most alien. Other vampires can walk amidst the mortal crowds and thus maintain at least an intermittent grasp on their former species. Not so the Nosferatu. They must lurk below, and their view of the mortal world is invariably filtered through the bars of a sewer grate. In some ways, the Nosferatu are the most "cultured" vampires, for they have no human culture to parasitize. They must look to their own for culture.

THE CURSE

I just want to share my disease.

— Clayface, *Batman: Arkham Asylum*

The Nosferatu Embrace is a brutal thing. In many ways it is more alienating than the Embrace of the Malkavians. One's body is one's most prized possession, and the disfigurement of the flesh inevitably has repercussions within the mind.

A typical transformation takes about a week. During the first night, the victim's body is wracked as the organs shrivel and veins harden in preparation for carrying the

bilious Nosferatu vitae. The victim still looks essentially human, but the constant pain twists the victim's face into a perpetual grimace. The lust for blood surfaces during this time.

During the second to fourth days, dead skin begins to coarsen and stretch, and bruises reminiscent of those caused by rigor mortis appear on the flesh (the blood-storing sacs are still developing). The childe's hair begins to fall out in patches, and the cartilage of the ears and nose collapses and distends.

The pain becomes truly excruciating by the end of the week. At this point, the childe's very bones gnarl and warp, and all semblance of humanity is lost. The agony reaches its peak at the climax of the transformation; when the skull suffers its changes — elongating, partially caving in, or flattening as the case may be. It is at this point that the Nosferatu realizes the extent of his transformation.

Many Nosferatu do not survive the Change with their sanity intact. The pain and the shock of sudden deformity prove too much to bear. Such Kindred often become mindless brutes, and in Camarilla society, it is the sire's responsibility to hunt down her mad offspring and destroy it.

THE NOSFERATU APPROACH TO URBAN RENEWAL

DATE: 6-16-69

TO: Xerxes

FROM: Jameson

RE: Project Tinkertoy

Per your request, I assumed the shape of Rory McAllister, ghoul servant of the Ventrue Maria. In this guise I entered the office of the crimelord Shephard and commanded him to order an immediate retaliatory crackdown upon the merchants of the Water Street community. As you predicted, Shephard obeyed "McAllister's" orders without question. Within hours, endemic gang warfare drove most of the residents indoors; several mortals were killed and scores more wounded. Among the wounded was Meriwether, child of the Brujah Tiera, who oversees Water Street and the surrounding environs.

During the chaos, I donned the illusory guise of Officer Shay. As you said, the residents of the Water Street area bear no love for that particular servant of the law. In this form, I hunted and found the popular street poet Sexton Lunchpail. Once more following your orders, I proceeded to assault him with a policeman's truncheon. I left him alive but in need of hospitalization. Regrettable, but necessary.

After finishing this action, I journeyed uptown. Assuming the shape of the injured Meriwether, I retrieved my cache of explosives from its hiding place and crept up to the FirstBank-Drake & Co. Tower, where Maria maintains a haven. The priming, et al. went off without a hitch, but I allowed myself to be seen by Maria's guards (in my disguised form, of course) as I exited following the detonation. I easily lost my pursuers—I have traveled the sewers of the area for years.

The rest was, as they say, a piece of cake. The incensed Maria mustered her policemen and gangsters,

sending them en masse into the Water Street area to quell the "rioters." Of course, by this time there actually was a riot in progress, as the equally furious Tiera deployed her own mortal pawns. Lunchpail's beating and the "fascist crackdown" had ignited the area, and it did not take much effort on Tiera's part to stir the poor, minorities, hippies and sympathetic bohemian intellectuals into a violent mob. Water Street was aflame within hours, and the mob then rampaged up the main roads toward the business district and Maria.

Naturally, such a struggle drew our Kindred like flies to honey; I took the opportunity to sell morsels of information and pseudo-information to other Kindred, keeping in mind our ultimate purpose. I know that no fewer than three vampires met the Final Death last night. At any rate, aided by these newcomers, the mob managed to storm the police barricades and reach the business district.

You can see the results in today's paper. The media is calling it "the worst riot of the decade"; it seems to have surpassed even the recent Watts tragedy. The FB-Drake, IBM and General Dynamics towers all suffered tremendous structural damage, and at least 30 percent of the area's industrial parks are likewise closed. The dead and wounded are estimated to be in the thousands.

Of course, the lives and unives lost are tertiary to our clan's aim. The rate of property destruction, if I may boast, was high indeed. Both the Water Street area and the business district suffered tremendous damage, and extensive repair will be needed in both areas. I have contacted Waylon; he has assured me that all of the important construction companies in the city contain mortals loyal to our clan. Thus, rebuilding in both areas will include a significant amount of "unsolicited" construction, secret catacombs, alcoves, antechambers, hidden rooms and the like. Sewer systems in both areas will likewise be expanded. I estimate that within six months our clan should have free and unrestricted access to both the elder and anarchy "hotspots" of the city.

THE FORTUNATE FEW

*We'll I, I've been lonely
And I, I've been blind
And I, I've learned nothing
So my hands are firmly tied
To the sinking lead weight of failure.
—Swans, "Failure"*

Vampires choose their progeny for many reasons, and this is true of the Nosferatu as well. Nonetheless, there seem to be certain common denominators among those the Nosferatu choose.

Perhaps the most common characteristic of Nosferatu-to-be is an alienation from mortal society. Even in life, Nosferatu Chosen are often physically or emotionally scarred. The ranks of Nosferatu neonates include the deformed, the autistic, the sociopathic, the hopelessly antiracial and the criminally insane.

Strange as it may seem, this selection is largely for practical reasons. A neonate who has lived a life of pain will find the grueling transformation easier to bear. A mortal who has suffered rejection and ostracism from his peers will find it easier to isolate himself fully from mortal society and to endure harsh treatment from other vampires. Nosferatu must bear a tremendous burden in unlife, and few sires want

to suffer the consequences of releasing an unstable child into the world. Nosferatu seek those who have bent, rather than broken, under the weight of life.

Equally odd is the fact that this selection of misfits and loners creates a clan unity unparalleled in the ranks of the Kindred. When one has spent one's life alone, any company, even that of monsters, becomes palatable. The Nosferatu elders have long understood this need. They have found that a few words of genuine praise are often more effective than any Dominate or Blood Bond.

One obvious exception to the aforementioned rule of selection might be noted. Vindictiveness often plays a role in the creation of neonates. The Nosferatu consider vampirism a curse, after all, and often bestow it as a form of punishment. The vain, the callous, the prideful — all have been targeted for victimization.

It should also be mentioned that in recent years, the Nosferatu's criteria for selection seem to have altered somewhat. The ruling clans have begun to notice the alarming number of highly skilled individuals being inducted into Clan Nosferatu. Engineers, computer programmers, intelligence agents, scholars and the like have been targeted. Several Ventrue and Tremere gatherings have recently been called to discuss this trend and to determine whether it points toward a greater conspiracy.



CLEOPATRAS

And where will she go, and what shall she do, when midnight comes around?

She'll turn once more to Sunday's clown and cry behind the door.

— The Velvet Underground, "All Tomorrow's Parties"

The Nosferatu are understandably bitter about their looks. Try as they might to suffer nobly, they cannot help but resent their own unsightliness. This resentment is only fueled by the proximity of such clans as the Toreador and Tzimisce, who often use their blood or Disciplines to achieve unearthly beauty.

All too often, a Nosferatu's rage at her condition festers into a vindictive hatred of beautiful people. Stories of vengeful Nosferatu going on killing sprees at beauty pageants and fashion shoots are not unknown. Indeed, Sabbat Nosferatu are often asked to do just that during a city takeover, as such high-profile slayings jeopardize the Camarilla's Masquerade.

The best and most satisfying form of revenge, however, is to find a beautiful, happy person and Embrace him. Despite themselves, Nosferatu relish the agonized wails of a former Narcissus who realizes that he has been condemned to eternity as a monster. The younger Nosferatu call such a victim a "Cleopatra," after the vain trapeze artist of the horror movie *Freaky* (a former beauty, the cinematic Cleopatra was grotesquely disfigured at the end of the film).

Many Cleopatras do not survive for long. They either commit suicide or meet Final Death after some stupid mistake. Some Cleopatras, however, have managed to

survive and even prosper in their new forms.

Indeed, certain Cleopatras have supposedly learned humility from the change. According to the stories, these Nosferatu become clan leaders and the protectors of the innocent. While this is probably no more common for Cleopatras than it is for any other Nosferatu, these Nosferatu maintain closer ties to the mortal population, and some even manage to maintain their mortal identities for years after the Embrace.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

*These perblind doomsters had as readily strewn
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.*

— Thomas Hardy, "Hap"

Though the Nosferatu are hardly the stereotypical crusty louts portrayed by most other vampire clans, they do tend to view the world with a degree of cynical pessimism. This is certainly understandable. In becoming Nosferatu, one has been wrenched from the society of one's species, turned into a monster, become the object of contempt from the other vampire clans and (if legend is to be believed) been targeted as prey by even more loathsome monsters.

Despite this, Nosferatu are, as a rule, no more cruel and callous than any other vampires. Indeed, many Nosferatu seem considerably less so. Perhaps this is because they do not attempt to whitewash their actions in noble sentiment. If a Nosferatu kills another vampire in anger — well, that's what she did. She didn't do it to preserve the Masquerade or eliminate a possible Sabbat spy or advance the cause of her clan, and she doesn't claim to. The Nosferatu clearly see the ugliness of both their exteriors and their interiors. Such self-awareness saves many Nosferatu from the nadirs of bestiality reached by their fairer Kindred.

Humility may well be the trait most prized by the clan. Nosferatu often suffer from other vampires' egos and refuse to tolerate such behavior from their own kind. Some Nosferatu carry this one step further, actively rejecting any sort of beauty and promoting the spread of ugliness. Devotees of this "cult of ugliness" often join the

anarchs, as this group affords them countless opportunities to smash, destroy and deface.

This embrace of ugliness often leads to a pronounced tendency toward crudity. Nosferatu rarely associate with their fellow Kindred, but when they do, they take great pleasure in shocking and disgusting them. This coarse behavior, besides being fun, is a psychological weapon, for a Kindred is far more likely to let information slip when his composure has been shaken.

Nosferatu are of two minds when it comes to the virtue of honesty. On the one hand, most Nosferatu despise hypocrisy (at least they say they do, which would itself be hypocritical). Nosferatu are fairly honest with themselves and their clan members, and despise pretentious sorts such as the Toreador.

On the other hand, Nosferatu take great pleasure in spreading all manner of lies throughout vampiric society. It is to Nosferatu that the other Kindred, who routinely mock and insult them from their elegant penthouses, come crawling when in need of information. Every now and then the Nosferatu enjoy throwing a fly into the ointment just to stir things up a little. If the repercussions of these little white lies set vampires at each other's throats and send cities into spasms of riots and chaos — well, serves the bastards right for making fun of us, the Nosferatu say.

MERITS AND FLAWS

Show-stopper — skin-popper.

— Skinny Puppy, "Worlock"

The following Merits and Flaws may only be taken by Nosferatu characters, unless permitted by the Storyteller. At your option, certain vampires who have been subjected to the Tzimisce Discipline of Vicissitude (see *The Players Guide to the Sabbat*) might also display these physical anomalies.

Lizard Limbs (1 pt. Merit) — When your limbs are restrained or grappled, you may spend a Blood Point and make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8). If you succeed, you may "shed" a limb, leaving it in your opponent's grasp while you escape. The limbs may be regrown normally. If you shed enough limbs, you can escape nearly any bonds, though it is hard to flee the scene of captivity when one has no legs....

Nosferatu with this Merit often use it for practical jokes (*Let's shake on it...*).

Long Fingers (1 pt. Merit) — Your fingers are unnaturally long and spidery. You gain one extra die to Dice Pools involving digital coordination or grappling.

Oversized Fangs (1 pt. Merit) — When you grow your fangs, you really grew 'em. Your fangs are enormous, scraggly things resembling cobra fangs or possibly even tusks. Your bite does one additional die of damage, and you may add one to your Intimidation Dice Pool.

Oversized Mouth (1 pt. Merit) — Your mouth is huge and you are able to open it to prodigious width. You may drink an additional two Blood Points from your victim each turn.

Disgusting (2 pt. Merit) — You have the ability to contort your body and face in all sorts of shocking and grotesque ways. You can drool blood, pop your eyes out to double their width, spontaneously grow and burst boils on your flesh, extend your tongue three feet out of your mouth, etc. In addition, you are an accomplished practitioner of the fine art of disgusting others, and take considerable pride in your ability to gross out anyone or anything. By concentrating for a turn and spending a Blood Point, you may will your body to do something vile, making a Wits + Intimidation roll (difficulty of the opponent's Wits + Self-Control). Each success on this roll subtracts one from the opponent's Dice Pool for any action taken next turn (the opponent is so repulsed and horrified by your antics that concentration is broken).

Slimy (2 pt. Merit) — Your skin secretes slime like that of a worm or mollusk. Opponents must score two more successes than normal to grapple you, and your difficulty to soak fire damage is reduced by one.

Swarm Attractor (2 pt. Merit) — You may have at least one dot in Animalism to take this Merit. Your skin exudes a grease that attracts flies, gnats, bees and other flying insects. While these insects normally buzz passively about you in a thick cloud, you may command them in a limited fashion. The bugs may travel up to 20 feet from you to sting and distract your foes. The swarm does no actual damage, but any being caught in the swarm must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7). If the roll fails, the victim loses two dice from her Dice Pool that turn; if it botches, she may take no action whatsoever.

Tough Hide (2 pt. Merit) — Your skin is thick and leathery, resembling that of a pachyderm. You gain one extra die on your soak Dice Pool (though not to soak fire and sunlight).

Foul Blood (3 pt. Merit) — Your blood tastes truly awful. Opponents who bite you in combat must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) or spend the next turn retching and gagging; the idiot who actually tries to commit diablerie upon you must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 9) and score three successes to complete the process.

Patagia (4 pt. Merit) — You have grown large flaps of skin under your arms, like those of a pterodactyl or flying squirrel. You may use these patagia to glide for short distances, provided there is an updraft or strong wind.

Blunt Teeth (1 pt. Flaw) — Your teeth are huge and square, not sharp like those of most other vampires. You must score one extra success to do damage with a bite, and once you have locked your teeth into your prey, you automatically cause the victim one additional Health Level of damage for every two Blood Points taken (you have to chew and chew and chew...).

Club Foot (1 pt. Flaw) — One of your feet is gnarled and deformed. You move at only half normal speed.

Nosferatu Caitiff (1 pt. Flaw) — You were Embraced by a Nosferatu, but failed to meet the standards of even that clan, and were subsequently rejected by your sire. As you did not complete the Becoming process, you were not fully transformed, but you still look rather odd. You begin the game with an Appearance rating of 1, and raising your Appearance costs double the usual number of experience points.

In addition, you present a tempting target for just about any bully — other Caitiffs may not have much to kick around, but a "Nosferatu reject" certainly offers possibilities for abuse.

Not all Caitiffs sired by Nosferatu have this flaw; nobody knows why some do and some don't.

Stench (1 pt. Flaw) — Few Nosferatu smell good, but you reach a new nadir of odiferousness. Even other Nosferatu are repulsed by your stink, and your Stealth Dice Pools are reduced by two against any creature that can smell, unless you are upwind.

Parasitic Infestation (2 pt. Flaw) — In many ways this Flaw is the negative counterpart of Swarm Attractor (above). Several species of hemovores — ticks, lice, mosquitoes, gnats, chiggers, leeches and the like — find your blood particularly tasty. These creatures crawl and hide among the creases and folds of your skin despite your best efforts to remove them. Particularly persistent are those vermin that drink from you three times and thus become enormous, Blasted, Blood Bound beasts.

You may not consider the vermin in any fashion; they are too intoxicated on your vitae to be of any use (though they do love you, for what it's worth). The parasites also drink from one to four of your Blood Points each night (roll a die and divide by three, rounding up). This forces you to hunt more often. Finally, the constant itching and irritation increase by one the difficulties of all your rolls to avoid frenzy.

Putrescent (3 pt. Flaw) — The mystic processes that inhibit the natural decay of the vampiric form were less effective on you. As a result, you constantly rot, though a day's rest checks and to some degree hushes the effects. Your soak Dice Pool is reduced by one, and if you are jarred or hit violently (more than three successes after soak) you must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 6). If you fail, one of your facial features or fingers falls off; if you botch, one of the levels of damage is aggravated and one of your limbs falls off. This will regrow when the aggravated wound is healed.

WHAT THE NOSFERATU REALLY THINK ABOUT THE OTHER GUYS (MAYBE)

Grotesque dwarves in mirrored rooms

Cruelly taunt a thousand yous.

—Siouxsie and the Banshees, "Carousel"

BRUJAH

It's kinda fun to sneak into their Rants and get a laugh out of all the stuff they think they know and don't really have a clue about. We've got a game down in the Chamber — we all sit around coming up with the wildest, goofiest,

most far-fetched tall tales we can think of. Then we vote one of 'em the best — not for being a good story, but for being the biggest load of crap in the bunch. Then we take that story and sell it to the Brujah as gospel truth. Watch 'em run around like ants in a hill, screaming Jihad and Sabbat and Lupines and everything else. Damned amusing.

GANGREL

They treat us better than any of the others do. Guess it's 'cause they know that after a few years of freakin' and sneakin', most of 'em are gonna look worse than we do. At any rate, we like to be left alone, they like to be left alone, and we pretty much leave each other alone. End of story.

MALKAVIAN

Gotta admit, these guys scare the piss outta me. No amount of dirt you get on 'em's any good, 'cause either all your facts'll change the next night or they just don't care if you tell the world anyway. Also, I hate the way they'll walk up to you and pay you for some information, and then when you start to tell it to 'em, they finish your sentence and add on a new tidbit you hadn't even heard yet. Then they just stare at you with that goofy grin while your jaw drops open. Then they walk away cackling. Damn, I hate it when they do that. Freaks.



TOREADOR

What do I think of the Toreador?

(There is a thoughtful pause, followed by the gurgling in the morning of at least a Blood Point's worth of vitae, and the sudden, violent vomiting thereof onto the nearest wall, accompanied by facial contortions and the grimmest, most disgusting retching noises imaginable.)

TREMERE

Definitely a PR coup for us. Take the most rigid, uncreative, predictable bunch of dweebs in all vampiredom. Spread a few li—er, creative generalizations about 'em. The Tremere are coming! Watch your ass around the Tremere! The Tremere are the strike force of the Antediluvians! The Tremere killed Kennedy! (leans closer) Listen, man, the Tremere are about as dangerous as my grandmother. Just don't let 'em get a hold of any of your blood, you got nothing to worry about. Well, almost nothing...

Huh? What do I mean, almost? Well, that little bit o' data'll cost ya...

VENTRUE

The biggest idiots of all. They really don't get it, do they? They want to put their asses on the firing line! Here I am, guys! I'm the leader! Come get me first! Let 'em, man. They'll be the first to go, and it don't mean squat to me.

Other than that, I say hey, if they wanna do all the managerial shit work, more power to 'em. And it's kinda funny to go up to 'em in a conclave and watch 'em try to be all polite and chummy to you, even though the sight of you makes 'em want toretch. Then start acting more and more disgusting and foul, and watch 'em really squirm. Wow, Mr. Prince, sir, thanks so much for saving us from the Sabbat. Gosh, I just want to shake your hand. Oh, sorry about the mucus—and that chunk, that's just month-old rat cartilage. I'm sure you have a couple of Dominated dry-cleaners to take that right off.

CAITIFF

Poor bloody bastards. They get screwed over even more than we do. Still, every now and then you need someone to screw over so's you can go about more important business. When that happens, well...sorry, man, but them's the breaks.

ASSAMITES

Oh dear, oh dear, the big bad-Assamites! They try to be great and terrible killers, but we ain't impressed. Can't kill whatcha can't find, and we taught 'em everything they know about sneakin'.

GIOVANNI

Who? Oh yeah, those guys. (long backward look over shoulder, followed by a shudder) No comment.

RAVNOS

Kinda one of those Gangrel situations, where ya get along 'cause there's no reason not to. We don't got nothin' worth stealing and they don't really care about information. Fair enough. Anyway, they screw over the Toreador as much as anyone, and that's more than good enough for me.

SETITES

Set is a Nictuku, one'a Nosferatu's childer. These guys are twisted, just on the inside. One'a these days it's gonna be them or us. Till then I stay the hell away from 'em. Bastards.

CAMARILLA

Here's a little—whaddaya call it, analogy?—about the Camarilla. Say you're learnin' to scuba dive. The instructor people always tell you never to go under without a buddy, or more than one. Why is that, you suppose? You're thinking maybe it's 'cause if a shark shows up, you and your pals can team up and hit the fishie in the nose and it'll go away?

Wrong. It's 'cause when (not if, when—always remember that) Jaws Jr. shows up, the more people you got down there with you, the less chance it is that sharkie'll go after you first. And while he's munching your buddy, you get the hell outta the water. Now if he's got, oh, say, six other guys to eat first, your chances of reachin' the shore're that much improved.

You see now why we're in the Camarilla?

SABBAT

They got good ideas, but the way they go about implementin' 'em's just so freakin' stupid it makes the whole point moot. I mean, ya just kinda wanta go over to 'em and slap 'em upside the head and try to get 'em to think a second, ya know? Trying to find the Antediluvians by killing and maiming humans is kinda like swinging at one'a those pifasta things—the Sabbat got a big stick, but it don't do much good 'cause they're all blindfolded.

LUPINES

They hate us and want to kill us. They want to preserve the countryside; we want to build more cities so we got more hidey-holes. Cats and dogs—pardon the pun. Take 'em out if ya can; run to ground if ya can't.

BLACK SPIRAL DANCERS

See, we know something the others don't. Just like there are lots of Kindred clans, there are lots of Lupine clans—they got names like Red Walkers and Running Bears and Pine-Cone Butt-Wipers and what have you. But there's one clan that's really kinda discombobulatin', 'cause they're competin' for our little ecosystem. And they're crazier than Malkavians and make the Brujah look like toy poodles. They're called the Black Spiral Dancers and they're trying

to take our tunnels away and eat us in the process. We gotta do somethin' about the Dancers, and quick, or we ain't gonna be around much longer.

MAGES

Like the Tremere except even more full of themselves. I sneaked into one'a their meetings one time. Sounded like a goddamn philosophy seminar. Talkin' about paradox fluxes and static this and dynamic that and consensual reality paradigms — I bet they kill their enemies by boring 'em to death.

Don't get me wrong — these ain't the kinda guys you wanna screw with. Weird little accidents always seem to happen to people who cross their path. And if the accidents don't getcha, the brain-exploding death chants they throw at you will.

FAERIES

Oooh, faeries! Aren't we pretty little Tinkerbells with our little wings, flying around spreading pixie dust and good cheer.

I ain't never seen a faerie, and I don't even believe in 'em, but if I ever got a hold of one, I'd rip its wings off just for fun.

CLAN HIERARCHY

Feel my hand, feel my hand, feel my arm, feel my arm, feel my fist, feel my fist, fists of love.

— Big Black, "Fists of Love"

Of all the clans, the Nosferatu is the most unified. While the Tremere and Ventrue clans present external facades of camaraderie, their structures are brittle shells wracked by backbiting and glued together by the fear of reprisal. Not so the Nosferatu. The ties of its members' ugliness bind tightly indeed. After all, to whom else can one turn for true understanding and sympathy?

There is, of course, a practical side to this. The elders are well aware that somewhere in the world the Nictuku lurk, stalking their progeny and seeking to destroy their own kind. Gehenna is all too real to the Nosferatu elders, and they realize that only through unity will the clan be able to face its "great-uncles" when the night of reckoning comes. Thus, the elders do everything in their power to ensure clan harmony. The Nosferatu have no time for internecine feuds.

Survival is the main criterion for status among the Nosferatu. Of course, this is ultimately true for all vampire clans, but the Nosferatu don't try to put a genteel facade

over it. Nosferatu existence is pain, and those who have endured the pain the longest are accorded the greatest respect. Thus, the elder Nosferatu tend to dominate clan dealings, but not through the use of force or intimidation. Instead, elder Nosferatu are seen as revered sages, and their advice is willingly followed by the young.

Indeed, Nosferatu never demand respect or obedience that practice, so common among the Ventrue et al., is seen by the Nosferatu as oxymoronic and just plain moronic. No Nosferatu is able to order another of the clan to do anything. Nosferatu who attempt to browbeat their brethren are simply ignored by the rest of the clan, who disappear into the night via Obfuscate.

For this reason, Nosferatu are skeptical at best toward sects such as the Camarilla or Sabbat. The clan considers the sects rather silly and takes a "yeah, sure, whatever you say" attitude toward the machinery of vampire politics. Camarilla and Sabbat Nosferatu have more in common than any other clan and its *antitribu*, and the two sides occasionally cooperate.

Nosferatu society is loosely divided into units known as broods. Most Nosferatu in a brood are related through bloodties, though outsider Nosferatu

who relocate to a given city are free to join that city's brood. Broods are generally run by consensual agreement, though the opinions of the elders carry a greater weight than do those of the young.

Decisions are rarely made without at least the grudging agreement of all in the clan, and consensus is generally the watchword within a brood. Individual Nosferatu, content that at least some attempt is made by the brood to come to terms with their wishes, rarely act against the interest of the clan.

Punishment is rare among the Nosferatu. The Camarilla branch of the clan reluctantly enforces the Traditions, and the Sabbat branch holds its members to what few rules guide that sect, but the clan otherwise does nothing to discipline its members. Nosferatu who consistently cause trouble for the clan are simply ostracized.

This "punishment" is surprisingly effective; unlife is harsh for the Nosferatu as is, and a Nosferatu without clan support is fair game for a variety of dangers, including the Nictuku. Besides, most Nosferatu find the clan provides the only true opportunities for friendship—an outcast Nosferatu is a lonely soul indeed.

LEATHERFACES

Among men like Jack the Ripper, Ted Bundy, and John Wayne Gacy there is a pattern that seems to repeat itself, a pattern, most professionals agree, that is too little studied and imperfectly understood.

— Tim Cahill, *Buried Dreams: Inside the Mind of a Serial Killer*

Despite the best efforts of the clan, some Nosferatu just plain lose it. Unable to cope with their deformity and discontented with the company of their fellow outcasts,

they lash out at the world in sprees of destruction and murder.

Such Nosferatu are common among the anarchs and the Sabbat, as these groups give them outlets for their violence. Their role in these groups is simple: terror specialist. Fear is their weapon and their drug. Not content with the fear induced by their visages, these Autarkis meticulously study the art of horror, devouring books and movies that depict the grotesque.

Many such Nosferatu have become almost Torenadoresque in the pursuit of their atrocities, staging them with the utmost care. They play all manner of games

with their prey: stalking the victim for nights, calling the victim and breathing heavily on the other end of the line, cutting the victim's power lines, etc. A persistent legend among the vampires of the Eastern Seaboard states that one particularly dreaded Black Hand Nosferatu, having trapped a Camarilla prince in his haven, was moving in for the kill. All of a sudden, the assassin stopped, looked around, shook her head in disgust, turned and left, muttering that "the lighting isn't right."

The recent plethora of "psycho slasher" movies has given these Nosferatu both fodder for their craft and role models to emulate. Other vampires, seeing the connection, have begun to refer to renegade Nosferatu as "Leatherfaces" in tribute to the villain of Texas Chainsaw Massacre infamy. The Nosferatu in question have readily adopted this *nom du guerre*. Razors, hockey masks, ice picks and other instruments of fear and pain are standard tools among the ranks of the Leatherfaces. These Nosferatu likewise emulate the murder techniques of their cinematic counterparts. A truly artistic touch is to Dominate the fleeing victim into tripping and falling while the Leatherface slowly walks forward for the kill, razor in hand.

FEEDING PRACTICES

Oh, the shark has pretty teeth, dear,

And he shows them, pearly white.

— Bertolt Brecht, "Mack the Knife"

An obvious difficulty for the Nosferatu is feeding. The merest glimpse of a Nosferatu sends most mortals fleeing in horror. Obfuscate helps in this regard but is far from reliable. Furthermore, few Nosferatu develop the high levels of Dominate and Presence common among the members of such clans as the Toreador and Ventruue. Particularly with regard to neonate Nosferatu (who do not have the high Discipline levels needed to subdue prey), feeding can be a chancy thing.

The elders of certain cities, realizing this, have created "way stations" among the downtown populace. Certain Nosferatu, those skilled enough to have achieved prowess in the Animalism power Song of Serenity, periodically gather at street corners and back alleys where homeless individuals cluster. The Nosferatu use Song of Serenity to lull and



DATE: 12-12-50

TO: Xerxes

FROM: Jameson

RE: Project Rosenberg

Per your request, I delivered the plans for United States atomic weapons to the Soviet agent. In so doing, I assumed the shape of the engineer Julius Rosenberg. The resulting panic has indeed been considerable. Rosenberg's trial and certain execution promise to be media spectacles. I rather confidently predict that construction of extensive subterranean bomb shelters will begin within the next year. Of course, we must wait a decade or more for the ensuing nucleophobia to subside and must gain the good will of several princes in order for the city, state and federal governments to "forget" the existence of the shelters. Once these feats are accomplished, however, our clan will have access to a vast vampiric *Lebensraum*, as it were.

mesmerize the mortals into a pacified trance, thus allowing their fellows to feed. Other Nosferatu then Dominate the victims into forgetting the incident.

The Nosferatu have discovered that repeated exposure to the Song has an addictive effect on mortals. As long as the Nosferatu display some degree of control in their feeding and make liberal use of Dominate, victims will keep coming back to the same "peaceful" spot over and over.

Of course, the above approach only works in crowded, decaying urban zones. In less populated areas, Nosferatu must often become "sundmen," stealing into sleepers' houses in the dead of night to drink their blood. The vampires of the Sabbat dispense with such genteel practices, instead preferring to waylay travelers.

Certain particularly despicable Nosferatu prefer to feed exclusively on children, whether because of cowardice or penchant. Such Nosferatu are, not surprisingly, called "boogeymen." This practice, while vile, is quite effective. Children's tales of monsters in

the night are rarely believed.

Of course, high levels of the Obfuscate Discipline help immeasurably when feeding. With sufficient control, a Nosferatu can use Mask of the Thousand Faces to impersonate anybody she wishes — including that doctor who happens to need five pints of Type AB positive ASAP...

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE...

You flush it — I find it.

— The Penguin, *Batman Returns*

The Nosferatu are infamous among the Kindred for their information (some say espionage) network. If a Cainite absolutely, positively needs to know something tonight, the Nosferatu are the vampires to consult. Not that this information comes cheap.

There are many reasons why the Nosferatu have such a stranglehold on information. The Nosferatu's intraclan unity plays a large role. Nosferatu of different broods routinely trade information that Ventrue elders would never dream of imparting to anyone. There is even limited exchange between Camarilla and Sabbat broods. Sect differences pale beside the threat the Nictuku pose to the entire clan.

This pervasive paranoia turns the pastime of information gathering into a near obsession. According to the legends, the Nictuku are as skilled at stealth and ambush as are the Nosferatu — perhaps moreso. One of these creatures, if undetected, can infiltrate a city and destroy an entire Nosferatu warren. Only constant alertness gives the Nosferatu a chance to detect the Nictuku's presence and enact preventive measures.

In truth, boredom may also contribute. After all, the Nosferatu often have more time on their hands than do other vampires. They attend no parties, make no rendezvous with mortals and avoid vampiric politics (such high visibility, in the Nosferatu's minds, promotes a Nictuku attack). They do not have to spend half their nights searching for the perfect victim — a stray dog will suffice. They are certainly not sought out for companionship.

The best way to obtain information is simply to look, listen and remember. The warren leaders often assemble the clan to play mnemonic and storytelling games. One common Nosferatu learning/exchange technique is a variant of a mortal



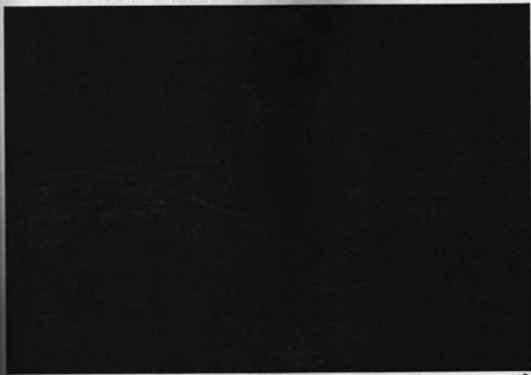
party pastime. A

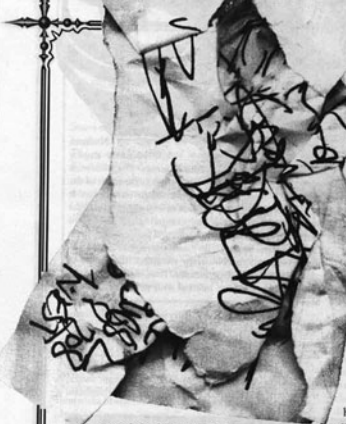
Nosferatu will start a story with a one-sentence statement; the catch is that the statement has to be an actual fact about something going on in the area. The next vampire must then repeat the first Nosferatu's statement *verbatim* and add another sentence to the story.

Of course, this is also a game, so juicy, lewd or otherwise interesting tidbits of gossip are preferred. If a Nosferatu forgets a line or cannot add anything to the story, she is out. The round-robin story continues until only one Nosferatu is left; by this time, a fairly coherent picture of events in the city has usually been formed.

Nosferatu also routinely employ animal scouts. The Nosferatu affinity for animals is the result of the vampires' affinity with their own Beasts. It does not betoken any sort of kinship or respect for animals, as does that of the Gangrel. Nosferatu regard animals as commodities and tools, and freely employ them to do the clan's bidding. Obviously, the more tools one has, the better, and the Nosferatu encourage the spread of animals throughout their domains. Thus, many cities in the Gothic-Punk world are infested with rats, alley cats and feral dogs.

Animal scouts are particularly useful once a Nosferatu has attained the fourth level of the Animalism Discipline, whereby a vampire may control an animal and perceive through its senses. With this power, a Nosferatu may literally become a fly on the wall of the prince's haven. Furthermore, provided the Nosferatu can remain awake, the animal may operate in sunlight. This allows the Nosferatu





to search for the havens of other vampires. Once another vampire's haven has been discovered, that vampire is fair game for all sorts of espionage and blackmail.

Needless to say, Nosferatu have entered the Information Age with a passion. In recent years, Nosferatu have become amazingly adept at the use of computers. Many BBSs have at least one Nosferatu monitor online. Certain warrens strongly encourage computer literacy, and clan meetings have been called to discuss the creation of a worldwide computer network accessible only by Nosferatu. It is certain that as the computer continues to dominate the globe, the Nosferatu will continue to wax strong among the Kindred.

URBAN DECAY

I can tear down the walls — storm the barricades

Run to the place where the frightened crawl.

— The Mission U.K., "Wasteland"

Nosferatu are not known for their elegance, and this applies to their abodes as well. The Nosferatu are responsible for much of the squalor that pervades the Gothic-Punk cities. The lower the station of a victim, the less likely it is that tales of attacks by monsters will be believed. The

Nosferatu often make deals with clans such as the Ventruue and Lasombra, trading information in exchange for the deliberate "de-gentrification" of an area.

Such a rundown, dilapidated zone has less of a police presence, making it an easy hunting ground. If the subdivision is particularly desolate, Nosferatu can openly bring into mortals' homes with little fear of reprisal. Furthermore, despite the easy prey, other vampires rarely venture into such an area, preferring the more genteel settings of the city's bars, theaters and nightclubs.

Crumbling industrial wastelands also suit the Nosferatu's peculiar sense of aesthetics. The squalor and decay are pleasing to the Nosferatu, who feel more at home in an environment as physically repulsive as these are. Some Nosferatu go so far as to trade favors for the deliberate erection of tacky, cheap-looking buildings. An unsightly eyesore jutting against the pristine glass skyline of a modern city is a 30-story middle finger at the world, at heaven and particularly at vampire clans such as the Toreador.

NOSFERATU GHOULS

By a foulness shall ye know them.

— H.P. Lovecraft, "The Dunwich Horror"

Vampire clans, especially the Ventruue and Toreador, have long assumed that they control mortal society. However, the Nosferatu have proved time after time that one cannot control what one cannot see. The Nosferatu routinely create ghouls to assist them in their clandestine endeavors.

Nosferatu tend to ignore mortals in obvious positions of power; these they leave for their Ventruue and Toreador cousins. The Nosferatu have discovered that 10 well-chosen petty bureaucrats can garner results equal to those achieved by a mayor or alderman. Indeed, such ghouls often provide superior service, as their involvement in city projects is generally of a "hands-on" nature and they are not subject to reelection.

The Nosferatu have fewer problems recruiting ghouls than one might imagine. Because they usually draw their fodder from the lower strata of society, they tend to find people who are desperate for any degree of power, regardless of the price — and there is a price. Humans who drink the blood of the Nosferatu do indeed acquire the benefits of ghoulhood — enhanced strength and vitality — but they also acquire a fraction of the Nosferatu curse. The ghouls' transformation is minuscule — indeed, almost unnoticeable — but ever after, there is "something strange" about them.

People might be slightly uncomfortable around them; dogs and cats might growl and hiss at them; they might develop a weird aura, a slight curvature of the spine or a

perpetual leer. Friends and acquaintances may be puzzled at the ghoul's sudden "creepiness" without being able to pinpoint what disturbs them.

Of late, the clan has increased its ghoul production among the underclass, promising this or that drug dealer, tavern owner or gang leader power and wealth in exchange for loyalty. This has not gone unnoticed by the people from whom the Nosferatu recruit their ghouls; they see the increasing strangeness and deformity among their peers, and grow more fearful by the night.

Most other vampires, however, have no clue that the Nosferatu have such a toehold in human society. Confident that no self-respecting mortal would feed from a Nosferatu, other clans continue to control their politicians and artists and tycoons. These ghouls in turn ignore the "lowly" servants and sanitation workers who hover around them, listening....

R & R

Celebrating loss — this is the reflection.

— Killing Joke, "Requiem"

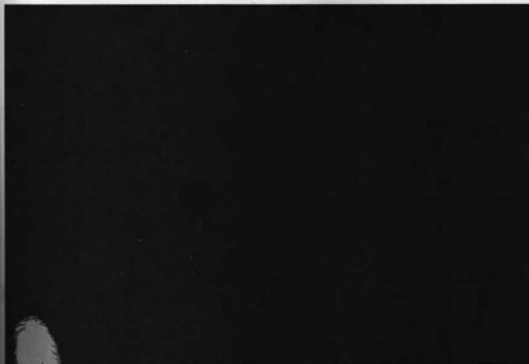
The Nosferatu, when they interact with other Kindred at all, tend to present doat and serious faces to their fellow vampires. They are somewhat stereotypically portrayed as grim, humorless recluses who spend the majority of their nights huddled in their burrows. This perception is not merely inaccurate, but entirely false. The Nosferatu enjoy a

wide variety of games, festivals and sports. Indeed, they play often, wildly and desperately, seeking in their games some small measure of escape.

SCAVENGER HUNT

The Nosferatu have a particular ritual that combines practical training in espionage techniques with good bloody fun. This age-old tradition is known among the elders as the *amanta-shadir*, but younger Nosferatu refer to it as the "scavenger hunt" — for that is essentially what it is.

At the beginning of a night of *amanta-shadir*, the clan elders gather all the neonates and ancillae in the warren. Each Nosferatu participant is then given a list of items to acquire. Certain items are common to all participants' lists. Other items are chosen by the elders based upon the ability of the participant (i.e., asking a rank neonate to "scavenge" the prince's signet ring would be grossly unfair, while asking the same of a hardened ancilla would be a little more reasonable) or upon a lesson the elders wish to impart (i.e., a prideful Nosferatu might be asked to acquire a Toreador Poseur's full-length mirror).



If the elders wish to put certain Nosferatu through their paces (perhaps in preparation for a mission), two or more Nosferatu might be asked to acquire the same item. Occasionally, mortals or even other vampires are included on a Nosferatu's list of "items."

One stipulation of the *aranta-shaher* is that all items must be acquired without the knowledge of the owner. The hunt is a test of stealth and cunning, not the ability to mug hapless victims and take their possessions. This stipulation does not, obviously, apply when the "item" in question is a living being.

As with a mundane scavenger hunt, she who acquires the most items on her list by the deadline (usually sunrise) wins the hunt. Following the hunt's completion, most items are returned (the Nosferatu are not *Ravnos*, after all!); the return of an item must be equally surreptitious. Sentient beings are simply Dominated to forget the events of the evening.

NOSFERATU ART

The pursuit of art is often associated with the Toreador clan, yet many strange forms of art have arisen among the Nosferatu. Nosferatu artwork is made all the more bizarre by the fact that its creators expect few, or no, viewers; indeed, many of the most magnificent Nosferatu pieces are summarily hidden away or placed in chambers of absolute darkness, never again to be viewed. Art for the Nosferatu is an object lesson.

Nosferatu enjoy sculpture and have the raw materials for the practice. They ingeniously combine sheet metal, discarded electrical wire and rusted piping into truly wondrous creations. Certain sculptures are beautiful, while others are deliberately grotesque; all are exceedingly strange. Ample leisure time and superhuman strength allow Nosferatu artists to create works using materials of a size and weight impossible for humans to manipulate. Nosferatu from all over the world journey to Peru to view (and traverse) the "Escalera," an enormous, spiraling sculpture of pipes and tubing that bridges a chasm deep beneath the streets of Lima.

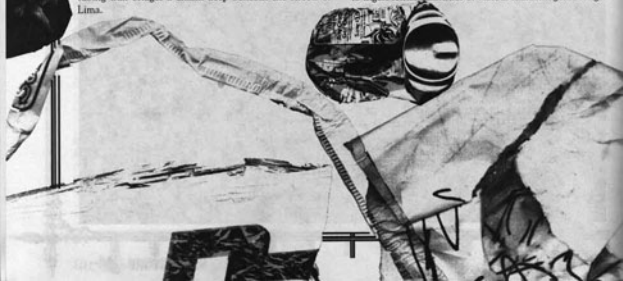
One Nosferatu innovation is the "sound room." This is an oddly shaped chamber designed to create all manner of echoes and other bizarre acoustic effects. Nosferatu "singers" stand in the middle of the room. By making different noises and directing the voice at different areas of the sound room, all manner of eerie reverberations can be produced. Multi-Nosferatu arias rival the Toreador's creations in beauty and far surpass them in weirdness.

The sound room, like many creations of the Nosferatu, also has a practical use. All manner of auditory illusions can be created therein to mislead enemies.

The water chamber, another Nosferatu work, is similar to the sound room in many respects. A large, cavernous area is dug beneath water-bearing pipes. Various drums, metal plates, and other reverberating objects are placed at different heights on the floor. Water is then leaked from the pipes, either via condensation or the chiseling of minute cracks. Meticulous care is taken to ensure that each drop from a given location is the exact same size and that the drops fall in a steady rhythm. As the different drops of water fall at different rhythms onto different surfaces, the cavern amplifies and carries the sounds, producing a concerto unknown to the surface world.

Nor are the Nosferatu limited to inanimate media. Despite their subterranean abodes, Nosferatu practice certain forms of horticulture. Over the centuries, the clan has bred and hybridized various sorts of fungi, splicing one with the other to produce species unknown to mortals. Some of these monster mushrooms tower as high as small trees. Some Nosferatu shape fungi in a fashion reminiscent of bonsai carving, while others prefer to let fungi grow as they will. These gardens often become expansive jungles of weird, phosphorescent beauty. Slime molds, enormous moths and the like ooze and whirl through the depths, just as birds and beasts traverse the terrestrial jungle.

It is rumored that the Sabbat Nosferatu of New York routinely kidnap mortals and drag them down to their subterranean forests. There, the vampires force the victims to ingest lethal quantities of various hallucinogenic fungi.





As the victims literally trip themselves to death, the sturdier Nosferatu feed on them. The doped-up Nosferatu then volunteer for the most dangerous War Parties. The victims are used as fertilizer for the gardens.

THE UNDERGROUND

*See you hide behind the door
Live in holes and disused shafts.*

— Joy Division, "Ice Age"

Just as the Ventrue have erected glass and steel spires to the heavens and the Toreador have encrusted the middle zone with frescoes, bas-reliefs and gargoyles, so the Nosferatu have carved their own dark kingdoms among the bowels of humanity's works.

Most cities of the Gothic-Punk world have extensive underground areas beneath their streets. The Nosferatu have orchestrated the creation of these areas over centuries, and even the other vampire clans rarely realize the enormity of these subterranean realms. Some old cities have networks of catacombs and crypts dating back to the mystery cults of the Roman Empire. Indeed, the Nosferatu often founded (and even led, via *Obfuscate*) such cults, using the subversives

attracted to them as cheap labor to build networks of secret chambers and the like.

The Nosferatu continually expand these underground areas. Using their ghoul on the city council, they propose project after project, excavation after excavation. Under the guise of "urban renewal," they oversee layer after layer of subterranean construction—a subway track here, a sewer line there, an underground plaza there. A few convenient accidents then convince the city to abandon the projects in mid-construction, leaving vast and desolate holes under the city. Into these areas the Nosferatu crawl.

Nosferatu usually have mortal pawns in the construction and maintenance industries; these servants keep the cities growing, evolving and changing. Just as a forest continually grows, dies and regrows over itself, so do cities inhabited by the Nosferatu continually reconstruct themselves.

Houses are built on top of abandoned cellars, are lived in and are torn down. Tenements are raised and buried under new tenements. Malls are built and maintenance tunnels dug, and then the malls suddenly go bankrupt and close. The surface of the city is the tip of a vast infrastructural iceberg—and only the Nosferatu know what's down there.

Of course, certain secret places must be constructed by the Nosferatu themselves. In this area they excel. Visitors to a Nosferatu labyrinth are often awestruck as they splash

around the corner of a filthy sewer tunnel to discover a pristine, elaborately carved architectural masterpiece. Nosferatu are builders without peer and have recently gone to great trouble to Embrace architects and engineers. Indeed, other clans have begun to whisper that the entire Nosferatu clan is preparing for some vast, world-spanning feat of construction, and they speculate as to the purpose of such an endeavor.

The end result of Nosferatu labor is a trackless, lightless, multileveled, subterranean maze, branches of which honeycomb the entire city. The Nosferatu ensure that nearly every important building, industrial park, etc. can be reached via their "warren." Particularly in older cities, these warrens are gigantic structures.

Centuries-old corridors connect with abandoned subway tunnels and disused bomb shelters. Entire sublevels of buildings lie empty and gaping. Secret shafts lead from the cellars of the elite to the Nosferatu's chambers. Crypts the size of rooms or even houses lie directly beneath the glittering skyscrapers of the wealthy. Flooded sewer pipes provide watery transport for the vampires, who build crude skiffs from plastic and lumber.

Certain adventurous vampires of other clans have descended into the Nosferatu warrens, but few — suspiciously few — have ever reemerged. Those who did return have spread such dark warnings that the lords of the Camarilla have begun to grow concerned. If the Nosferatu's demesnes are indeed as vast as reports claim, the Justicars reason, any sort of lawbreaking could take place down there.

In particular, the Camarilla elders are concerned about the possible violation of the Third Tradition. Looking down from their lofty aeries, the Ventruue lords see the squalid masses of the poor and homeless, whom they have largely ignored and left under the aegis of the Nosferatu. Such an enormous population of potential progeny — such an expansive space in which to conceal them — who knows how many Nosferatu are down there?

Ironically, the Toreador wholeheartedly support the Nosferatu's kingdoms, espousing the truth of the proverb, "Out of sight, out of mind." "Let the beasts rot in their holes," they sniff. "Better there than on the carpet at the Waldorf." It is equally ironic that the Nosferatu are usually no more than 10 feet beneath the Toreador who say this, listening to every word and laughing gleefully.

THE ANTECHAMBER

This is the way — step inside.

— Joy Division, "Atrocity Exhibition"

Most Nosferatu warrens have an area that serves as a combination of reception room and guard post. This area is generally dubbed the Antechamber, although it is not necessary confined to one chamber *per se* and in fact is often a maze of connected corridors, dead ends and rooms.

The Antechamber is where the clan's rare visitors enter the Nosferatu's subterranean kingdom. One of the area's primary purposes is to disorient visitors — both physically and psychologically. This is done partially out of common sense (the Nosferatu have no desire to reveal the layout of their domain to spies) and partially from perversity (the Nosferatu get kicked around on the surface, and anyone who enters their realm can expect equivalent treatment).

Thus, the Antechamber is designed to promote maximum discomfort, paranoia and confusion. The area is blisteringly hot in the summer and frigid in the winter. Each room in the Antechamber usually has several tunnels leading elsewhere (some of these are illusions created via high-level Obfuscate powers).

The tunnels (the real ones) are often cramped, requiring visitors to kneel, crawl or even slither through them (poetic justice in the Nosferatu's eyes). The tunnels are also generally choked with filth, slime and sewage. As if this weren't revolting enough, the Nosferatu use their Animalism Discipline to stock these areas with swarms of rats, bats, roaches, worms, slugs, centipedes, spiders and other harmless but disgusting vermin.

The Nosferatu consider the Antechamber an object lesson and delight when some unsuspecting Toreador prima donna decides to enter the clan's domain to bargain for information. A "guest" must often endure several hours of laborious crawling, backtracking from one dead end to the next amid foulness and vermin. By the time visitors reach the other side of the Antechamber, where their requests will be heard, they are utterly lost and psychologically frazzled. The rare visitor who stoically endures the ordeal of the Antechamber without complaint usually gains favor in the clan's eyes.

If a visitor is deemed legitimate and/or harmless, the clan uses Obfuscate to conceal the sections of the Antechamber where the real, lethal traps are laid. This is not the case for enemies or particularly obnoxious Toreador....

THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

What sounds were heard,

What scenes appeared,

O'er all the dreary coasts!

Dreadful gleams,

Dismal screams,

Fires that glow,

Shrieks of woe,

Sullen moans,

Hollow groans,

And cries of tortured ghosts!

— Alexander Pope, translation of *The Aeneid*

Each Nosferatu warren invariably has a main room where the clan gathers. This room (which is usually quite large) serves as an audience chamber, recreation area and last-ditch defensive site. It is designed to house all the city's Nosferatu, as well as any visiting clan members or other guests. The room is the center of a warren's existence. The Nosferatu, in their typical self-deprecating fashion, have named it the Chamber of Horrors.

The decor of the Chamber of Horrors depends on the proclivities of the clan leader or leaders. In many ways, it is a reflection of a given warren's attitude toward the outside world. Some Nosferatu, in an attempt to maintain some facade of beauty in their unlives, decorate the Chamber with ornate sculpture, delicate crystal chandeliers, rich tapestries and the like. Other, more cynical Nosferatu reject the standards of the surface world wholeheartedly.

These Nosferatu take the Chamber's name most literally and meticulously collect grotesqueries of all sorts. These items are arrayed about the Chamber in wax-museum fashion, the better to shock and horrify visitors. Implements of torture, bizarre paintings, deformed animals taxidermically preserved, dinosaur bones, coffins, mummified corpses, pickled human organs and the like adorn these Chambers.

The Chamber of Horrors is the most important site within a warren, and great care is taken in its construction. It is placed in the most defensible spot possible. Cunning

traps are scattered throughout; the Nosferatu say that to stand in the Chamber of Horrors is to stand beneath a thousand swords. In *extremis*, the very roof of the place can usually be collapsed, ensuring that if a Nosferatu warren dies, its enemies die with it.

THE SPAWNING POOL

With this beast, seems to me when you hear stories about him, the smart thing to do is not cut anything off. The smart thing to do is double 'em.

— Peter Benchley, *Beast*

The security-conscious Nosferatu value their privacy and detest other beings skulking around in their demesnes. The Antechamber provides a good first line of defense, but certain beings (Malkavians and Black Spiral Dancers, in particular) can circumvent it with relative ease. While mechanical traps and the like are useful deterrents, the Nosferatu affinity with animals allows a more innovative approach to personal security.

At some point in each Nosferatu warren is a small pool of still water. The Nosferatu take pains to ensure that this water remains fresh and pure. The Nosferatu with the most potent vitae (i.e., the one of lowest generation) regularly bleeds into the pool, infusing the water with her essence.



The pool is placed under the effects of *Obscure*, hiding it from the eyes of humans and most other vampires. Animals, however, can smell the intoxicating aroma of the vampiric blood. Rats, roaches, stray cats and dogs, and even (if legend is to be believed) the fabled sewer alligators come from miles around to drink from the pool.

The ingestion of the blood-saturated water turns the animals into ghouls of a sort: they gradually become larger, more cunning and much more aggressive. Of course, the blood is *Nosferatu vitae*, so the animals usually begin to sprout deformities as well. So much the better, think the *Nosferatu*.

The vitae is as addictive to these animals as it is to humans, and once an animal has drunk from the Spawning Pool, it continues to come back for more and more. The longer a creature drinks from the pool, the more pronounced the effects on the animal — it grows larger and larger, fiercer and fiercer, more and more malformed. Urban legends depicting dog-sized rats or swarms of foot-long roaches are quite common in areas near the Spawning Pool.

The animals remain susceptible to *Animalism*, and the *Nosferatu* employ these ghouls as scouts, spies and sentries. A few (particularly the larger beasts) are kept in the warren as guards. In most cases, however, the *Nosferatu* let the animals roam where they will. They prove remarkably effective in discouraging vampiric incursions and nosy sewer workers alike.

SUBTERRANEAN WARFARE

Very few mongooses, however old and wise they may be, care to follow a cobra into its hole.

— Rudyard Kipling, "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi"

The *Nosferatu* have many enemies, both among their own kind and outside. They have fought a guerrilla war in the dark for millennia. In that time they have become quite skilled at using their environment against their foes.

One of the first actions undertaken by *Nosferatu* new to a city is to gain influence in the construction, transportation and maintenance industries. This can be accomplished through prestation, ghoul creation or blackmail, but it is done whenever possible. Possession of such influence gives the clan a tremendous amount of power in a modern city — power often overlooked by the loftier *Ventrue*, *Tremere* and *Toreador*. If the *Nosferatu* presence in a city has been strong for a long time, the entire city may be riddled with hidden chambers, booby traps, escape routes and secret crypts.

Nosferatu love subways. Not only do the trains supply constant vessels, but they are powered by electricity. This electricity can be diverted from the tracks for a variety of purposes — including defensive ones. *Nosferatu* often run wires from the third rails of subways to nearby metallic structures. They then lure enemies to these structures. When the pursuing *Kindred*/Lupine/witch-hunter/whatever touches the "harmless" girder or other debris — ZAP!



Furthermore, the Nosferatu usually know at least the general locations of other vampires' havens — and the proximity of those havens to water and gas mains. Many a vampire who annoyed a Nosferatu has awakened at noon to the sound of an explosion and the sight of her haven going up in flames.

Such tactics can even be used during a pitched battle. Particularly paranoid Nosferatu often wire explosives to the gas and water mains at certain preset points that are then designated with an alphabetical or numerical code. A fleeing Nosferatu, passing one of these points, calls out the appropriate code via radio to an ally who lies in wait with a detonator. When the pursuers pass by — BOOM! More primitive, but equally effective, are deadfalls, pits, prearranged cave-ins and other forms of mechanical traps.

The aforementioned fungus gardens provide another means of defense. Over the centuries, Nosferatu botanists have bred a variety of exotic and lethal plants. Certain Nosferatu fungi are exceedingly poisonous, and rumors of poisons lethal even to vampires have recently circulated among the Lasombra and Assamite clans.

Other, wilder rumors suggest the "watering" of plants with Nosferatu vitae. The spore-spraying "ghoul mushrooms," carnivorous slime molds and other creatures allegedly thus germinated are generally discounted as fancy.

Direct assaults are not the only means by which the Nosferatu strike at their foes. The Nosferatu's control of the sewers makes it ridiculously easy to transport and deposit incriminating items — blood-drained bodies, for instance — onto the territory of an enemy.

DEEPER AND DEEPER

*But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.*

— Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach"

Despite their best efforts, the Nosferatu are running out of places to hide. In recent years, certain warrens have begun to delve away from the hated surface world entirely, carving

new tunnels into the very heart of the earth. Many Nosferatu, weary of centuries of loneliness and abuse, have begun to voice a "manifest destiny" sentiment toward the earth's core.

After all, these Nosferatu argue, the surface holds nothing for the clan. Perhaps, beyond the deepest caverns, a Xanadu awaits. In recent years, this sentiment has been reinforced throughout the clan. Despite the protests of the more cautious Nosferatu, who warn of the sleeping Antediluvians, great expeditions into the deep are now being planned.

An apocryphal tale has spread through the ranks of the younger Nosferatu. This tale neatly reverses Dante's Inferno, claiming that the surface world is in fact hell and all its dwellers are devils. In fact, all surface dwellers look like Nosferatu — they merely cloak their loathsomeness with clever illusions in a vain effort to delude themselves. By sloughing off their mortal form, the Nosferatu have accepted their true nature and in so doing seek to transcend it. The Nosferatu must now dig — dig through the purgatory of the underground to the center of the earth, where heaven awaits.

In their excavations, Nosferatu explorers have discovered many bizarre objects and entities. Some of these, the elder Nosferatu feel, should have stayed buried. The Nosferatu do not like to speak of Last Chance Warren in Colorado.

Its members, spurred by similarities between certain legends in the Book of Nod and descriptions of the fabled city of El Dorado, began an extensive foray into the heretofore unexplored cave systems beneath the Rockies. A lone Nosferatu stayed in the upper caves, keeping in touch with the rest of the warren via walkie-talkie. About 12 hours into the exploration, the warren excitedly reported findings of various carved structures — evidently buildings of some sort. The description was interrupted by a deafening roaring or grinding noise, peals of terrified screams, and crunching sounds. Then the walkie-talkie went dead save for static.

None of the members of Last Chance Warren ever returned to the surface, and a frantic rescue squad found the warren's path into the depths blocked by an enormous cave-in. The Nosferatu claim that the warren was destroyed in a landslide, but to this night, the lone survivor swears that no rockslide could have made the noises she overheard.



NIGHT OF THE TOXIC VAMPIRES

DATE: 10-23-89

TO: Xerxes

FROM: Jameson

RE: Arlington Warren

Per your request, I set out on foot to discover why communications between the Arlington Warren and our own have ceased.

I arrived at Morrow's Cave, the traditional entrance to the warren, at approximately 10 p.m. I have never been superstitious by nature, but you are older than I and have seen many wonders, so perhaps you will understand when I say that something about the very landscape frightened me. Never have I seen a place so desolate and devoid of life. No birds sang, no bugs hummed; no trees, no shrubs, not even grass grew there. It was as if something had dropped down from the sky and sucked the life from the place. The stillness itself was menacing. It was the silence one sometimes feels in the night before one's Beast claws its way to the surface.

But I digress. I entered the cave and crawled down the tunnel leading to the warren. Upon arriving, I was profoundly surprised to find the entire structure abandoned. The traps, et al. were still in place, but save for the usual animal guards, there was no sign of occupation.

In the deepest, rearmost room of the warren I found a recently constructed tunnel sloping downward. I did not remember this tunnel from previous visits. Having nowhere else to go, I descended into whatever depths lay below. As I traversed the tunnel, I noticed a peculiar architectural feature, one I found rather disturbing. The tunnel had been rather roughly and unskillfully hewn, and judging by the chisel marks, it had been cut upward — from below.

The tunnel sloped into the earth for roughly half a mile, whereupon it widened into what was evidently a natural cavern. I am Nosferatu, of course, and long ago desensitized myself to the niceties of aroma, but the stench that emanated from that place was nauseating in the extreme. The walls and floor of the cave exuded some sort of green phosphorescence.

Hesitantly, I crossed the cavern. I was, I might add, quite thankful for the new pair of boots I had acquired, and took especial precaution against touching the walls. As I walked across the cave, a figure emerged from a tunnel on the other side and called my name in greeting. It was Volhune, leader of the Arlington Warren.

I responded, and Volhune approached me. As he neared me, I grew profoundly disturbed. His flesh bore a sheen similar to that of the cavern walls, and the expression on his face — pardon me for judging someone

on appearance, but I tell you the look in his eyes was strikingly similar to that evinced by many of the children of Malkav.

He led me into the tunnel from whence he had emerged. The entire place radiated the same green glow, and I felt a palpable crawling sensation, as if my very flesh were vibrating. That walk seemed to take an eternity. The tunnel widened, and there were alcoves along the sides, faintly illuminated by the green glow. I could clearly see gnawed bones within, and I heard scuttling, flopping noises among the debris — rats and insects, no doubt, though the noises sounded like no vermin I had ever heard.

Finally, the tunnel opened into a vast cavern. By vast, I mean that a surface-world skyscraper could have fit within. The ceiling was lost to my view, while the walls stretched on and on, finally disappearing into a greenish mist that floated through the place and obscured everything in sight. I was thankful then that I no longer breathed.

Volhune turned to me. "This," he said, "is where we now make our homes. Our scouting parties have ranged far and wide, and we have discovered many wonders beneath the earth." He laughed then, unpleasantly, and pointed.

I looked, and far off in the center of the cavern was what appeared to be a pool of glowing green liquid — or perhaps lava, for it seemed to flame and flicker, though I felt no heat.

Volhune continued, "We have no more need of mortals or vampires. We have found others to aid us." He then — well, frankly, he became incoherent. He began babbling something about a snake or worm that waits in the dark, and of a black spiral that he would soon walk. I did not know whether to fear or pity him.

As he spoke, other members of his warren shambled out of the mists. The green liquid dripped from their bodies; they had evidently been bathing. I recognized Riley, Karen C., Curtis and Geoffrey — but only barely, for their bodies were coated with enormous burns, as if from fire or acid. They did not speak to me, but leered at me with a look that I know all too well from my own Hungers.

"You see, Jameson," Volhune said, "we have rediscovered parts of ourselves down here. I tell you, we no longer need blood to live." Looking at the eyes of the wretches who had been my comrades, I doubted that, but I listened still. I slowly looked back toward the exit and tensed my legs.

"Yes," Volhune continued, "we have learned things from our friends of the black spiral. We have learned how to eat as they do."

I must now apologize for my unfortunate lapse of control, but I stared into those charred, leering faces and thought of the bones I had seen, and something told me that if I did not run now I would never again have the opportunity. Knocking Volhune to the ground, I ran for the surface world.

Behind me, I heard the sounds of pursuit, and my name was screamed amid burbling moans. I ran as if the very Furies were on my heels. I was swifter, and the others seemed reluctant to enter the upper caverns. I fled outside and went to earth just as dawn broke.

Based on the above incident, I would suggest ceasing communication attempts with Arlington Warren. I would furthermore suggest that future exploration into the depths be carefully planned and monitored.

SONG IN THE DARK (ANIMALISM LEVEL SIX)

In their millennia underground, the Nosferatu have ranged deep and wide. In so doing, they have encountered

an array of other underground dwellers, many of which remain unknown to mortal science.

Song in the Dark is superficially similar to the Level Two Animalism power The Beckoning, but this power enables contact with the monstrous denizens of the underworld. The nature and power of these creatures are up to the Storyteller; some legendary beasts are rumored to be larger than blue whales.

System: The Nosferatu must be underground or on the surface above or near some sort of underground cavern area. She must then make a Charisma + Survival roll (difficulty 8). If successful, and if there is an appropriate creature in the vicinity (Storyteller's discretion), something will answer the call. The creature is not under the Nosferatu's direct control, but is generally not hostile toward the caller, or at least is more likely to devour the Nosferatu's enemies. More successes summon additional creatures or more powerful ones. A botch often calls a hostile creature, or even (if legend is to be believed) alerts a Nictuku to the Nosferatu's presence.



CHAPTER FOUR: LOWLIVES

*Everyone becomes the one
The one they most despise.*

— Cop Shoot Cop, "All the Clocks Are Broken"

Though few care to look at Nosferatu long enough to learn this fact, this clan is as diverse as any other. The only thing its members have in common is that their features are, by mortal standards, grotesque. Even their deformities are unique, and no two Nosferatu horrify observers in quite the same way.

The templates presented here are similar to those in *Vampire*. The Natures and Demeanors given here are samples only. You can easily alter these templates to fit your concept of how you would want to run the character. Some of these Natures and Demeanors are taken from *The Vampire Players Guide*.

NOSFERATU
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NOSFERATU

LEATHERFACE

Quote: (raspy, labored breathing)

Prelude: Mommy never had time for you; she called you "her little monster." Daddy had all too much time, though you hated the games he played, and he made you swear never to tell Mommy. If you did, he said, he'd cut you up into little chunks and dump your bloody bones in the river.

You had no friends — Daddy discouraged visitors, and the other kids were uncomfortable around you anyway. So you sat and festered alone in the damp cellar. Not that you were lonely. You saw and heard things in the dark that no human had a right to see and hear. The scuttlings in the walls, the scrapings under the floor, the rattling against the window — you knew what made them all.

Over all the other noises, you heard the distant wail of the river. The river, which Daddy had deprived of its prey. The river, singing for pieces of flesh and bloody bones. You had been a good boy. Mommy and Daddy had been bad. Time for them to go to the river.

There were tools in the cellar — sharp saws, heavy hammers, pliers, rope, an axe. You waited until you heard the screaming upstairs. Mommy and Daddy had been drinking. Now they were fighting. They were being bad. You took your tools and climbed the stairs and went to play with Mommy and Daddy.

Afterward, you made a deal with the river. The river got Daddy, but you got to keep Mommy. Now she had all the time in the world — she could play with you forever.

The stench would eventually have alerted the authorities, but something else found you first. It bit you, and changed your outside to look like your inside. Now you really were Mommy's little monster. But you still had a debt to the river. Now you play your little games with other people, and the river gurgles its contentment.

Concept: You have learned little save how to hide, stalk and kill — but you have become very good at these feats. Your education was nearly nonexistent, but you are very cunning.

Roleplaying Tips: You have been terrified all your life, and now you plan to inflict the same fate on others. You don't think like other people or vampires do, and rarely speak. When you do talk, it is often to the shrunken head of your mother, which you carry around at all times.

Equipment: Chainsaw, hockey mask, ice pick, straight razor, axe, carpet cutter, knives of all shapes and sizes, Mommy's shrunken head



NOSFERATU

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Deviant
Demeanor: Autist
Concept: Leatherface

Sire:
Generation: 8th
Haven:

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●○○○○
Dexterity ●●○○○○○○
Stamina ●●●●○○○○

Social

Charisma ●○○○○○○○
Manipulation ●●●●○○○○
Appearance ○○○○○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●●●○○○○
Intelligence ●●○○○○○○
Wits ●●○○○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ○○○○○○○○
Alertness ●●○○○○○○
Athletics ●●○○○○○○
Brawl ●●●○○○○○
Dodge ●●○○○○○○
Empathy ○○○○○○○○
Intimidation ●●●●○○○○
Leadership ○○○○○○○○
Streetwise ●○○○○○○○
Subterfuge ○○○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ○○○○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○○○○
Etiquette ○○○○○○○○
Firearms ○○○○○○○○
Melee ●●●●○○○○
Music ○○○○○○○○
Repair ○○○○○○○○
Security ●○○○○○○○
Stealth ●●●●○○○○
Survival ●●○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ○○○○○○○○
Computer ○○○○○○○○
Finance ○○○○○○○○
Investigation ●○○○○○○○
Law ○○○○○○○○
Linguistics ○○○○○○○○
Medicine ●○○○○○○○
Occult ●○○○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○○○○
Science ○○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Animalism ○○○○○○○○
Obfuscate ●○○○○○○○
Potence ●●○○○○○○
Fortitude ●○○○○○○○
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Backgrounds

Generation ●●●●○○○○
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Virtues

Conscience ●○○○○○
Self-Control ●●●○○
Courage ●●●●●

Other Traits

Police Procedure ●○○○○○○○
Serial Killer Trivia ●○○○○○○○
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Humanity

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Blood Pool

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

ZERO APPEARANCE. FAIL ANY ACTION INVOLVING APPEARANCE

Attributes: 7/5/3 Abilities: 13/9/5 Disciplines: 3 Backgrounds: 5 Virtues: 7 Freebie Points: 15 (7/5/2/1)



APPENDIX: WHO'S WHAT AMONG THE NOSFERATU

SERGEI VOSHKOV

Tension ran rampant across the shadowy chessboard of Cold War Europe, but no name inspired as much paranoia and dread as that of Sergei Voshkov. The CIA and others would have given much to catch the infamous KGB spy-master. It was not to be; he slipped through the agencies' grip like smoke, though he often left behind a wake of atrocities and disappearances, like the trail of a slug.

By the '90s Voshkov had become a legend — and a legend only, for dead men indeed tell no tales — among the intelligence agencies of the world. But the world was changing. The damnable Gorbachev kowtowed to the imperialist West, and the once-dreaded KGB was largely put to pasture.

Voshkov had seen it all, and little moved him anymore, so he retained some vestige of his dignity even when she appeared before him at midnight. He had heard the old stories, of course, though he had scorned them as Czarist babble. He knew who she was, and he guessed that he was to die. Still, he checked the counterrevolutionary prayer that nearly fell from his lips, and waited, as calmly as he could, for the grip of the iron claws.

But she spoke to him in a voice like the rumble of rocks, telling him that she had need of those loyal to the Rodina. The old order was indeed crumbling, but men such as he could carve a new Mother Russia amid the vacuum. Voshkov still hungered for action, and was his frame not wrinkled and withered anyway? Renewed vitality, even at such a cost, was too important. He accepted the hag's offer and became her neonate.

Voshkov travels the world in the service of Baba Yaga; he is her Eye and her Fist. The combination of his formidable mortal talents and the supernatural might imbued by his low generation renders him virtually unstoppable.



PRUDENCE STONE

Ever since she was a small child in England, Prudence had seen the visions. She had seen the ship that was to carry her family to the Colonies before her parents had even dreamt of setting sail. Her dreams had shown her the gray town and its gaunt gray men by the gray sea long before she had ever heard the words "Plymouth Bay."

Prudence was a strange and fey child, and such qualities were not valued by the dour Puritans of the colony. She spent many long summer afternoons walking alone amid the shadows of the New England glens, heedless of the dangers about which Cotton Mather preached so vehemently. She saw none of the witches and demons rumored to haunt the forest, but she saw many other things invisible to the grim townspeople. Flitting sprites darted amidst the flowers, and tiny, wrinkled gnomes winked at her from beneath toadstools.

Prudence, fascinated by the forest's secrets, spent more and more time there, exploring deeper and deeper within. One day the fascinated Prudence failed even to heed the steady sinking of the sun. By the time she thought about heading for home, night had shrouded the woods. The formerly serene forest underwent a frightening change. Eerie, half-seen shapes crept at the edge of her vision, and the gentle breeze became a fierce wind that cut through the copes with what sounded like mocking laughter.

The frightened girl walked, then ran for home, but despite her keen senses she could not ascertain the correct path. As she ran blindly, she felt a palpable stare from the forest depths. She whirled — and saw a dark, twisted form leering at her from amid the shadows of the branches.

Prudence started in shock. Surely something so horrid must be the Black Man about whom the townspeople whispered. As she gazed at that awful face, she could restrain herself no longer and let out a terrified wail.

At the sound of her voice the creature's expression changed to one of amazement. It sprang toward the terrified Prudence, growling in a guttural voice, "How did you see me? How?"

Upon discovery of Prudence's powerful gift, however, the creature's attitude softened. It spoke to Prudence in a gentle voice, reassuring her that it was hardly a demonic entity, but had once been a human being just like her. Its name was Osric, and it had been one of the first colonists to set foot on the Vinland shores centuries ago.

Prudence and Osric became fast friends, and Prudence spent even more time amid the forest's bowers. Her behavior did not escape the watchful eyes of the townspeople. As she grew, the whispers began — whispers of midnight visits with witches and pacts with the devil. Prudence was open and frank about her Second Sight, and that alone would have damned her in her repressive era.

The trial took place when she was 18. The obligatory witch's mark was found, and she was sentenced to be



hanged. As she lay in her cell and prayed, Osric appeared at her window. He tossed a vial of a strange brownish liquid into the cell. "Tis my vitae," he whispered. "Drink it. 'Twill save thee until I can Embrace thee. Be brave. Drink it." Then he disappeared. Prudence, baffled but trusting her friend, swallowed the contents of the vial. The liquid was bitter and foul, but it filled her with vitality and calmed her shattered nerves. Indeed, she craved more.

Morning came, bright and harsh. Prudence was led to the gallows. The smug clergyman prayed for her damned soul. The noose was placed around her neck. The signal was given, and she dropped. She felt a horrible wrench, and distinctly heard her vertebrae crack. Instinct told her to shut her eyes and lie limp — for she realized, despite her pain, that she would not die.

The children were led past to gawk at the grim object lesson of sin's wages. Prudence hung limp, dangling from the rope. Evening fell and Osric appeared. He cut her down from the gallows, took her in his arms, and gently sunk his teeth into her neck. She felt calm and serene as the blood left her. Afterward she awoke, and was inducted into the society of the Kindred.

Prudence became one of but a few Kindred inhabiting North America, and she quickly proved her worth to her peers. Her Second Sight was unaffected by her condition; indeed, it improved as the years slipped by. She settled in Boston, where she was instrumental in keeping the Sabbat at bay. She has become something of a clan matriarch and uses her powerful psychic abilities to keep the rest of North America's Nosferatu apprised of danger.

Stone is a powerful voice among the Nosferatu of New England. In addition to the standard abilities of the Nosferatu, she possesses Auspex abilities of preternatural potency. She appears as a small, withered Nosferatu dressed in somber blacks and grays. Her neck is stretched and twisted from her hanging, and her head lolls across her shoulders at a 90-degree angle.

PUSFINGER

Pusfinger was a relatively typical Nosferatu neonate, skulking and scrounging through the back alleys of Seattle. His unlife was also fairly typical for a member of his clan: he hunted, he sneaked, he shunned others and was shunned. Unfortunately for Pusfinger, not everyone shunned him; in particular, Empedocles, a high-Status Toreador Poseur, singled him out for ridicule at every opportunity. Pusfinger hated Empedocles with a passion, but could do little; rightly or wrongly, Empedocles outranked him in the Comarilla, and the older vampire's Auspex cut through Pusfinger's Obscure attempts like a knife through butter.

One night, as Empedocles and his sycophants mocked the Nosferatu in a dingy courtyard, howls shattered the night air. Two enormous, furry monstrosities — Lupines by the look of them — sprang from the roof of a nearby building and waded into the undead, slashing and chomping.



Empedocles fell to his knees and wailed, while his ghouls (chosen more for their looks than their skill) were quickly reduced to lumps of ragged meat. Pusfinger, however, had had enough. His blood, already set close to boiling from the cruel taunts, suffused his limbs with liquid fire. He waded into the melee, and his world went red.

When his head cleared, he was standing over the corpses of several ghouls and two Lupines. His flanks and limbs had been shredded by the Lupines' claws, but the pain of his wounds was nothing compared to the satisfaction of his sudden realization. Pusfinger slowly turned to the ashen-faced, cowering Empedocles and calmly informed him that he would be contacting Clan Toreador about the life boon owed him.

Since that night, Empedocles has been at the beck and call of Pusfinger. Though Empedocles owes the Nosferatu the greatest favor imaginable, and Pusfinger could demand nearly any service, he chooses not to ask for great favors or mighty boons. No, Pusfinger instead takes repayment bit by humiliating bit. Empedocles has been valet, victim procurer, haven cleaner, model and many other things besides.

In one of his greatest coups, Pusfinger forced Empedocles to wear Pusfinger's old, dirty clothes to all the Toreador social events. Empedocles' herd and sycophants, seeing the proud Toreador clad in a stocking cap, combat boots and stinking plaid shirt, assumed it was the latest craze and attempted to emulate it. This "look" spread throughout Seattle and thus was "grunge fashion" born.

Needless to say, Pusfinger's deed rocked him to prominence among the ranks of the Nosferatu. Though grunge fashion is slowly (and mercifully) dying out, Pusfinger remains one of the most respected Nosferatu on the West Coast.

THE "BAT CHILD"

The origin of the tragically horrific figure dubbed the "bat child" is unknown. In many ways this creature resembles one of the more bestial members of Clan Gangrel, but its uncanny ability to vanish from the sight of its pursuers marks it as Nosferatu. It was first discovered beneath the Appalachians by a group of weekend spelunkers. Blinded and disoriented by the humans' flashlights, it remained visible long enough for one of the team to take a photograph of it. The blurred, grainy photo was bought by a tabloid journal, which immediately ran a full-page story about the so-called "bat child." A frantic search for the creature ensued.

Though the "bat child" has thus far managed to elude its pursuers, its obvious inexperience with its powers has led to many documented sightings and a few photographs. Naturally, the upper echelons of the Camarilla are gravely concerned about this breach of the Masquerade and have made it known to the princes of their cities that the "bat child" is to be captured at all costs. Nonetheless, the feral cunning of the creature has enabled it to remain at large — thus far.



CLANBOOK: NOSFERATU



Hideously deformed, hiding from the world's eyes in their dank holes, the Nosferatu thrive despite their ostracism from vampiric society. But what are they plotting in their dark caverns? What schemes are brewing in the nether regions of the night? The Nosferatu watch everyone else, but who watches them?

Clanbook: Nosferatu includes:

- The history of the clan and its true role in the upheavals of the undead;
- 10 sample characters suitable for players and Storytellers; and
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ISBN 1-56504-064-3
WW 2054 \$12.00US



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